

SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES

AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SOUTH ASIAN AFFAIRS

Volume 13, No. 2

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JULY 1996

SOUTH ASIA STUDIES

RAFIQ AHMAD

Editor

South Asian Studies seeks to provide a forum for discussion of issues and problems primarily relating to South Asia. We welcome contributions by researchers, administrators, policy makers and all other interested in promoting better understanding of South Asian Affairs.

Published bi-annually by the Centre for South Asian Studies, University of the Punjab, Quaid-i-Azam Campus, Lahore, Pakistan.

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| Pakistan | : Annual | Rs. 175.00 | } | By Air Mail |
| | Single Copy | Rs. 100.00 | | |
| Foreign | : Annual | U.S. \$ 70.00 | | |
| | Single Copy | U.s. \$ 36.00 | | |
| Pakistan | : Annual | Rs. 165.00 | } | By Surface Mail |
| | Single Copy | Rs. 95.00 | | |
| Foreign | : Annual | U.S. \$ 65.00 | | |
| | Single Copy | U.s. \$ 33.00 | | |

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ISSN 1026 - 678X

SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES

Volume 13 No. 2

JULY 1996



Centre for South Asian Studies
UNIVERSITY OF THE PUNJAB
QUAID-I-AZAM CAMPUS, LAHORE
PAKISTAN
(Published 1998)

Starlite

Printed at : STARLITE PRESS, 5 COURT STREET, LAHORE.

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The 1990 Elections in Pakistan

Dr. SAYYID A.S. PIRZADA

INTRODUCTION

The Third Martial Law Regime (1977 — 1988) in Pakistan ended with the addition of 8th Amendment in the 1973 Constitution vesting powers in the President to dissolve the National Assembly. The dismissal of Benazir Bhutto's Ministry under this Amendment, the performance of Benazir Ministry (1988 — 1990) the Pakistan Peoples Party's (PPP) close liaison with the United States and India their impact on the result of 1990 polls is the subject of this article. It will also discuss the polls at home and abroad besides their comparison with those held in 1993.

THE LEGAL BATTLE

The August 6, 1990 presidential proclamation stated that the extreme step of dismissal became inevitable as Government of the Federation led by Benazir Bhutto could not be carried on, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution. Enumerating its reasons the President said that utility and efficiency of the National Assembly as a representative institution was defeated by internal dissensions and frictions and scandalous "horse-trading (floor crossing) for political gains besides unprecedented corruption in which the PPP's upper most echelon was involved.¹

It may be recalled that much before the August 6 proclamation, the Tahrik-i-Istiklal Pakistan (TIP) Chief Air Marshal (Retired) Asghar Khan had demanded the dissolution of Assemblies from the President.² A similar demand was also voiced by the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) President and former PM Muhammad Khan Junejo which appeared in national press on August 4, 1990.³ The veteran Pakistan Democratic Party (PDP) leader Nawabzada

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Nasrullah Khan had even asked Benazir Bhutto to step down and give a chance to the Opposition to sort out things, especially matters pertaining to Sind.⁴

The PPP Co-Chairperson Benazir Bhutto in her quick reaction termed the presidential order as "un-constitutional, illegal, void and bogus." She bitterly criticised the President and regarded his action as arbitrary and of ulterior motives.⁵ She also lashed at the appointment of Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi as Caretaker Prime Minister who she said had been rejected by his own constituency.⁶ However, the Opposition appreciated the presidential order. The Islamic Jamhoori Ittehad (IJI) Secretary General hailing from the Jama'at Islami Pakistan (JIP), Professor Ghafoor Ahmad fully supported the step which had become un-avoidable for the protection of democracy in the country.⁷ Prominent Muslim League Senator Pir Pagara from Sind who had gained the rank of a 'King Maker' during the Zia regime (being frequently consulted on political appointments) reacted by saying that Benazir fell a prey to the corruption of "her own, her friends, well-wishers and party workers."⁸

The PPP challenged the order in the Lahore High Court but lost. The Court held that the Government of the Federation could not be carried on in accordance with the provision of the Constitution and an appeal to the electorate was necessary. No substantial legislative work had been done, and could be carried on by the Government in the National Assembly and the Senate, failure of the Government to protect the Province of Sind against internal disturbances resulting in colossal loss of life and property as well as calling a meeting of Council of Common Interests (CCI) to sort out collective issues and setting up of the National Finance Commission (NFC) as required by the Constitution for distribution of revenues, eroding provincial autonomy guaranteed by the Constitution by launching People's Works Programme violation of fundamental rights, public ridiculing of constitutional organs of the State like the Senate and superior judiciary, misuse of Federal Secret Service funds to the tune of millions of rupees, unauthorized use of aircrafts belonging to Air Force and PIA for transportation of members of the National Assembly at the time of facing a no-confidence-motion and appointments in the Civil Services of Pakistan and the Services under the Statutory Corporations in violation of law.⁹ Another appeal of similar nature was also dismissed by the Sind High Court.¹⁰ The PPP challenged the Lahore High Court judgement in the Supreme Court but the latter upheld the Lahore High Court verdict.¹¹ The Lahore High Court also rejected an appeal to postpone the national polls.¹² The Peshawar High Court, however, on an application of the provincial PPP Chief Aftab Ahmad Sherpao ordered the restoration of NWFP Assembly,¹³ but

prior to the convening of the Assembly, the order was suspended by the Supreme Court.¹⁴

On August 27, 1990 exercising powers under Disqualification Act 1977, the President set up 11 special accountability courts to try and decide cases of disqualification of corrupt members of the Parliament. Benazir Bhutto declared lack of trust in those courts and described them as 'Kangaroo Courts.'¹⁵ She declared that she herself and her party leaders would not appear before those courts. However, the government went ahead with its task of accountability, and filed references against Federal Ministers, Jahangir Bader.¹⁶ Kawaja Tariq Rahim, Ghulam Ahmad Manaka and Faisal Saleh Hayat,¹⁷ Nasir Beg and Mumtaz Ahmad Khan Bhabha Members National Assembly.¹⁸ Seven references were filed against Benazir Bhutto on misuse of powers accruing billions of rupees loss to the state exchequer,¹⁹ besides involvement of her husband and father-in-law²⁰ in criminal and corruption cases. No reference, however, was moved against any IJI member of the former Punjab Government. The PPP Deputy Opposition Leader in the Punjab Assembly, Salman Taseer issued a 100 item *Questionnaire* against the IJI Chief Muhammad Nawaz Sharif which was also telegraphed to the President.²¹ The IJI categorically refuted the allegations and asked the PPP Leader through national press to move them in the Special Courts set up by the President. The IJI Chief Mian Nawaz Sharif, former Prime Minister Muhammad Khan Junejo and former Federal Minister Coudhary Shujaat Hussain offered to scrutinize their political career but the proposal was turned down.²² However these offers for accountability elevated their stature in the eyes of voters.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE POLLS

As a first step to implementing August 6 presidential proclamation, composition of Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) was completed. Later the ECP made arrangements for the elections and appointed Returning Officers and Assistant Returning Officers drawn from amongst judiciary.

On September 6, 1990 the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Mr. Justice Naeemud Din announced the schedule of elections to 207 Muslim and 10 Minorities seats in the National Assembly, and also that of the Provincial Assemblies. He reiterated commitment of the ECP for holding free, fair and impartial election. He said police officials and even the ministers and district management authorities will not be allowed to enter the precincts of the polling stations.²³ The ECP also announced a code of conduct for the parties. It exhorted the parties to refrain from arousing parochial feelings, conflicts between various sects, communities and linguistic groups, acting in a manner

prejudicial to the ideology of Pakistan, or the sovereignty, integrity or security of Pakistan, ridiculing the armed forces of Pakistan and obstructing the political activities of their rivals. However, practically the significance of this code of conduct was not more than an intelligent lecture to the deaf and dumb. The parties have been formed contrarily and even projected as such through state controlled Radio and TV network. The ECP deployed Army in Sind to meet any eventuality and also in some other sensitive parts of the country. In this connection, the CEC held meetings with the President and also the Commander-in-Chief General Aslam Beg.

While the election campaign had entered the final phase, the country continued to be in the grip of rumours circulated through the national press and also the hearsay that polls can be postponed at any time. The PPP expressed scruples that the elections will be postponed.²⁴ Meanwhile an application was moved to the RO in Peshawar to dismiss the candidacy of Benazir Bhutto because she ceased to be a Muslim for having termed the Qur'anic prescription for *Qisas* and *Diyat* as 'in-appropriate' in her public statements. She also indecently commented on the Shar'iyyat Bill in the Cabinet meeting and viewed the Islamic punishments as '*wahshiyannah*' (beastardly) besides directing the Information Ministry to create hatred again the Shar'iyyat Bill through the Radio and Television networks.²⁵ Another application was filed in Lahore against the candidacy of Muhammad Nawaz Sharif levelling 80 allegations which barred him to be a valid candidate.²⁶ Both these applications were dismissed.

The IJI nominated 154 candidates for 207 National Assembly seats. The IJI had electoral alliance with Awami National Party (ANP) and no candidate was nominated in constituencies from NWFP against ANP nominees. The Pakistan Democratic Alliance (PDA) nominated 182 candidates. Excepting Sind the overall contest between IJI and PDA was one-to-one. The IJI hierarchy was of the view not to nominate candidates against Mohajir Qawmi Movement contesting the polls under the name Haq Prast Group (HPG) with a view to give tough time to the PDA in urban Sind especially Karachi and Hyderabad, but at a later stage the decision has to be reversed. Apart from PDA and IJI, there were 280 nominees of smaller parties.

THE MANIFESTOES

The PPP decided to contest the polls from its own platform. A 24-point election manifesto was released for dissemination through party hierarchy. The most important point of the manifesto was a complete blackout of 'Socialism as Economy' as their guiding principle. The manifesto admitted 'All Power to the

People' as the source of their democratic order. It guaranteed freedom of speech, conscience and association. The rights of labourers will be protected by giving them share in their concerns and also those of women by giving them among others membership of various elected bodies. The electoral mechanism will be of joint electorates. A multi-dimensional defence policy will be evolved to make the defence services a deterrent force. The PPP announced commitment of no further nationalisation of industries. The manifesto promised to develop nuclear and other indigenous fuel resources, promote agriculture by launching a programme 'Lands to the Tillers', and creating more job opportunities. About foreign policy the party resolved to foster solidarity with Muslim world, more friendliness with super powers, and all possible help to the Kashmiris fight for freedom, as well as struggle for free Afghanistan and independent Palestine.²⁷

After adoption of above manifesto the PPP changed the idea to contest the elections from its own platform. What transpired precisely for this move is not known. However, the PPP's joined Tahrik-i-Nifadh-i-Ja'afariah — Shi'a party and PML Malik Qasim Group in the PDA. The PDA's manifesto was reiteration of the PPP's as mentioned above. In addition the PDA promised acquiring of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.²⁸

The IJI in their manifesto pledged to establish the supremacy of the Qur'an and *Sunnah* of the Prophet (Peace be upon Him), if voted to power. Its other guiding principles were to promote democracy and preserve the avenues of individual and family rule, equal opportunities to all citizens including women folk, promotion of national solidarity, provision of in-expensive justice, eliminating exploitation and corruption in all its forms, pursuing non-aligned foreign policy and support to the Kashmiris fight for independence, and responsible government in Afghanistan. The government will protect the life, honour, property, freedom of speech and expression. The IJI promised decentralization of administration to ensure solution of the people problems at local level. The provision of utility services such as water, electricity, gas and telephone will be made easier. In the economic sector agriculture will be promoted on scientific lines and process of industrialisation will be accelerated. New banks will be opened and the existing ones will be reformed. The IJI will promote, gas, mineral, nuclear energy, solar energy and petroleum resources to overcome growing energy requirements.

Major industries and financial institutions in public sector will be denationalised protecting the interests of the employees besides improving the socio-economic conditions of the labourers. The manifesto promised to create

one million jobs over the five-year period and gradually bringing the minimum wages to the vicinity of three thousand rupees per month. The IJI expressed its commitment to turn the national defence into a deterrent force.²⁹

Of the rest HPG mostly confined to Karachi, Hyderabad and a few other urban areas of interior Sind promised to improve the social status of the common man by giving the reigns of the state to the middle class, by breaking the age old monopoly of aristocracy in politics. The Jam'iyyat Ulama-i-Islam Fazalur Rehman Group (JUIF) with power base in the NWFP and Baluchistan, the Jam'iyyat 'Ulama-i-Pakistan Noorani Group (JUPN) popular in a few constituencies of the rural Sind and rural Punjab, and the newly set up Pakistan Awami Tahrik (PAT) of (Professor) Dr. Tahirul Qadri pledged in their manifestoes to bring about Islamic renaissance. The regionalists including ANP, Pakistan National Party, Sind National Alliance (SNA), Pakhtun Khwa Milli Awami Party (PKMAP) and the new comer Jamhuri Watan Party (JWP) limited from a few wards of a constituency to a few districts in either, the NWFP, Baluchistan or Sind stood for maximum provincial autonomy.

THE PPP'S CAMPAIGN

The PPP's alliance (PDA) with smaller parties which never won a seat in any Assembly, despite their being a well organized and sound political party, strengthened the view that she was not ready to face the masses from her own platform. Either the PPP was convinced that their popular slogan Food, Clothing and Shelter through Socialism has lost attraction to the 'havenots' like 1970, or they were not satisfied with the balance sheet that stood pasted on their forehead, after the Benazir era. The PDA's major apponent IJI consisted of PML, National Peoples Party (NPP), JIP, Jam'iyyat Ulama-i-Islam Darkhawasti Group (JUID), Azad Group, Markazi Jam'iyyat Ahl-Hadith (MJAH), Jam'iyyat 'Ulama-i-Pakistan Sattar Niazi Group (JUPS) Hizb-i-Jihad (HJ) and Markazi Ja'miyyatul Mashaikh Pakistan (MJMP). No doubt the IJI too had similar parties in its fold such as JUPS, MJAH, HJ and MJMP but the fact remained that the PPP had far better standing as a national party. The IJI being a comparatively weaker party could own its strength to the smaller pressure groups, to face a powerful party.

The PDA branded the IJI as a '*Bhan Mati ka kunbah kahin ki aient kahin ka rora*' — incoherent entity like a magician's tools.³⁰ Soon after the announcement of election by President, the PPP Co-Chairperson Benazir Bhutto and the IJI Chief Main Nawaz Sharif started their campaign. In the

absence of party manifestoes which were released in mid October, the campaign presented the scenario of a referendum as to whether the masses stood for the Bhuttos, or the IJI.

The PDA Chief Benazir Bhutto described her removal from office as a result of a semi-military *coup d'etat*. The *awam* (masses), however will frustrate all such conspiracies of destroying the norms of democracy in the country, she remarked. She categorically denied the corruption charges levelled on her, her husband Asif Zardari, and her government and held that she was being offered withdrawal of corruption cases in return to her going to political seclusion which she will not accept.³¹ She held that the country was being subjected to a conspiracy to bring the IJI into power at the cost of PPP government.³² As for the PDA's apprehensions about the disqualification of Benazir Bhutto and other PPP leaders on charges of 'corruption' were concerned, Nawaz Sharif stated that she should not be disqualified and that the IJI wanted to remove her from politics through electoral processes.³³ He expressed the hope that people of Pakistan will not vote for terrorists, enemies of the country, looters and corruptionists.³⁴ Besides him, Maulana Fazalur Rahman, Secretary General, JUIF³⁵ and Nawabzadah Nasrullah Khan also asked the government not to keep the PPP leaders out of the election race, in the larger national interest.³⁶

The principal target of Benazir Bhutto was the President. Here are some of her abmonitions addressed to him : "President was campaigning for the IJI and his extra-constitutional act cost the state a loss of the order of 5500 million rupees;"³⁷ (she will) "teach such a lesson to the President that in feture no President will dare to sabotage the democratic institutions of the country;" "the President should resign, I have other methods also to remove;"³⁸ (her) "real rival was the President, he should come to the fore;" "the President was operating like an SHO — junior police officer"³⁹ the President exerted his official influence for the release of his son-in-law involved in drug trade;" and that the President was "chief patron of drug peddlers and terrorists."⁴⁰ About the IJI she said that everyone of them aspired to become the Prime Minister and such aspirants included the 'emaciated' Ijazul Haq who claimed this office, being son of late General Ziaul Haq.⁴¹

The PDA's viewpoint of the nature of the overall gambit of democracy, Benazir Bhutto — army relations, process of accountability, suspension of American aid and finally monitoring of the polls attracted a wider interest from the Western news media especially from the United States. The most inportent

of all was the interest of Americans in Pakistan's nuclear programme which they wanted to stop. To meet the US foreign policy objectives in this behalf, the Americans started interference in the election politics. This linkage of the Pakistani politics beyond the nation's frontiers left a dominant impact on the election campaign and results which requires to be dealt, with a bit detail.

THE AMERICAN FACTOR

The Bush administration was the first to support the presidential proclamation of August 6, 1990. The decision is in accordance with Pakistan's Constitution and democratic and above all it was an internal affair of the friendly country, said an official spokesman in Washington on the very day of August 6.⁴² The US Ambassador in Islamabad, Robert Okley however, hinted that Pak-American ties will suffer, if elections are not held on schedule.⁴³ Senator Patrick, Member Foreign Relations Committee,⁴⁴ and Senators Dannis Dequincy, Moynihan, Babra A. Makoski and Member of Congress G. Toursley⁴⁵ severely criticised the order. The American news media described it as a *coup d'état* against Benazir Bhutto.⁴⁶ The former Attorney General of US, Ramsay Clark in a letter regarded Benazir Bhutto 'a true hero' and offered his services to her.⁴⁷ Benazir Bhutto herself was alleged to have contacted Peter Galbrith who held an important position in American Foreign Relations Committee of the US Senate, and asked him to utilize his good offices to pressurize Pakistan.⁴⁸

Commenting on the accountability process, Chairman of Senate Subcommittee, Stephen Solarz (who was conferred the highest civil award Hilal-i-Intiaz by Benazir Bhutto) said that Benazir Bhutto's disqualification by a tribunal will prove negative effect on Pak-US relations. He warned that "if in a free and fair polls Benazir won" and "if she was deprived of political power," Pak-American relations would be sore.⁴⁹ Ambassador Okley told the Asia Society in Washington on September 11, 1990 that accountability process against PPP men only would be seen as partisan and will "further divide the country."⁵⁰ The text of his speech was released to the Pakistani press from the residence of Benazir Bhutto — Bilawal House, Karachi and was even quoted as such by the national press.⁵¹ An amendment in the Foreign Operations Act, 1991 sponsored by Senator Mikulski required the US government to subject availability of military education and training to Pakistan, to the certification of "full participation of all legal parties" in the elections without regard to the verdict of special courts of accountability established under the law.⁵² Fifty-three Senators including Patrick expressed their concern over Pakistan President's constitutional step to dissolve the Assemblies (sic).⁵³

It was only a day before the national polls that Pakistan's largely circulated Urdu daily *Jung* published a detailed report on the question of Pakistan's nuclear programme. Correspondent Nayyar Zaidi quoting a *Washington Post* report of July 15, 1989 said that Benazir Bhutto consented not to permit the use of enriched uranium for the manufacture of atomic bomb with a view to cause delay in Pakistan's gaining membership of the atomic club. The report further disclosed that "it was not possible for her to remove the most popular nuclear scientist Dr. Abdul Qadir Khan from his position, or Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, Admiral Siroehy and General Aslam Beg. When her plan failed and she feared a military take over, she got nervous and 'hysterical' in a telephone conversation with President Bush, and requested him for help who declined to extend any. Nayyar Zaidi also narrated details of American report about Pakistan's nuclear programme, which were collected from the American Embassy in Tehran and subsequently published.⁵⁴

The solidarity of US with Benazir Bhutto built the impression that she was protecting the American interest in Pakistan at the cost of Pakistan's interests. The caretaker government expressed their dislike for those statements. A high level meeting in Islamabad with President Ghulam Ishaq Khan in the chair renewed the nation's pledge, that government will not yield to pressure at the cost of the country, and upheld that the people will not tolerate any foreign command performance in the general election.⁵⁵ The President addressed a letter to President Bush and conveyed to him sentiments of the nation about American interests in Pakistan polls to impede the acquiring of nuclear technology, and about suspension of military aid at such a juncture.⁵⁶ According to a veteran Pakistani journalist Z. A., Sulehri it was "American recommendation" to the people of Pakistan to defeat the IJI.⁵⁷ The Federal Interior Minister Mian Zahid Sarfraz severely castigated the American Ambassador's comments which 'smelt of a viceroy' and asked the US to replace him with a sensible diplomat.⁵⁸ The condemnation of the US Ambassador by the cross section of population⁵⁹ has been so dominant that the US government was forced to issue a statement rendering the comments of Ambassador Okley 'as his personal remarks' and not a policy statement of the American government.⁶⁰

Forty-four Pakistan Senators in a letter expressed full confidence in the President. They regretted that "relations between the nations are based on fraternity and goodwill, and not in supporting individuals and families which lower their profile."⁶¹ The Federal Information and Broadcasting Minister

Syeda Abida Husain held that democracy was to be protected by the people of Pakistan, and not by Stephen Solarz.⁶² She accused PPP leadership of having strong Zionist links which lobbied for her coming into power.⁶³

The American tilt in favour of Benazir Bhutto became crystal clear after her letter to Peter Galbrith to create hurdles in the smooth flow of Pak-US relations.⁶⁴ Three days before the polling to the National Assembly, the Special Assistant to the PM and a Federal Minister (now a very close associate of Benazir and also the Sind Governor) Kamal Azfar told a press conference in Islamabad that the suspension of aid by US was due to "dis-information by the Bhuttos in the context of Pressler Amendment." He alleged that Benazir Bhutto gave an undertaking to the Director of CIA to stop Pakistan's nuclear research programme unilaterally. He exposed the PPP's designs not to accept result by quoting a statement made at a largely attended rally in Rawalpindi in the presence of Benazir by their nominee to the National Assembly (NA-38) Haji Mushtaq Ahmad,⁶⁵ that "if Benazir Bhutto was not voted to power the PPP would play havoc with metropolitan Islamabad."⁶⁶ Anwar H. Syed and Lawrence Ziring have altogether ignored this aspect of the 1990 elections in Pakistan.⁶⁷

THE IJI CAMPAIGN

The IJI accused Benazir Bhutto of betraying the nation's confidence by not rebutting PM Rajiv Gandhi's comment that "Kashmir was integral part of India." The comment was passed by him in Islamabad where he was attending the 4th Summit of South Asian Association of Regional Countries (SAARC). Kashmir has been a disputed territory and in 1965 the PPP founder Chairman Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto then Foreign Minister in the Ayub cabinet made an emotional speech at the UN Security Council and expressed Pakistan determination to fight for a thousand-year war with India over this issue.⁶⁸

Benazir Bhutto shared a different aspiration of the issue. Addressing the 4th SAARC Summit at Islamabad held during December 29-31, 1988 she mentioned various world issues excluding Kashmir.⁶⁹ In her concluding remarks she commanded the political efforts and mission of Mrs. Indira Gandhi and Sheikh Mujibur Rehman who collaborated to dismember Pakistan in 1971.⁷⁰ When Premier Rajiv Gandhi visited Pakistan again on July 16, 1989, she did not make a mention of Kashmir in her speech in the state banquet hosted in his honour.⁷¹ The IJI aquated it with her "underhand understanding" with India in Kashmir. Benazir had also ordered the removal of signboards of Kashmir House falling on the route of venue of SAARC Summit

from where Rajiv Gandhi has to pass through. Later her government in Azad Kashmir discontinued the slogan *Kashmir banay ga Pakistan* — Kashmir will become part of Pakistan, used in Azad Kashmir as a moral booster by the Kashmiries.

Apart from Kashmir, the IJI also criticised Benazir Bhutto's close ties with India. Pakistan Television telecast a news item that Benazir Bhutto sought the help of Indian Premier V.P. Singh to save her government from dismissal.⁷² The contents of the news item were denied by the PPP.⁷³ The former Indian Premier Rajiv Gandhi said in a statement that India cherished the friendship of Benazir Bhutto.⁷⁴ The author of the most hated book *Satanic Verses*, Salman Rushdi issued a statement that he had been a voter in Pakistan, he would have cast his vote in favour of Benazir Bhutto.⁷⁵ Her government ordered firing on a procession against Salman Rushdi in Islamabad near the American Center Library. It claimed the lives of 7 processionists and hundreds injured.

The NPP Chief and Caretaker PM, Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi told in election meeting in his hometown Nawab Shah that what else could be the bad luck of the country that a Minister in PPP government conveyed state secrets to India about Sikhs.⁷⁶ The PPP added to the misery of Sind which was a scene of dacoities, loot, kidnapping and murder of the innocents. He accused Benazir Bhutto for giving a free hand to her corruptionist husband Asif Ali Zardari, to usurp the state revenue to the tune of 17 billion rupees which surpassed all records, and even that of President Marcos of Phillipine.⁷⁷ The PML President and former Prime Minister Muhammad Khan Junejo criticised the PPP for opening the portals of state revenue to her party workers in complete disregard to the law. He termed the release of outright criminals in the name of political prisoners to be the sole reason of lawlessness in Sind.⁷⁸

The JUIF, PAT did HPG did not organize large scale campaign. The campaign of regional parties was still negligible

IMPACT

The IJI succeeded in mobilising the public support to rally round the factor that PDA was out to humiliate the nation, and sacrifice the country's prestigious nuclear programme to the Americans. The IJI impressed upon the electorate to either opt for the PDA by submitting themselves to the dictates of Washington, or to reiterate their firm resolve in Pakistan's independence and continuity of nuclear research programme by supporting the IJI. The criticism

of American interference by a cross section of the people created an aura resembling like that of the 1945-46 elections under the British rule, which gave a thumping verdict in favour of Pakistan plan of the All-India Muslim League.⁷⁹

POLLS

4,86,48,960 electors went to the polls on October 24 to elect 204 of the 207 members of the National Assembly. Two candidates returned un-opposed and election in one constituency was postponed due to death of a candidate. 1332 candidates were in the field for 204 general seats and another 82 for 10 minority seats.

The IJI won 106 seats with 92 from the Punjab, NWFP 8, Baluchistan 2, Sind 3 and Federal Capital 1. The PDA won 44 seats — Sind 23, Punjab 14, NWFP 5 and Baluchistan 2. The HPG won 15 seats, ANP JUIF 6 each, JUPN 3, PNP and JWP 2 each, PKMAP 1 and Independents 22. In the provincial assemblies polls held on October 27, the IJI and PDA won 260 and 64 seats (Pakistan Democratic Party 2, PKMAP 2, SNA 1, ANP 23, JUIF 8, JWP 10, PNP 3, BNM 2 and Independents 54) out of total 460 seats. Generally the polling was peaceful. However, 34 people were killed and 100 injured on the eve of provincial polls due to firing amongst rival political factions.

The PDA leaders, Benazir Bhutto, Air Marshal (Retired) Asghar Khan, Allama Sajid Naqvi, Omar Asghar Khan and Aitzaz Ahsan termed the election results as 'fraud and outright rigging'. According to the PDA the rigged constituencies numbered '70', '80', '165' and '100'. The changing version itself spoke that the accusations lacked a cogent basis. This opinion is based on the PDS's *White Paper* and various press reports of their above mentioned party leaders.⁸⁰ The ECP denied these assertions and issued an exclusive volume of the election results — *Report of the General Elections 1990*, Volume III to clarify position.

A forty-member team of Washington based National Democratic Institute visited 600 polling stations in 30 constituencies in their immediate report endorsed fairness of the polls. A four-member Paris based International Federation of Human Rights delegation whose members visited four constituencies (three National Assembly and one Punjab Provincial Assembly) dubbed the entire election as "highly sophisticated fraud." Of these four only one candidate NA-96 filed election petition. A SAARC Mission also witnessed the polls and certified their fairness.

CONCLUSION

The 1990 polls were held in a fair, free and orderly manner. The instances of mal-practices were rare. The PDA's continuously changing statements, denial to accept the un-rigged results, directives to their candidates to file election petitions with the ECP and subsequent charges of rigging on the ECP, taking oath of membership of assemblies whom they dubbed as 'bogus' heading the Foreign Affairs Committee of the 'bogus' Assembly by the PDA chief proved that there was nothing substantial in their charge. The sole factor determining the result was PDA's American sponsorship which moved the voters to reject them. In fact American factor also affected the outcome of 1993 polls. In those elections not only the PML (Nawaz) but almost all other parties and alliances voiced against American interference but dissensions in their ranks (i.e., breakig the JI) came as a blessing to the PPP which won more seats. Even now matters like setting up of a seismic monitoring station at Chakwal (linking Pakistan's nuclear facility with Washington) and so-called billion dollers investment promised in memos of understanding (of which even 25 per cent was not guaranteed as per statement of the US Ambassador in Islamabad) are likely to figure prominently in determining the fact of polls in Pakistan on 1998.

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Walking up the Down Escalator : Decentralisation Policy and Practice in Bangladesh

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INTRODUCTION

Decentralisation policies have almost universal popularity with the governments in developing countries. Over the last quarter of a century democratic, autocratic, military and monarchical regimes have proclaimed their commitment to decentralize government decision-making. Such policies are cross-ideological and both socialist and right wing governments have espoused them. A vast and dispersed literature has developed around the topic, much of it empirical and pointing out the complexity of understanding the content and results of decentralisation policies. Often the analytical framework of such studies is weakly specified, and this have even led to claims that there is 'no theory' (Mackenzie, 1961) in this field. Such a notion is incorrect. Indeed, the theoretical problem confronting analysts of decentralisation is that there are a large number of different and often competing theoretical perspectives. Much of the existing literature implicitly utilizes mixtures of these perspectives, but obscures its theoretical orientations under a mass of empirical detail.

This paper seeks to contribute to the understanding of decentralisation policies and their outcomes in theoretical and empirical terms. It commences by identifying a number of major theoretical perspectives on decentralisation. The upazila decentralisation policy (1982 - 1991) in Bangladesh is then

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described, its results documented and the processes surrounding its formulation and implementation are analyzed. In its conclusion the paper explores the implications of the Bangladesh experience for theory. While we find that political economy theories are best able to explain the processes and results of the upazila decentralisation, we also conclude that normative theories must remain an element in the long term analysis of decentralisation.

DECENTRALISATION IN THEORY

Decentralisation is an area that has drawn contributions from the scholars with diverse background and origin. Most of them tended to view decentralisation from their own perspectives, which led to a number of theoretical interpretation on the subject. For analytical purposes it is convenient to divide theoretical perspectives on decentralisation into two broad categories: normative theories, and political economy theories. While the normative theories are based on deduced 'ideal type modes' of how institutions and individuals behave, the political economy theories make generalizations through more inductive methodologies.

Normative Theories

The classical liberal democratic political theorists are the obvious starting point as they have argued the benefits of decentralisation at both national and local levels (de Tocqueville, 1835; Mill, 1861; Laski, 1931). They advocate elected local government as an institutional vehicle for national political education, the preparation of leaders, political stability, social equality, responsive public services and more effective public accountability. Such writings emphasize political factors and contend that local government is beneficial for the political health of a nation. Implicitly these writers assume that the economic well-being of a nation is dependent on its political situation.

From this classical liberal democratic tradition has emerged a powerful recent school of thought in the writings of Maddick (1963), Rondinelli and associates, Uphoff and Esmann (1982), Bryant and White (1982), Mawhood (1983), and Montgomery (1988). Although they utilize similar arguments these 'developmentalists' (Conyers, 1986) emphasize the contribution of democratic decentralisation to economic and social development. The strengthening of the economy and the meeting of basic needs, rather than the health of the political system, has been their central focus.

The main benefits arising from decentralisation, according to such writers, are 'classical' originating from the greater accountability and responsiveness of state institutions to their publics, Local level accountability,

through a variety of electoral and institutional processes, ensures that good leaders with reasonable policies are in authority and that the corrupt and incompetent are denied access to positions of responsibility. Individual voters, carefully considering policy proposals and using their personal knowledge and experience of local leaders and parties, determine who will lead and ensure that neither local politicians nor local officials can be arbitrary in their behaviours. The electorate has easy access to local representatives and '... the local government official... has his master at his doorstep' (Maddick, 1963: 58).

The pressures of accountability on politicians and administrators induce responsiveness to public needs and preferences. The availability of local data and a knowledge of local opinion (United Nations, 1962; Rondinelli and Cheema, 1983; Mutahaba, 1989) permit plans to be 'tailor made' and facilities effective implementation that can respond to changes in the local context. The representative nature of local government, it is argued, leads to increased equity in service provision as the electorate is comprised of all social classes and ethnic or religious groups (United Nations, 1979; Rondinelli, 1981). The 'poor' can pull down benefits from local government that might otherwise be siphoned-off by local elites. In addition, the transfer of authority to local bodies should enhance inter-agency coordination so that services can be delivered more efficiently.

To the 'classical' concepts of accountability and responsiveness, the developmentalist school has added 'popular participation' (Korten, 1980). In part this overlaps with these earlier concepts, but it also introduces new elements. Of particular importance are the arguments about the social forces released by the participation that democratic decentralisation permits. This, it is argued, mobilizes grassroots support for development programmes and promotes a feeling of local 'ownership' increasing the commitment and contributions that people make to such programmes. Thus additional resources can be mobilized and the likelihood of successful implementation and maintenance of projects is enhanced.

Theorists of management and organizational behaviours have largely concerned themselves with decentralisation in private organizations (e.g., Dessier, 1986). The arguments they have developed, however, have generally been seen as being relevant to questions of delegation within bureaucracies (i.e., deconcentration) and have been widely cited with regard to the desirability of delegation in public sector organizations. Writers have sought to identify the position at which authority can be delegated '... to subordinates for most decisions while maintaining control over essential companywide

matters' (*ibid*: 169) and now '...decentralisation is in vogue' (Handy, 1985: 307). Proponents within management science argue that decentralisation enhances a manager's responsibilities; this increases his/her commitment and job satisfaction which has positive influences on motivation, communication, creativity and consequently productivity. Management theorists with interests in development have resisted the 'decentralisation vogue' and argued for a contingency approach (Moris, 1981 and 1991; Leonard and Marshall, 1982) that recognizes the strengths and weaknesses of decentralisation (Honadle and VanSant, 1986) in the light of specific contexts.

Economists have approached decentralisation from the quite different conceptual bases of competition and its influences on efficiency (Tiebout, 1956; Buchanan and Tullock, 1962; Russell and Nicholson, 1981). Public choice theory, grounded on the premise that an individual will locate him/herself where local public goods provision coincides with his/her own preferences, contends that decentralized government is better able to reflect the needs and preferences of particular individuals or communities. 'A large number of providers offer citizens more choice' (Rondinelli et al., 1989: 59) and creates competitive forces that will promote supply side efficiencies, as dissatisfied citizens will vote with their feet and move to areas where local authorities meet their needs. Public choice theory leads to arguments for local units to be numerous (and thus relatively small scale) to intensify competition. Ultimately, in its more radical forms, such theory can be used to argue that virtually all goods and services are best provided by a deregulated private sector.

Normative theorists have made a strong case for decentralisation on the basis of political, administrative, economic and managerial grounds. However, their arguments contain conceptual weaknesses and include assumptions that do not mirror developing country realities. Liberal democratic and developmentalist theorists conceptualise 'power' from a very narrow perspective and fail to consider the ways in which the highly unequal distribution of power characteristic of African, Asian and Latin American societies influences electoral processes and the behaviour of institutions. Thus, assumptions about the nature of electoral and institutional accountability, and consequent responsiveness, are often totally inappropriate, as will be shown later. The public choice theorists' modelling of individual behaviour purely in terms of self-interest fails to recognize the complex nature of human behaviour (Uphoff, 1992 for an extended discussion). Assumptions about individual access to information, competition, market entry opportunities and the capacity of families to relocate ignore Third World realities. The contingency theory of

management specialists has advanced beyond the simple and erroneous identification of 'optimal' models by developmentalists and neo-classical economists. But it does not provide tools for appreciating the complex, context-specific social and political processes that characterize the formulation and implementation of decentralisation policies. The search to understand these leads us to more descriptive theoretical approaches.

Political Economy Theories¹

Normative theories of decentralisation have been strongly contested by a number of scholars who see such constructs as full of disguised ideological overtones and often rhetorical. The writings of Fesler (1965), Samoff (1979, 1990), Hyden (1983), Smith (1985), Rakodi (1988) and Slater (1989, 1990) reveal alternative approaches to the study of decentralisation with conceptual roots in the works of Marx and Gramsci. Common features of such approaches include the in-depth analysis of the nature of power and its distribution; an emphasis on detailed historical studies that contextualized decentralisation policies; a more inductive orientation towards theory; relatively pessimistic interpretations of what decentralisation policies can achieve; and a reluctance to policy prescriptions. Political scientists and sociologists predominate in such studies.

These writers view decentralisation policies as potentially parochial, inegalitarian and consistent with the privileges and exploitation built into local and national power structures (Fesler, 1965; Smith, 1985). They commonly find that decentralisation policies serve as a facade to maintain or strengthen, in one way or another, the position of those who hold power as in Zambia, Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Nigeria and Ghana (Chikulo, 1981; Slater, 1989; Barkan and Chege, 1989; Hyden, 1983; Asibuo, 1992). decentralisation is seen as a tool cynically deployed by the holders of political power to maintain their control and perpetuate their interests. Through the analysis of the political economy of developing countries, they argue that as power is commonly concentrated in the hands of narrow elites then decentralisation is unlikely to operate in ways that promote the welfare and empowerment of the poor. In such situations decentralized local institutions will be captured by local elites (Griffin, 1981), Kasfir, (1983), Hyden (1983) and Samoff (1990) have shown that despite the rhetoric and propaganda, decentralisation initiatives in Africa have favoured influential local groups who capture most of the benefits.

Given such findings, the claim that decentralisation promotes grass-roots participation has faced critical scrutiny. The introduction of decentralisation policies is not seen as a guarantee that power will be transferred to the people,

nor does it necessarily mean increased people's participation (Fortmann, 1980; Smith, 1985). Rather it may mean that control has shifted from a national centre to a regional centre, which in its turn, spawns a new bureaucratic elite that more jealously guards their vested interests than their central predecessors (Mullen, 1985: 30). Slater (1989) has made a vigorous assault on Rondinelli and his colleagues and asks: '...are the private owners of large scale property, in both urban and rural areas expected to relinquish their privileges when presented with the call for more popular participation?' (Slater, 1989: 518). Mullard (1987: 148) has gone even further by arguing that decentralisation often 'creates new political elites with no forms of public accountability'. In his view, decentralisation may reduce democratic controls: the recent 'hiving-off' of government services to *ad hoc* bodies, voluntary organizations and private sector agencies representing a form of decentralisation that neither empowers the people nor promotes democracy. Local communities may have less control over the providers of such services than previously.

In contrast to the developmentalist argument that decentralisation leads to equitable development, political economic interpretations commonly view it as polarizing and 'a means for capitalist accumulation' (Smith, 1988; Rakodi, 1988; Slater, 1989). Decentralized government, it is argued, is not only elitist and inegalitarian, but reproduces some of the conditions required for the reproduction and entrenchment of pre-existing socio-economic inequality. Rakodi (1988) shows how decentralisation policies in Zambia have been used to facilitate private accumulation, support patronage networks and extend social control.

While normative theories tend to transform decentralisation into an 'absolute good' (Fesler, 1965), the political economy approaches find that it is 'not an absolute good in its own right' (Smith, 1985: 191). Those contributing to the latter approaches are of the opinion that the achievements of decentralisation, whether negative or positive, depend on the situation. Thus what emerges from their arguments is the importance of case-specific, location-specific and country-specific factors in determining the form and the outcomes of decentralisation policies. They also emphasize that decentralisation is a political process involving various socio-economic and political actors. Therefore, it should be seen as part of the process by which dominant classes, including those at the local level, articulate their interests through state policies and institutions (Smith, 1985: 25-26).

While the contribution of political economy approaches is now well recognized, they also have their limitations. Much of the work of the 1970s

and early 1980s was based on neo-Marxist development theory (e.g., Samoff, 1979) and reveals flaws in its conceptualization for which such theory is renowned (Booth, 1985). However, perhaps the greatest limitation of these approaches is that they are basically explanatory rather than prescriptive in nature. They point out the fundamental problems of the normative approaches, but normally fail to provide guidance about what alternative structures or policies should be pursued to achieve development goals.

Our review of the literature leads us to conclude that, at the very least, an understanding of the recent decentralisation policies in Bangladesh must conceptualize them as a part of wider political processes involving the relationships of different classes and their linkages with the state.

DECENTRALISATION IN BANGLADESH (1959-1991)

Since the early 1960s Bangladesh has witnessed four major decentralisation initiatives, all of which explicitly claimed to promote grass-roots participation in development. The military regime of General Ayub Khan was the first to introduce a decentralisation programme in the then East Pakistan. Known as the Basic Democracies System the programme made the Union Council and Thana Council the two most important units² of rural local government. Despite its lofty title, the move did not make any breakthrough in democratizing local administration. Though the Union Council was allowed to perform some important functions the other bodies had very little to do except coordinating the activities of lower bodies. Local bodies were not representative character. Bureaucratic domination at each and every level (with the possible exception of the union councils) made the idea of democracy absurd. The system was used to bolster the legitimacy of the regime by diffusing an image of democracy while nurturing a power base among the rural elite. It turned into a patronage mechanism through which a large amount of Rural Works Programme (RWP) money was channelled to the rural elite in return for their allegiance to the regime. These allocations were never properly audited or monitored and served as 'political bribery' (Haque, 1972) encouraging financial and administrative malpractice on a massive scale (Sobhan, 1968; Rashiduzzaman, 1968).

Sheikh Mujib's Awami League government took power following the country's independence in 1971 and embarked upon reorganizing local government at the district level. Under the District Governorship Scheme, existing sub-divisions were upgraded to districts each of which was to be headed by a district governor directly appointed by the President. Each district

was to have a District Administration Council (composed of members of the national party, the bureaucracy, chairmen of municipalities and members of armed forces including those of *Rakkhi Bahini*, a para-military force) to advise the governor on development programmes. The district governorship hardly represented a genuine form of decentralisation as it did not transfer any additional functions or authority at the district level. Before the reorganization programme could be put to work, Mujib was assassinated and his government was eventually replaced by a military government, which immediately abolished Mujib's scheme and returned to the pre-existing system of local administration.

Mujib's eventual successor, General Zia, introduced the *Swanirvary Gram Sarker* (self-reliant village government), a highly fragmented scheme, to each of the 68000 villages in the country. Headed by an elected *Gram Proddhan*, the *Gram Sarker* was composed of eleven members representing landed farmers, landless, artisans, women and youths and was assigned the responsibility for doubling food production, eradicating illiteracy, reducing population growth, invigorating cooperatives and maintaining law and order within the village (GOB, 1980). Despite the apparent recognition of the rural class structure and the formal provision of representation for disadvantaged socio-economic groups, *Gram Sarker* failed to become a forum through which rural poor could participate in local decisions. Most evaluations (e.g., Khuda, 1981; Franda, 1981) revealed that the *Gram Sarkers* were controlled and managed by a handful of persons from households belonging to the village elite. However, the *Gram Sarker* was short-lived as Zia was assassinated in May 1981.

Following a brief period of civilian rule, a military regime under the leadership of General H.M. Ershad came to power. Soon after his takeover, it introduced a new and innovative decentralization policy. 460 existing thanas were elevated to upazilas (sub-districts) giving them a democratic character and substantially increasing their power and authority. Responsibility for a large number of development activities³ including agriculture, rural industrialization, health and family planning activities was transferred to a new democratic institution, the Upazila Parishad (UZP). This transfer was backed by the devolution of financial authority in that UZP was authorized to mobilize their own resources through taxes, levies, fees and tools. The UZP was empowered to plan and implement development schemes without seeking approval from higher authorities. Headed by a popularly elected Upazila Chairman the UZP had a combination of representative and official members. While the representative members enjoyed voting power in the UZP, the official

members were divested of the voting right they had enjoyed in the previous system. The earlier preeminence of the government officials was further undermined by bringing them under local political control.⁴ By devolving the development planning, funds and authority to the locally elected councils, the upazila system was to usher in a new era of 'bottom-up' planning and participatory development within a democratic framework.

The Ershad regime propounded that the system would bring administration closer to the people and ensure their participation in the development process. The pre-existing administrative system was decried as remote, inefficient, non-representative and incapable of undertaking major development activities. In contrast, the upazila decentralization would activate local government into an agent of rural transformation. By strengthening local bodies and making them representative institutions, it provided opportunities for popular participation and greater accountability; by posting senior administrative and technical staff at the upazila level, it sought to improve management and technical capacity; by putting significant resources at the disposal of the UZP, it enabled the local body to plan and implement projects of local importance. The upazila system was presented to the Bangladesh public, bureaucrats, politicians and donors as the main device through which the problems facing the rural populace would be overcome. But how effective was the system in achieving these goals?

DECENTRALISATION IN PRACTICE : INTENDED GOALS AND REAL ACHIEVEMENTS

This section of the paper looks at the practice of the upazila and comments on its performance in terms of achievement of declared objectives. Based on empirical data collected from two upazilas in during 1991-1992 and those available in secondary sources it argues that much of the promises of decentralisation have remained unfulfilled.

Local Level Planning and People's Participation

The upazila system was intended to act as a mechanism for local level planning and enlarge the opportunities of the people at the grassroots to participate in or influence the formulation of development plans and projects. But available evidence indicates that the new system has not led to any significant improvement in this regard. The concept of 'local level planning' was almost irrelevant in the context of upazilas, as most upazilas did not prepare their five-year plans (Crook and Manor, 1994). Although upazila level projects were to 'bubble-up' from the grassroots with inputs from the

beneficiaries, this did not happen in practice. Project planning and decision making remained the prerogative of local elites and government officials. Participation of the poor majority was confined to the implementation phase of projects, mainly as hired labourers. Project committees constituted under the upazila, did not enable the poor to participate in the process as these bodies were invariably monopolized by local elites having close connections with UZP and UP chairmen (Siddiquee, 1994).

Other mechanisms of participation were far from effective. The electoral processes were found to be much less democratic than had been anticipated. Although more than 90 per cent of interviewees reported voting in the 1990 upazila elections, there was evidence of local elites influencing the voting behaviour of the poor. The moninant elites threatened economic sanctions on clients who did not support their preferred candidate. Alongside these 'subtle' practices, the direct use of violence (Bertocci, 1986; McCarthy, 1987) and physical intimidation at election times prevented many voters, particularly women, from exercising their democratic rights freely. These processes both blocked the political representation of the poor and undermined the democratic accountability of the incumbents of political office to the people at large.

The supposedly participatory structure of the local democratic institution, the UZP, was a myth. With the exception of the chairman there was no public representative in the UZP directly elected by the upazila population at large. Instead of widening the scope of democratic participation through direct elections of all its members, the upazila decentralisation, like the erstwhile thana system, made the UP chairmen within the upazila the ex-officio members of the UZP. This provision of 'double mandate' permitted them to monopolize the resources of patronage in rural local government and reduced the possibility for the rise of new leadership. Those who became chairmen and members of the UZP were not only unrepresentative of the vast majority of the rural population, but also remained unaccountable to them. An analysis of the socio-economic and political background of the chairmen and members shows that they were drawn from an elite stratum of the rural population (Rahman, 1986; Ahmad, 1986). Their position in terms of education, income and socio-political linkages, and their control over the means of rural livelihood made any idea of their accountability to the rest of the population absurd. Thus the participatory goals of decentralisation remained unattained. On the contrary, the euphoria of decentralisation has led to the discontinuation of the Gram Sarker, the only rural institution that had some potential to ensure the participation of the poor (Ahmad, 1988).

Local Resource Mobilization

There was a clear imbalance between what was expected of the UZP and its performance in local resource mobilization. While it was expected that by utilizing its own sources of revenues each upazila would gradually become self-reliant in financing its development activities, mobilization of revenues from local sources by upazilas has remained extremely poor. This has led to an almost total dependence of these bodies on central government grants for recurrent and development activities. An estimate of the eight years figures shows that the average collection was less than 6 per cent in case study upazilas. This means that the central government contributed a staggering 94 per cent of the annual budgets in these upazilas. This was more or less the case across the country (DANIA, 1988). The capacity of the upazila system to mobilize local resources was thus negligible and local tax-payer pressures for accountability minimal.

The poor record of the upazila in revenue generation and its precarious dependence on the central government for fund was due to the following reasons. First, the sources of revenue granted to the UZP were highly inadequate to generate sufficient revenues locally. Majority of the eight sources were only in name is that hardly any revenue could be and was generated from them. Secondly, even within its limited revenue base, the most important sources (lease or auction of local *hats* 'markets', bazaars, *jalmahals* 'fishponds' and ferries) did not produce expected revenues because of 'market failure' at the local level. Collusion and collaboration among bidders meant that the auction and lease prices remained artificially low. Thirdly, there was little or no incentive for mobilization of local resources. Local politicians were reluctant to tax themselves and their electorates for fear of losing popularity. Rather, they remained pre-occupied with obtaining and distributing resources from the government. In addition, the prevailing political and administrative culture mirrored in the high levels of corruption and irregularities has further undermined the tapping of local resources for developmental purposes.

Responsiveness in the Delivery of Public Services

Despite huge expansion of the governmental apparatus at the erstwhile thana level with corresponding increase in manpower and resource allocation, the upazila's performance in the delivery of services was anything but satisfactory. This was clearly evident in agriculture and health care—the two important sectors of rural life. The introduction of the upazila system was associated with a reduction⁵ in expenditure on agriculture by the central government, and that UZPs did not attempt to compensate for his decline by

allocating the maximum permissible amount for the sector (Hossain, 1988). While the central government allocation for agriculture declined rapidly, the budgetary allocation at the upazila level became highly skewed in favour of lumpy projects involving construction works. The main change was to shift resources from extension and farmer services into activities which were likely to provide members both short term and long-term dividends. The extension service has remained ineffective while the bulk of the inputs provided through the upazila were siphoned away by larger farmers (Siddiquee, 1993). The procedural and allocative mechanisms introduced at the upazila level and below are biased in favour of larger farmers and influential families. This situation has led an analyst to argue that the activities for agricultural development are better handled by national government than its local counterpart (Hossain, 1988). It is hard not to concur, despite the poor record that national government has in these fields!

Though initially there was a lot of satisfaction among the local people as the upazila system led to the creation of Upazila Health Complexes (UHCs) and health centres at the union level, the enthusiasm soon evaporated when these centres came into operation. Crippled with a host of problems these centres were incapable of providing better health services to the rural population. Petty corruption was commonplace in these health centres. The doctors posted at the thana and union level health centres were either absent from their stations or remained busy making private calls even during office hours. The quality of services provided at these centres was very poor and consequently very few people were satisfied with the services they received (Siddiquee, 1996a). The people's representatives in the UZP did not play any important role in pushing for better services from these centres and for ensuring that people get adequate services. This is nothing surprising as construction projects, not service delivery, were the priority of local councillors. Thus though decentralisation has created new health centres at the local level, the goals of improved health services in rural areas have remained largely unmet.

Heightened Conflicts and Problems of Coordination

Smooth functioning of the upazila and coordination between and among various agencies suffered serious setbacks under the decentralized system. Since the office bearers under the new system enjoyed more power, privilege and prestige, the upazila decentralisation did intensify conflicts and factional politics both at national and local levels. There was evidence across Bangladesh (including the upazilas we studied) of the increasing interest shown

by MPs in upazila affairs. This often created deadlocks in upazila development operations, especially when the UZP chairman and the local MP were from different political parties/factions. The upazila administration itself was honey-combed with tensions and conflicts between elected representatives, elected representatives and government officials and among the officials themselves (Siddiquee, 1994: 252-258). The relationship between the political head (Chairman) and the administrative head (UNO) of the upazila was particularly bad in most cases. A complex and messy game occurred between them in the early years of the reform as they vied for control of upazila finance and personnel. There were conflicts between the generalist UNO and between specialists in agriculture, health and other functional departments, between specialists in service provision and specialists in construction side. The numerous forms of conflict, tension and resentment ham-strung upazila activities and performance. This explains the acute coordination problems at the upazila level (Ahmad, 1991). Indeed, ensuring coordination among officials and departments was one of the difficult tasks of upazila administration. This was due mainly to the fact that the UZP had little control on deputed officials. Though some of these officials were made accountable to the parishad, it did not have the power to reward or reprimand on the basis of their job performance (Ahmad, 1986). Thus the officials' loyalty to the UZP was more apparent than real; their primary loyalty was towards central ministries. Such a limited nature of control on government officials has undermined the coordinating role of the UZP. This also explains in part upazilas' poor record in resource utilization. The average rate of resource utilization by UZPs during 1983-84 to 1989-90 was only 72 per cent (Planning Commission, 1990). This is staggering in a country where a shortage of resources is recognized as one of the main constraints on development, but even the limited resources available could not be utilized.

Decentralisation of Corruption and the Problems of Access

Although the decentralisation programme has brought government officers nearer to the people in spatial terms, this did not lead to any fundamental change in the distribution of power and influence with a corresponding improvement in access of the poor to various services. Rather decentralisation was associated with an increase in corruption and mismanagement at lower levels, which caused dissatisfaction among ordinary villagers. Indeed, one of the most serious criticisms against upazila system was that it had decentralized corruption at lower levels. Estimate shows that close to 40 per cent of the resources allocated for development purposes went elsewhere as a result of widespread corruption, leakage and mismanagement of

those involved locally. The local representatives and government officials worked in league and engaged in systematic corruption. Corruption at the upazila level assumed many forms and dimensions :

The Chairman and members of Sub-district Councils often quietly skimmed off percentages of budgetary provisions for development programmes before specific projects were decided upon. Greater amounts were, according to official books, allocated to projects than were actually spent. When the labourers engaged in construction were remunerated in kinds—usually provisions of wheat—chairman had to sign a delivery order issued by a food officer before the grain could be released. They frequently demanded bribes before agreeing to sign... (Crook and Manor, 1994: 88).

While evidence of patronage and corruption in the past was not uncommon, with substantial sums of central government money flowing through upazilas and the power given to the UZP, the opportunity for corruption increased manifold. The 'tender process' provides a good example of the types of processes that operated. Tenders create opportunities for local representatives and officials to favour selected candidates in return for 'kickbacks'. Although regulations did exist to reduce nepotism, such provisions were easily flouted. Considerable evidence was also found of the systematic use of violence and threats to discourage competition in the tendering process. In addition, pay-offs for construction tenders were by 1991 almost institutionalized, with at least 5 per cent of the total project cost going to those who administer the process. To make a profit under these circumstances, successful contractors use either inferior materials or complete projects with scant regard to technical specifications. As the officials in charge of verification and authentication can be bribed, contractors do not expect contract standards and specifications to be rigorously enforced. Such processes mean that the services provided to the public are relatively high cost and of low quality. Accountability mechanisms to identify these problems and tackle them remained largely ineffective.

Positive Aspects of Decentralisation

Although the upazila system has generally failed to live upto expectations, it had some positive impacts. The policy of allocating disproportionately for infrastructure projects, as noted earlier, has financed the construction of a sizeable amount of roads, bridges, culverts, drains, irrigation channels, dams and embankments and the physical infrastructure for social services like schools and health centres. In a country like Bangladesh where rural areas are characterized by very poor infrastructure facilities, the

importance of infrastructure in rural development should not be underestimated. However, the benefits to be derived from much of the UZP financed infrastructure have remained only potential (e.g., rural health centres without medicines and equipment) or have gone to higher income groups (e.g., irrigation channels). The impact of infrastructure development on the poor, in terms of 'displaced' services and increased inequality remain to be fully investigated. Thus any judgement about the benefits of the UZP supported rural infrastructure 'boom' of the 1980s must remain tentative. Nonetheless, rural Bangladesh is now blessed with a better network of communication infrastructure than before. This has helped promote trade, commerce and economic activities in rural hinterlands. Each upazila became a thriving business centre, benefiting both the rich and the poor, albeit disproportionately. Decentralisation has also raised people's awareness about the government and political parties (Akhter, 1990). The presence of government officials closer to rural people resulted in increased people-official interactions. Viewed from that sense people's participation has certainly increased as a result of decentralisation.

WHO GAINED WHAT?

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF DECENTRALISATION

It is now widely believed that the upazila programme was initiated and implemented by the Ershad regime as part of a strategy to consolidate its position and enhance the likelihood of its continuation in power. By decentralizing authority to the upazila level, it sought to win the support of rural elites, create a patron-client relationship with them, and thereby achieved its long term political goals: civilianization, legitimization and continuation in power. Given these pressures, the regime had to install a system which assured that those it was trying to attract could see they would gain more power and better access to public resources by aligning with the regime. Much of the rural elite recognized the new system as a vehicle for patronage, and by giving their support to the regime they took full advantage of the system. They competed for control of the new system, and those who won benefited enormously. This allowed them to use upazila resources for their individual and group interests through the processes described earlier. Indeed, the huge corruption, leakage, misuse and dissipation of upazila resources was intricately related to the interests of the Ershad regime and the established power holders in rural areas. As one well-informed observer comments :

...local elites are aided and abetted in their desire to loot the public till by the central elites, whose primary goal *vis-a-vis* the countryside is to

secure and hold onto the allegiance of their counterparts at local level. Thus while some at higher level (things are not monolithic there, after all) may well be genuinely motivated to promote meaningful development for the rural poor, the abiding interest of those on top is to help secure their own future by building patron-client linkages to village elites (Blair, 1989: 242).

It is not only those elites in official control of the upazila who benefited, many outside it also benefited directly and indirectly from the programme. By virtue of their socio-political linkages different elements of the rural elite benefited directly as contractors, suppliers; dealers, advocates, touts and brokers. They also benefited indirectly by shaping decisions about infrastructure facilities, roads, bridges, culverts, embankments and irrigation channels developed by the *parishad*. By contrast, the main benefit accruing to the rural poor was only a limited number of poorly paid labouring opportunities created as a by-product of the upazila system.

Although the overriding aim of those in control of state power was to attract rural elites, they could not afford to overlook the civil bureaucracy which has long been such a powerful force in the country (Khan and Zafarullah, 1982). The introduction of the new system, with a public representatives as its head exercising some control over government officials significantly undermined the position previously enjoyed by the field bureaucracy. Although in theory bureaucrats posted at the upazila level found their role had been reduced to an advisory one with no direct power or authority, in practice the interests of civil servants were accommodated by significantly expanding the bureaucratic apparatus at the upazila level, and by using the introduction of the upazila system to effect widespread promotions. Subsequent policy adjustments permitted bureaucrats to maintain their privileged position and a high degree of autonomy from local political control. They were also given important roles in resource allocation and utilization. Consequently, government officials benefited no less than the elite through their enhanced positions and through systematic involvement in corruption, often in collaboration with local representatives.

But the most direct beneficiary of the upazila system was the regime itself. The upazila programme yielded the regime political dividends for a period of more than eight years. Faced with increasing opposition from various organized groups ever since its take-over, the military government recognized the need to appear reformist and to create an impression that it was returning the country to democratic processes on a gradualist basis. At the same time, by

decentralizing power at the local level, and by placing increased resources at the discretion of the *parishad*, the government sought to covertly win the support of what Blair has termed the 'kulak class' for its incumbency and policies. The regime needed to capture such a class, at least in part, to neutralize the rural power-base of the mainstream opposition parties, and more importantly, to civilianize and legitimize its military government. The introduction of the upazila was the first step towards this direction. This was followed by the launching of a political party, *Jano Dal* (later renamed the *Jatiyo Party*)

The regime's use of the upazila system as a ground for political mobilization got its full expression when the first UZP elections were held in May 1985. Although the elections were officially held on a non-party basis, no sooner were they over than the regime claimed that the *Jano Dal* had won in 207 upazilas. The upazila system gave the regime a foothold in rural areas. The regime gained further through upazila elections when a total of 120 independents and opposition UZCs defected to the *Jano Dal* and became supporters, at least by acquiescence, of Ershad's policies and programmes. Thus the 1985 upazila elections enabled the regime to gain control of more than 70 per cent of the country's 460 upazilas. It responded by extending their tenure from three to five years and making them answerable directly to the President, thereby 'short-circuiting ministerial or parliamentary control' (Ahmed, 1987). In addition, they were accorded a status equivalent to a Deputy Secretary in the civil service or a Major in the army. All these acted as incentives to lure UZCs to align with the *Jatiyo Party*, which Ershad was building so that he could become the civilian authority. By doing so the regime created a new constituency, which lent vital support to it until the very last days of its rule. In the second upazila elections held in 1990 and keenly contested by almost all political parties, the government sponsored *Jatiyo Party* captured 197 upazilas. After the elections as in 1985, many more UZCs switched to the *Jatiyo Party*, although their number was never precisely known.

However, the greatest contribution of the upazila system to the Ershad regime was that it helped win two national elections,⁵ the parliamentary elections in May 1986 and the presidential elections in October 1986. These elections marked the end of the transition from military to civilian rule. By holding these elections, the regime was poised to prolong its authoritarian rule in a civilian guise. However, the decentralized upazila system could not keep the regime in power for an indefinite period. Although by coopting a large proportion of rural elites into the governmental patronage networks, it acted as

a 'safety valve' in absorbing or reducing anti-government tensions in rural areas for a number of years, there was no equivalent mechanism in urban areas. By 1990 the regime was trapped with a narrow support base amongst the politically powerful urban population. The anti-government movement gained such popularity that the regime did not dare to use force. The combined movement of students, intellectuals, the urban middle class and the major opposition parties forced the government to handover power to a caretaker government, putting an end to more than eight years' authoritarian rule. Ershad's inability to manipulate urban politics led to his downfall. His cynical use of decentralisation had been effective in rural areas and support for the *Jatiyo Party* only fell away as it became clear that his days were numbered and that the direct and indirect benefits of being pro-government wear about to evaporate.

DECENTRALISATION POLICY SINCE 1991 : BACK TO STARTING POINT

Following the downfall of General Ershad in 1990 through mass upsurge, Bangladesh saw a transition to democracy. Having received people's mandate in the parliamentary elections of 1991, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) under the stewardship of Khaleda Zia formed the government. One of the earliest decisions of the BNP government was to do away with the upazila through an executive order without caring to replace it with anything else. Later upazila was renamed as thana and the head of civil administration was authorized to take control of all affairs of the defunct UZP. The democratic decentralisation was thus replaced by a deconcentrated approach. The Local Government Structure Review Commission, appointed by the BNP government submitted its report in July 1992 recommending a two-tier system of local government: union parishad at the union level and *zila parishad* at the district level. But unfortunately, neither the report was made public nor anything was done to implement its recommendations. Despite much talk about decentralisation, the regime failed to demonstrate its sincerity and commitment in any meaningful way. The Thana Development Coordination Committee (TDCC) established after the abolition of the upazila, has proved to be a retrograde step in many respects. While the upazila was greatly flawed, it did not generate the levels of antipathy that have been generated by BNP's failed attempts to provide local government at the thana level.

In 1996 Bangladesh witnessed yet another change in the political arena. Having won the general elections held under the caretaker government, the Awami League, under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina, came to power. Soon it appointed a high powered Local Government Commission and assigned it the

responsibility to determine the framework for local government keeping in view the government's declared policy of accelerating decentralisation and participation. In its report recently submitted to the Prime Minister the Commission suggested a four-tier system of local government: *Zila Parishad*, *Upazila/Thana Parishad*, *Union Parishad* and *Gram Parishad* for *zila*, *thana*, union and village levels respectively. It has proposed direct election to local bodies at all tiers and envisaged a separate composition, powers and functions for sub-national bodies at each level. The government is now examining the report and reportedly planning to table a bill soon in the parliament. It is too early to say whether the Awami League government will make any breakthrough or follow its predecessor with regard to local governance. The fact that remains : the abolition of the upazila has taken the country back to square one.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS : THEORY AND THE PARADOX OF DECENTRALISATION IN BANGLADESH

The preceding pages have examined the recent experience of decentralisation in Bangladesh. What are the implications for this experience for the theories of decentralisation identified in a Section 2? The most obvious is that normative theory, in its various forms, has little practical value and contributes relatively little to understanding empirical experiences. In ideal mode!s devolved government may enhance the efficiency of service delivery, respond to local needs, improve accountability, promote popular participation and mobilize more resources. However, in the complex contexts of the third world such simple formulations take on an air of naive utopianism. Such utopianism may be deplorable for analytical purposes, but for those seeking to govern developing countries it has distinct attractions. Indeed, the reasons that the Ershad regime publicly proclaimed for the introduction of the upazila system, to drum up initial support, were in essence the arguments of the liberal democratic, developmentalist and normative management theorists. What 'went wrong' with these formulations?

In respect of the classical liberal democratic theory it is evident that the processes of accountability and responsiveness did not operate as hypothesized. Voting behaviour was not based on individual assessments of the merits of candidates, policies and parties, but was heavily influenced by the inegalitarian social structures of rural Bangladesh. It was further distorted at times by the use of violence and threats to deter elements of the electorate from voting. These factors meant that electoral processes could not fulfil their hypothesized accountability role.

Developmentalist writers add the processes of popular participation to the classical formula. Again, we find that in Bangladesh, such processes did not operate as postulated. The upazila decentralisation did not stimulate local level support for development initiatives, rather it was characterized by heightened factional in-fighting, and by the neglect of facilities once contracts were completed. Local resource mobilization throughout the programme was at derisory levels and the main resource orientation revealed in our fieldwork was towards 'how can more be got out of central government' rather than 'what can be raised locally'.

The normative theory of management scientists is equally problematic when applied to the Bangladesh case. The decentralisation policies changed many aspects of bureaucratic activity in rural Bangladesh, but there was no evidence that this was in the positive forms of greater commitment, satisfaction, motivation and productivity. On the other hand, the upazila administration remained '...a house divided against itself' (Khan, 1986: 24) leading to a severe coordination problem. The arguments of public choice theory were not utilized by the proponents of the upazila system nor do they appear to have much relevance in the Bangladesh context where information flows are highly constrained, competition imperfect (Crow, 1990) and mobility is tied to desperate household survival strategies rather than consumer choice.

Our conclusion from this discussion must be that those who seek to understand or to predict the workings of decentralisation initiatives in developing countries must concentrate on analytical frameworks drawn from political economy, in its less determinist variations. For Bangladesh an examination of the nature of the state, the country's political history and rural social structures (and how these elements inter-relate and have evolved) represent the essential building blocks for analysis. But does this finding mean that normative theory should be spurred? Perhaps paradoxically, we believe not.

Normative theories should remain of interest to students of decentralisation for two particular reasons. The first is because of the way in which these frameworks are used by national leaders, political parties, regimes and the aid agencies to legitimize new policies and reform initiatives. Centralizing regimes draw upon varying mixtures of these theories to justify their actions and an appreciation of this should inform empirical work. Second, and more important, is the role that such frameworks can play in influencing behaviour in the longer term. The constant presentation and re-presentation of ideas has impacts well beyond the short-term goals that their proponents may intend. Indeed, as Uphof (1992) has forcefully argued, the

articulation of hypothetical propositions partly determine the social norms that shape individual and group behaviour. Let us return to the Bangladesh case to illustrate this. We speculate on the basis of impressions gathered that by 1990 the normative constructs used to justify the upazila decentralisation were beginning to influence the behaviour of the poor rural majority in Bangladesh. We do not mean this in any radical sense (i.e., that they would demand control over the local and national state) but in an incremental sense (i.e., that growing numbers of poor rural people were aware of the gulf between the idea presented to them of decentralisation and the actual practices). Such a realization creates the potential for more effective involvements in formal politics. This is only a potential, however, and its capacity to influence behaviour will depend on context. Arguably, in Bangladesh in the late 1980s and 1990s the context was becoming increasingly supportive of an assertion of the interests of the rural poor at local and national levels. Globally, democratization or redemocratisation was the only political agenda; nationally, popular discontent with Ershad's authoritarian regime was reaching crisis point; and locally, the grassroots activities of NGOs were strengthening the horizontal linkages between poor people, contributing to the evolution of an alternative cadre of local leaders and providing poor people with evidence of the capacity of group action to achieve some of their goals. The decentralisation strategy's initial effectiveness in demobilizing civil society thus rebounded, as in the words of Crook and Manor (1994, p. 99), "...many groups became exasperated with the disappointed performance of elected councils.... This had the effect of crystallizing and mobilizing discontented interests and of undermining the government's legitimacy." The rhetoric of decentralisation in part generated a reaction from which civil society drew energy to force change.

These theoretical and empirical musings lead us in our conclusion to speculate on what may be the ultimate irony of decentralisation in Bangladesh. In 1982 the upazila system was introduced by the wrong people with the wrong motivations, in terms of the interests of the poor majority that populate the country's rural areas. However, the influence of the ideas it espoused, in a global and national context of decentralisation and increasing organizational capacity amongst the poor, meant that by the early 1990 the system had the potential to provide an institutional framework that might be gradually guided towards the needs of the poor majority. The rescinding of the system in 1991, and the return to a deconcentrated administration, has emasculated this potential. Today most analysts are of the opinion that despite all its problems

decentralized upazila could have become effective in the long run if it was allowed to exist and rectify.

In fact one of the problems of decentralisation in Bangladesh is lack of continuity and lack of consensus among the political elites on the role of local government, its shape and design. Thus decentralisation measures introduced so far have failed to command the support of successive regimes. Almost every political regime has scapegoated the pre-existing local government system and sought to replace it with its own brand of 'decentralisation.' Such frequent changes stunted and even thwarted the development of viable local government institutions. After five years of indecision and inaction of the BNP regime, decentralisation is again high on the agenda of the present government. The 'new' system as proposed by the Local Government Commission will, like its predecessors, no doubt promise the moon. Unfortunately, what Bangladesh needs however, is not the panacea of a 'new' system every 5 to 10 years, but an extended period with one system that may give its civil society an opportunity to understand and eventually gain some leverage over the local state.

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2. The two other tiers of administration under the Basic Democracies system were the District Council, and the Divisional Council.
3. Government activities were classified into two distinct categories: 'retained' and 'transferred'. The first category corresponds roughly to the regulatory subjects (e.g., police, magistracy and revenue collection) over which the government retained control. The second category corresponds mostly to development activities, the responsibility of which was passed on to UZPs. The government however, retained the responsibility of all major development activities of national and regional coverage.
4. The officials dealing with 'transferred' subjects were made accountable to the UZP with their services deputed to it.
5. Since the early years of Decentralisation the share of agriculture sector in the ADP was reduced to a little more than 6 per cent, almost half it received during the pre-upazila days. Such a dramatic reduction was due more to donor conditionalities under the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) than domestic policy preferences.
6. Though the referendum held in March 1985 allowed the regime to partially change its image, it was desperate to hold parliamentary and presidential elections in order to complete the process of civilianization. Pushing this process was not easy as in the face of strong resistance from the opposition political parties and coalitions, the government had to postpone parliamentary elections twice. After announcing fresh election dates, the government therefore, sought the UZCs' cooperation. The strong support of the UZCs in this regard helped the regime not only to hold the elections but also to win.

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Factors Affecting the Low Enrollment and Low Attendance in Primary Schools in Bangladesh : An Analysis of a Regional Situation

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INTRODUCTION

The 1990 World Conference on Education for All (EFA) in Thailand made an assessment of the recent situation of the primary education throughout the world and decided to expand basic education for all children everywhere in the world and guarantee all learning needs essential to life and society by the year 2000 (EFA 1992). Being a signatory to this summit declaration, Bangladesh is also now committed to attain these goals. And accordingly, the National Programme of Action for Education in Bangladesh proposed for the Universalization of Primary Education (UPE) by implementing the Compulsory primary education (CPE) throughout the country by the year 2000. Considering the importance of CPE and to fulfill the target for basic education, it has further introduced and started some important strategies for its programmes. Among them, some of the important strategies are: 1. Child Survey and Enrollment;¹ 2. Assessment of Drop-out and repetition, 3. Cluster and Sub-cluster training for the teachers,² 4. Introducing Social Mobilization Meetings for the community people.³ The main rationale for introducing these programmes is to ensure the total quality management of the CPE programme. Consequently, there has been a considerable progress in the enrollment of students in many schools of the country. But what is however disappointing is

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that although there has been a sharp increase in the enrollment, far fewer of these enrolled students however, finally complete their primary education. Moreover, it has been observed that the situation of enrollment and attendance is also not the same in all parts of the country. An evidence of the UNICEF (UNICEF 1987) has identified three important problems for primary education in the country. These are: (a) Firstly, the enrollment figure is higher than the actual attendance in the schools; (b) Secondly, a very big number of students actually remain absent from their classes; (c) And finally many students in the primary schools in Bangladesh repeat their grades. This is evident when the UNICEF in Chittagong Division learned from their field experiences that some of the primary schools of Sylhet Region have been performing extremely below the expectation. It is predicted that the enrollment and attendance in these schools is very low and therefore they are having a tremendous impact on the CPE of the country. Realizing this situation, the UNICEF in Chittagong Division in recent time has identified 14 thanas⁴ of three districts of Sylhet, Habibganj and Sunamganj to assess their position and to find out the real issues underlying such low performances in the enrollment and attendance in these study schools. And to achieve the decade goal, it is very much essential to identify the real causes of such low enrollment and attendance in these localities. Assuming this situation, this research explores the situation of compulsory primary education and its problems in fourteen thanas of three districts of Sylhet Division. The research also identifies the causes of low performances in these schools and accordingly suggest some remedies which the policy planners may find useful for their future planning.

STUDY AREA, METHODOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION AND DATA SOURCES

As indicated, this research has been conducted in 42 schools of low performing thanas of Sylhet, Habibganj and Sunamganj districts. From methodological point of view, we have selected three different schools from each of the 14 thanas and they are purposively chosen from the remote areas of the thana headquarters. A list of the study thanas is given below in Table 1. The selection of the study schools is done randomly from a list provided by the Deputy Director of Primary Education in Chittagong strategically to know the situation of primary education in Sylhet Region. From that point of view, this research is a kind of exploratory study at an intensive level of field investigation.

TABLE I

A List of the Low Performing Study Thanas of Sylhet, Habibganj and Sunamganj Districts

| Districts | Study Thanas |
|---------------|--------------------|
| (a) Sylhet | (i) Jaintapur |
| | (ii) Companyganj |
| | (iii) Gowainghat |
| | (iv) Kanaighat |
| (b) Habibganj | (i) Ajmiriganj |
| | (ii) Lakhai |
| | (iii) Nabiganj |
| | (iv) Baniachong |
| (c) Sunamganj | (i) Bishwambharpur |
| | (ii) Dharamapasha |
| | (iii) Durabazar |
| | (iv) Jamalganj |
| | (v) Sullah |
| | (vi) Tahirpur |

Among the three types of schools which have been included in the study, one is a government primary school, one is a registered private primary school and the other one, is a religious school titled as *ebtedaye madrasha*. The basic objectives of the primary education in these schools is to make students proficient in the basic knowledge. This stage is essential for those who can never go beyond their primary level and at the same time it is also essential for those who prepare them for the next higher level of education. The government primary schools are directly controlled and supervised by the Department of Primary Education of the Government of Bangladesh. Besides the government primary schools, there are also many registered and non-registered primary schools which play a significant role in the education system at the beginner's level. A large part of the management activities of these non-government schools are managed by a governing body which usually includes the locally reputed persons having interest and capabilities of mobilizing funds for the smooth running of these schools. These private schools usually follow a similar curriculum of the government primary schools. In addition to that, there are also some recognized private and government *madrashas* named as *ebtedaye madrasha*.

The *ebtedaye madrashas* are now recognized by the government and a *Madrasha* Education Board in the country controls its education system directly. They also have a similar stage of five years schooling level known as *Alim*. From methodological point of view, this research is a kind of comprehensive one as it is included three different categories of primary schooling system of the country and thus it provided data on diversities and qualities of education in these institutions. And as far as we know, no other study has so far dealt with this issue from such differential level of data (Karim 1995).

The research is principally based on survey. The parents, teachers, local level people, supervisory officials of the primary schools and the students of the study schools of the above mentioned thanas have been interviewed extensively to receive responses relating to the low performing situation of the schools. To supplement the data ascertained through interviews, we have also incorporated the qualitative and observational data which seem relevant for the research. Group interviews and unstructured interviews have also been done for this purpose.

THE SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF THE STUDY SCHOOLS AND THE PATTERN OF ENROLLMENT

This section provides the socio-demographic information of the study schools and assess the enrollment pattern of the students, their attendance situation and the retention rate in higher grades. Data have also been provided on teachers' educational background as it often affects the enrollment and attendance.

The Pattern of Educational Enrollment

The primary schools have now the provision to keep records of the total number of school-aged children of their respective catchment areas. We have procured these information from the school records. But it may be noted here that the government primary schools and registered primary schools usually conduct such survey and keep records of the students of their respective catchment areas but *ebtedayi madrashas* do not keep such records as such a kind of survey is not a binding on them.

The total number of surveyed 6+ aged children in the government and registered schools has been shown in Table 2. Data indicate that the total number of 6+ aged children in the 28 government and registered primary schools of Sylhet, Habibganj and Sunamganj is 2970. And among them, 1620 (54.55%) are boys and the remaining 1350 (45.45%) are girls. Table 2 also

gives us an idea about the trends in educational enrollment of the 6+ aged children of the 28 government and primary schools. It is evident from the Table 2 that out of a total 2970 surveyed 6+ aged children in 28 study schools of Sylhet, Habiganj and Sunamganj have enrolled in grade I in 1995. And among them, 1242 (76.67%) are boys and the remaining 989 (72.26%) are girls. However, the over-all pattern of total enrollment in all classes (i.e., grade I to V) of the 42 study schools has been shown in Table 3. It is evident from this Table that a total of 4039 students have so far enrolled in grade I in 1995 and among them, 2172 (54.27%) are boys and the remaining 1847 (45.73%) are girls.

As compared to other areas in Bangladesh (Karim 1993), the enrollment situation in the study schools shows a quite discouraging trend in this region of Sylhet, Habiganj and Sunamganj. The evidence indicate that a total of 75.12 per cent 6+ aged surveyed children of this region have enrolled in grade I (Table 2). But it is figured out that even for fewer of them however, can continue or complete their primary education. The statistics indicate that a total of 11,246 students have so far enrolled in grades I to V of the 42 study schools. And among these enrolled students, 4039 (35.91%) students enrolled in grade I, 2522(22.43%) in grade II, 2065 (18.36%) in grade III, 1462

TABLE 2

Distribution of the Surveyed 6+ Age Children in the School Catchment Area and their Pattern of Enrollment

| District | Number of 6+ Age Children in School Catchment Areas | | | Enrolled 6+ Aged Children From the School Catchment Areas | | |
|------------------|---|-------|-------|---|-------|-------|
| | Total | Boys | Girls | Total | Boys | Girls |
| | Sylhet | 1029 | 543 | 486 | 748 | 413 |
| Habiganj | 839 | 477 | 361 | 600 | 344 | 256 |
| Sunamganj | 1103 | 600 | 503 | 883 | 485 | 398 |
| Total | 2971 | 1620 | 1350 | 2231 | 1242 | 989 |
| Total Percentage | | 54.55 | 45.45 | 75.12 | 76.67 | 73.26 |

(13%) in grade IV and the remaining 1158 (10.30%) students enrolled in grade V. These data clearly document a decreasing rate of enrollment in the succeeding higher grades. This trend of enrollment is vertically downward from grade I to grade V. From an analysis of the above data, it can

immediately be observed that a fewer proportion of students in primary schools actually continue or/and complete their education. This is, however, quite disappointing.

Attendance Situation of the Students

The pattern of attendance in the 42 study schools of Sylhet, Habibganj and Sunamganj has been shown in Table 3. In this Table, the attendance for all grades from I to V has been shown and here the attendance has been calculated by making an average of the present students in April 1995. It is evident from Table 3 that the attendance rate for all the study schools in grade I is 67.47 per cent. And for grade V, it is 67.96 per cent. The district-wise trend of attendance also shows a similar pattern as it is evident in Table 3 below. The district-wise attendance indicates that the students remaining present in grade I for 12 study schools in Sylhet is 68.54 per cent and for grade V, it is 70.67 per cent. The attendance show a similar trend in the study schools of Habibganj. The attendance rate for grade I in Habibganj is 71.26 per cent and for grade V, it is 71.35 per cent. The attendance of 18 study schools of Sunamganj indicate that 64.81 per cent students remained present in grade I and in grade V, the attendance is 63.58 per cent.

TABLE 3
The Enrolled Students in all Classes and
their Variation in Enrollment

| Grade | Total Students Enrolled | | Districtwise Total Enrollment | | | | | |
|-------|-------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | | | Sylhet | | Habibganj | | Sunamganj | |
| | Students | Variation | Students | Variation | Students | Variation | Students | Variation |
| I | 3339 | — | 1157 | — | 995 | — | 1187 | — |
| II | 2522 | 37.56% | 638 | 44.86% | 832 | 16.38% | 1052 | 44.25% |
| III | 2065 | 18.12% | 608 | 4.70% | 665 | 20.07% | 792 | 24.21% |
| IV | 1462 | 29.20% | 455 | 25.16% | 403 | 39.40% | 604 | 23.74% |
| V | 1558 | 20.79% | 341 | 25.05% | 342 | 15.14% | 475 | 21.36% |

It is suspected that the attendance of the students often is overstated in the school registers and for that reason, we have also taken attendance of the students on the day of the survey. This was done by counting the number of students present in the class on the day of the survey. It is evident from our data that 739 (63.87%) students remained present in class I on the day of the

survey in 12 study schools of Sylhet. And the number of students present in grade V for these schools, was 255 (74.78%). Similarly, in the 12 study schools of Habibganj, a total of 690 (69.35%) students remained present in grade I while the number of students remained present in class V in these schools, was 254 (74.27%). A total of 813 (43.08%) students remained present in grade I on the day of the survey in the 18 study schools of Sunamganj. And in the same number of schools of Sunamganj, the number of students present in grade V was 269 (56.63%) on the day of the survey.

The attendance statistics (April, 1995) provided by the schools of Sylhet and Habibganj seem to be quite consistent with the data that have been obtained by counting the number of students remaining present on the day of the survey in June 1995. But in regard to Sunamganj, a significant variation is observed regarding the attendance of students on the day of the survey with the statistics provided by the schools. This is perhaps because of the reason that while we conducted the survey in May and June 1995, the communication of Sunamganj was disrupted totally by the severe flood in that district which prevented the students from coming to schools as shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4
Attendance of the Students,
on the Day of the Survey (June 1995)

| District | Grade I | Grade II | Grade III | Grade IV | Grade V |
|------------------|---------|----------|-----------|----------|---------|
| Sylhet | 739 | 426 | 452 | 336 | 255 |
| Habibganj | 690 | 578 | 449 | 309 | 254 |
| Sunamganj | 813 | 495 | 392 | 304 | 269 |
| Total | 2242 | 1499 | 1293 | 949 | 778 |
| Total Percentage | (55.51) | (59.44) | (62.62) | (64.91) | (67.18) |

As it has been observed the enrollment rate of students decreased considerably in the succeeding higher grades. But the attendance data however, do not reflect such pattern for the higher grade students. By contrast, it has been observed that the attendance in higher grade rather, improves slightly. A successive increase of attendance is clearly visible with the passing of higher grades as in Tables 3 and 4. This is perhaps because the students in higher grades start realizing the importance of education at that time. Also they are the students who retained their positions in higher grades after dropping out in

several classes. A differential rate of attendance of the students has also been shown in different categories of schools. Among the three categories of schools, the government primary schools in all the districts of Sylhet, Habibganj and Sunamganj themselves retained their position at the top of the hierarchy followed by registered primary schools. The students' attendance in *ebtedaye madrasa* remained at the bottom of the hierarchy as detailed in Table 5. We learned from our interviews that the *madrasa* administration is very strict and employs much effort to increase the attendance but in spite of that, they failed to increase the attendance in their institutions. Thus, it seems that the students are now becoming very reluctant to their *madrasa* education. Another interesting finding is that the attendance of the girls is significantly higher in all the three types of schools. This finding is also similar to what I (Karim 1993) have found in my research in the northern part of the country.

Teachers' Educational Background and Training

The educational background of the teachers may have a very positive impact on the enrollment and attendance of the students in schools. It is usually believed that the teachers exert greater and lasting influence on the parents and children than any other persons in the society. Data on teachers' educational background and training indicate that a great majority of the teachers of 42 study schools, i.e., 123 (59.89%) have at least passed their S.S.C. examination. And among the remaining teachers, 23 (13.07%) have passed their H.S.C. examination and 30 (17.05%) of them even obtained their Bachelor's degree. It may be noted here that the minimum qualification of a teacher in the primary school is S.S.C. So, it is logically reflected from our data that all the teachers of the primary schools have attained their required minimum qualification to be eligible in their service.

Regarding extra and in-service training however, it has been found that only 10 (21.74%) teachers of Sylhet, 22 (43.14%) of Habibganj and 23 (29.11%) of Sunamganj had their in-service training. This is quite disappointing. It is always understandable that a trained teacher will be able to teach the students better than the non-trained teachers.

Teacher's Use of Yearly Lesson Plan and their Use of Teaching Manual

To improve the quality of education, the primary school teachers have been instructed to use a yearly lesson plan and the teaching manual provided by the Department of Primary Education. The introduction of such plans indicate that the teaching in the class is no longer haphazard, it is very specific.

TABLE 5

Attendance Situation in Government Primary School, Registered Primary School and Ebtedayi Madrassha, June 1995

| District/ Categories of School | Grade - I | | | Grade - II | | | Grade - III | | | Grade - IV | | | Grade - V | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|-------|-------|------------|-------|-------|-------------|-------|-------|------------|-------|-------|-----------|-------|-------|
| | Total | Boys | Girls | Total | Boys | Girls | Total | Boys | Girls | Total | Boys | Girls | Total | Boys | Girls |
| SYLHET | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Govt. Primary School | 271 | 133 | 138 | 172 | 89 | 83 | 237 | 126 | 111 | 142 | 84 | 58 | 116 | 51 | 65 |
| | 59.96 | 55.42 | 65.09 | 64.18 | 63.57 | 64.84 | 82.29 | 79.25 | 86.05 | 75.94 | 80.77 | 69.88 | 81.89 | 82.26 | 81.15 |
| Regd. Primary School | 333 | 160 | 173 | 168 | 103 | 65 | 130 | 72 | 58 | 116 | 56 | 60 | 69 | 43 | 26 |
| | 65.29 | 60.84 | 70.04 | 73.68 | 78.63 | 67.01 | 69.15 | 66.67 | 72.50 | 74.84 | 72.73 | 76.92 | 69.70 | 72.88 | 65.00 |
| Ebtedayi Madrassha | 135 | 95 | 40 | 86 | 70 | 16 | 85 | 71 | 14 | 78 | 66 | 12 | 70 | 54 | 16 |
| | 69.23 | 71.43 | 64.52 | 60.56 | 61.40 | 57.14 | 64.39 | 65.98 | 53.85 | 69.03 | 71.74 | 57.14 | 70.00 | 70.13 | 69.57 |
| HABIBGANJ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Govt. Primary School | 303 | 114 | 189 | 279 | 137 | 142 | 261 | 117 | 144 | 164 | 70 | 94 | 141 | 59 | 82 |
| | 71.29 | 61.96 | 78.42 | 65.49 | 64.62 | 66.36 | 69.23 | 62.57 | 75.79 | 82.41 | 81.40 | 83.19 | 80.57 | 77.63 | 82.83 |
| Regd. Primary School | 251 | 130 | 121 | 182 | 93 | 89 | 111 | 52 | 59 | 59 | 28 | 31 | 35 | 20 | 15 |
| | 74.93 | 74.29 | 75.63 | 78.11 | 78.15 | 78.07 | 65.68 | 64.20 | 67.05 | 65.29 | 71.79 | 62.00 | 66.04 | 71.43 | 60.00 |
| Ebtedayi Madrassha | 136 | 92 | 44 | 117 | 79 | 38 | 77 | 53 | 24 | 86 | 65 | 21 | 78 | 63 | 15 |
| | 57.87 | 60.93 | 52.38 | 67.63 | 65.95 | 69.09 | 64.71 | 67.09 | 60.00 | 74.78 | 81.25 | 60.00 | 60.42 | 70.00 | 62.50 |
| SUNAMGANJ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Govt. Primary School | 367 | 198 | 169 | 276 | 147 | 129 | 253 | 141 | 112 | 198 | 117 | 81 | 186 | 93 | 93 |
| | 49.45 | 49.50 | 49.42 | 55.76 | 56.98 | 54.43 | 56.85 | 61.30 | 52.09 | 55.93 | 58.21 | 52.94 | 62.63 | 64.14 | 61.18 |
| Regd. Primary School | 237 | 148 | 89 | 105 | 65 | 40 | 66 | 45 | 21 | 52 | 34 | 18 | 28 | 18 | 10 |
| | 44.72 | 43.27 | 47.34 | 38.04 | 42.76 | 32.26 | 39.52 | 46.39 | 30.00 | 42.98 | 51.52 | 32.73 | 45.90 | 54.55 | 35.71 |
| Ebtedayi Madrassha | 209 | 108 | 101 | 114 | 67 | 47 | 73 | 46 | 27 | 54 | 28 | 26 | 55 | 39 | 16 |
| | 33.98 | 35.53 | 32.48 | 40.57 | 44.67 | 35.88 | 40.56 | 50.55 | 30.34 | 41.86 | 37.33 | 48.15 | 47.01 | 55.71 | 34.04 |
| SYLHET, HABIBGANJ, SUNAMGANJ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Govt. Primary School | 941 | 445 | 496 | 727 | 373 | 354 | 751 | 384 | 367 | 504 | 271 | 233 | 443 | 203 | 240 |
| | 58.12 | 54.00 | 62.39 | 61.14 | 61.15 | 61.14 | 67.66 | 66.67 | 68.73 | 68.11 | 69.31 | 66.76 | 71.15 | 71.73 | 72.51 |
| Regd. Primary School | 821 | 438 | 383 | 455 | 261 | 194 | 307 | 169 | 138 | 227 | 118 | 109 | 132 | 81 | 51 |
| | 59.71 | 56.15 | 64.37 | 61.74 | 64.93 | 57.91 | 58.59 | 59.09 | 57.98 | 61.19 | 64.84 | 59.56 | 61.97 | 67.50 | 54.84 |
| Ebtedayi Madrassha | 480 | 295 | 185 | 317 | 216 | 101 | 235 | 170 | 65 | 218 | 159 | 59 | 203 | 156 | 47 |
| | 45.93 | 50.17 | 40.48 | 53.19 | 56.54 | 47.20 | 54.52 | 61.59 | 41.94 | 61.06 | 64.37 | 53.64 | 61.33 | 65.82 | 50.11 |

Note: Decimal figures indicate percentages.

To know the use of their everyday lesson plan, we asked the teachers very informally to demonstrate their lesson plan on the day of our visit. From our data, it is learned that out of a total of 176 teachers in Sylhet, Habibganj and Sunamganj, only 63 (35.80%) have been found to use their yearly lesson plan. Similarly, in regard to the use of teaching manual, the situation is even further discouraging. Out of a total of 176 teachers, only 46 (26.14%) have been found to follow their teaching manual. There is every logic to believe that such a situation must have a negative impact on the enrollment and attendance situation of the students in these study schools.

School Timing, Instructional Days and Instructional Hours

The school timing, instructional days and instructional hours often have very vital effect on the enrollment and attendance of students. And for that reason, we sought the opinion of the parents and students regarding the present school timing, instructional days and instructional hours. The primary schools in our rural areas during the summer begin their classes at 7.00 in the morning and in the pourashaha area they usually start at 10.00 o'clock in the morning. Excepting three months of hot summer, the majority of the schools in the rural areas usually hold their classes at 10.00 o'clock in the morning. By asking the parents and students of the school catchment areas, we wanted to know their feeling about school timing. An overwhelming majority of the parents (93%) and students (80%) replied that they like the existing school timing. Their liking signifies that a great majority of their parents utilize the economic potential of their children in confronting with the hardship of their daily survival. The students at the stage of III to V are capable of helping their parents in this regard. The classes being scheduled at 12.00 o'clock allow the poor and needy parents who could utilize their children's labour while they work in the morning. Islam (1995) also observed the similar trends while he focussed on the survival strategies of the poor families in rural Bangladesh.

TABLE 6
The Use of Yearly Lesson Plan and the
Use of Teacher's Manual

| Name of District | Total Number of Teachers | The Teachers Who Follow YLP* | The Teacher Who Followed the TM** |
|------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Sylhet | 46 | 17 (36.96) | 13 (28.26) |
| Habibganj | 51 | 18 (35.29) | 14 (27.45) |
| Sunamganj | 79 | 28 (35.44) | 19 (24.05) |
| Total | 176 | 63 (35.80) | 46 (26.14) |

* The concept of Yearly Lesson Plan has been abbreviated to YLP.

** Similarly, TM is an abbreviated word for Teacher's Manual.

THE IDENTIFIED REASONS OF LOW ENROLLMENT AND LOW ATTENDANCE IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

One of the biggest problems of primary education in the country is perhaps, the low enrollment and low attendance of students in schools. The enrollment and attendance of students may be affected by many factors and accordingly in this section, we have identified some of these factors which are responsible for low enrollment and low attendance. And with this purpose, a number of persons who are directly responsible for the successful implementation of the CPE at the field level have been interviewed quite extensively.

The TEOs (Thana Education Officers) and the ATEOs (Assistant Thana Education Officers) are the most important persons who supervise the schools very closely at the field level. So, it is quite likely that their identification of field level problems of the CPE should be very important and relevant. In our interview, we sought the views of TEOs and ATEOs regarding low enrollment and low attendance. Most⁵ of the TEOs and ATEOs mentioned that the rural people are so poor that it often becomes difficult for them to bear their children's educational expenses. Hence, instead of sending their children to schools, the economically insolvent parents prefer their children to earn subsistence for their families. Mass illiteracy and parental apathy towards education have also been identified as another important reason for low enrollment.

The school teachers are regarded as the most knowledgeable persons who can visualize the problems of primary education very well at the field level. A total of 84 teachers were interviewed to know in details the reasons for low enrollment and low attendance. And likewise the TEOs and ATEOs, an overwhelming majority of the teachers identified poor economic condition of the villagers as an important reason for low enrollment and low attendance. They also mentioned that the parents and guardians are illiterate and they are not fully aware of the importance of education.

Besides these, the teachers also feel that the deplorable condition of the school building shortage of furniture and inadequacy of recreational facilities are hindering the education in many schools. Most of the schools have shortage of teaching aids. Due to absence of playgrounds, many students are denied of recreation. In many schools, scarcity of pure drinking water persists due to non-availability of requisite number of tubewells. The teachers urge that these problems should be solved immediately to increase enrollment and attendance.

The parents specially the mothers can play an effective role in motivating their children to go to schools. As noted in the preceding section, we have interviewed two parents of school attending children and two parents of non school attending children and they were asked to predict the reasons for low enrollment. Most of the parents of non-attending children replied that they failed to enroll their children to schools only because of economic hardship. In the peak agricultural season, the parents are not willing to send their children to schools as at that time they have to utilize their children's labour for farming activities. On the other hand, the parents of school attending children replied that many schools are damaged by floods and storms and are not repaired for long which cause a negative impact on attendance. The parents also told us that the communication problem is another important issue which has a tremendous impact on attendance.

The SMC (School Management Committee)⁶ and MMC (*Madrasha* Management Committee)⁷ are the important management organizations which play a significant role in supervising the enrollment and attendance for the CPE. As members of the SMCs and MMCs, a total of 84 persons were interviewed to find out the reasons for low enrollment of school-aged children and low attendance of the enrolled students at primary level. From their replies, there emerged some important points regarding this issue. Most of the respondents admitted that the parents are not aware of their children's education. They however feel that the situation could be improved if the parents are mobilized properly. Since many poor people can not afford to send their children to schools, the SMC and MMC people therefore suggest that the poverty in the rural areas should be eradicated.

Like the SMCs and MMCs, the Ward Committee members also exert a great influence in structuring the CPE activities in the community. They were also asked to identify the reasons as to why the enrollment and attendance is so low in the primary schools in their localities. They said that the parents are mostly illiterate and for that reason, they do not realize the importance of education. The Ward members further told us that from geographical point of view, Sylhet is a land of *hoars* and *baors* which remain inundated throughout the year. The disrupted communication system specially in the rainy season therefore discourages the children in attending schools.

CONCLUSION

This research on 42 strategically selected primary schools from 14 low performing thanas of Sylhet Division has been conducted to identify the reasons of low enrollment and low attendance of children in schools in this

region of Bangladesh. Three types of schools, i.e., government primary schools, registered primary schools and the *ebtedayi madrasa* have been included in the study to observe the pattern of enrollment and attendance. The pattern of total enrollment in all classes (i.e., I to V) of the 42 study schools indicate that a total of 4039 students have so far enrolled in grade I in 1995 and among them, 2172 (54.27%) are boys and the remaining 1847 (45.74%) are girls. Although there has been an apparent increase in the number of enrollment for the students in grade I but, there is a clear tendency of such enrollment to decrease in the succeeding higher grades. Moreover, as compared to other regions of the country (Karim, 1993), the enrollment trend of this low performing thanas is however, exceedingly low.

The problem of educational wastage resulting from students drop-out is also a serious problem in Sylhet. According to our evidence, a total of 4039 students of the 42 study schools of Sylhet, Habibganj and Sunamganj districts have so far enrolled in grade I and among them, only 1158 (28.67%) students somehow, could retain their schooling in grade V. As compared to other regions, the retention rate in this region is extremely low. This is quite unfavourable and disappointing for the CPE. However, there may be several reasons for such low enrollment and low attendance rate in these study schools of Sylhet, Habibganj and Sunamganj. From analysis of our data, it is clear that parental apathy and poor economic condition of the family are the two important factors that contribute much to the low enrollment and low attendance. It is reported that the parents are less motivated to send their children to schools and many of them even can not afford to bear the educational expenses for their kids. Thus, instead of sending their children to schools, the economically insolvent parents often prefer them to work for their subsistence. This has been confirmed when we ascertained the reasons by interviewing the parents and children (Karim, 1995; UNICEF 1987).

As we know that to improve the quality of education, the primary school teachers have now been instructed to use the 'Yearly Lesson Plan' and the Teaching Manual. But it is very much disappointing to know that out of a total 176 teachers in Sylhet, Habibgang and Sunamganj, only 63 (35.80%) have been found to use Yearly Lesson Plan. Similarly, in regard to the Teaching Manual, the situation is even much poorer. Out of a total 176 teachers, only 46 (26.14%) have so far used the Teaching Manual. There is, therefore, every reason to believe that such a situation must have a tremendous negative impact on the enrollment and attendance of the students in these study schools on these low performing thanas. How can educational planners solve this problem? They can solve this problem by strengthening the supervision of the

schools and by inspiring the teachers to follow these plans. They can organize workshops and seminars for the school teachers to provide them training and motivation in this regard.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the above discussion, the following recommendations may be suggested for future planning :

1. The poor economic condition of the parents and guardians is an important factor which is responsible for the low enrollment and low attendance. The parents and guardians are often reluctant to send their children to schools as they prefer to employ them in earning subsistence for the family. In this regard, poor students may be provided with financial support from the schools to meet their educational expenses and at the same time, the poor families may also be provided with a target-oriented loan to eradicate poverty.
2. In Bangladesh most of the children from the poor families are employed to work in various menial works as their labour is cheaper than others. The government therefore, should formulate laws and enforce them very strictly to restrict the child labour. It is expected that the enrollment rate may increase if such steps are strictly enforced.
3. Lack of awareness of the parents and guardians has been identified as another important cause for low enrollment and low attendance. It is essential to motivate the parents towards primary education. And we suggest that social mobilization meetings and mothers' rallies may be organized frequently to improve the situation in this regard. The local community people may be encouraged to participate in these programmes enthusiastically as it is understandable that the community social mobilization programmes can never be successful without their active participation.
4. The deplorable condition of the school buildings, insufficient furniture, absence of recreational facilities are the important problems of primary education. It is therefore suggested that the government should take proper steps for physical infrastructural development of the schools and provide them with required facilities. It is expected that the enrollment rate will certainly increase with the improvement of facilities.

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1. The primary schools now keep records of the total number of school going students in the respective school catchment areas. With this purpose, all the government primary schools now procure these statistics by conducting a door to door survey. As this type of survey is not a binding on the private schools, they often do not keep such records.
2. A cluster and a sub-cluster training is a recent innovative system where a group of teachers are given necessary training and instruction regarding their use of Yearly Lesson Plan and the use of Teachers' Manual. The ATEOs from the Education Department are entrusted with this responsibility of cluster training. This is held in each and every school rotatively.
3. The concept of social mobilization is evolved out of UNICEF'S in community participation through involvement of the target groups (UNICEF 1977; Mckee 1992). Realizing the importance of social mobilization, the Department of Primary Education in collaboration with the UNICEF has introduced certain programmes to motivate the community people towards primary education. Among them, the Mother's Rally, Social Mobilization Meetings and the Courtyard Meetings have shown tremendous impact on the CPE.
4. A thana is an administrative unit of the local government organization in Bangladesh. A Thana Nirbahi Officer is entrusted with the responsibility to run the administration within a thana jurisdiction. A Thana Education Officer (TEO) and some Assistant Thana Education Officers (ATEOs) from the Department of Primary Education supervise the over-all progress of the CPE at the school level within a thana.
5. If the responses for any question is at least 80 per cent, the words 'Most', 'Almost all', 'An overwhelming majority' are used. The words 'a great majority', 'many of them' are used to indicate for the responses of more than 70 per cent. When we use the words 'a great number' 'a good responses', it indicate that the replies for this question is 60 per cent. If the responses are less than 40 per cent, we use the words, 'some of them' and 'some of the respondents'.
6. The SMC has formally been introduced in the country in 1991 for better maintenance of the primary schools at the community level. They are also intended to play an active role in mobilizing the local people and help maintaining the schools properly. The SMC for each school is composed of 11 Members which includes one Chairman.
7. Like SMC, the *Madrasha* Education System also formed a committee known as *Madrasha* Management Committee which supervises all the management activities of each of the *madrashas* in the country. It is usually comprised of the local influentials who can mobilize the local people for primary education.

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Textile Industry in Pakistan

Dr. FARHAT GULZAR

Abstract

Pakistan is the largest exporter of cotton yarn in the world. Fabrics of Pakistan range from coarse to super fine varieties. Abundant quantities of locally grown cotton and cheap manpower have helped Pakistan hold out a strong position in the international market. The share of blended yarn has almost doubled while that of fine and super-fine yarn varieties have shown a sharp decline. There is a growing need felt for automation and product development in both sectors for bringing about important in this sector. However, there has been a remarkable progress of the power loom sector due to market forces and governmental policies. The main driving force in textile development is now the shuttleless looms. Improvements in dyeing and finishing processes are also contributing considerably for an extension in textile exports.

INTRODUCTION

Pakistan is known world wide as a cotton producing agricultural country. Its cotton production has increased from a million bales in 1971-72 to almost 12.5 million bales in 1992. Being the largest exporter of cotton yarn in the world, it supplies 23.3 per cent of global exports and 10 per cent of world trade in cotton cloth.¹ Garments and other textiles constitute 1 per cent of the total world requirements. At present, the textile industry is composed of a large scale organized sector. The organized sector is essentially the spinning sector, including small number of composite units. The downstream industry (weaving, finishing, knitting, garment and others), is largely in the area that could be described as unorganized sector.

Pakistan is known for fabrics ranging from coarse to super-fine varieties, over 80 per cent of the yarn spun ranges from coarse to medium count. While

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coarse and medium varieties are mostly exported, fine and super-fine varieties are locally consumed by textile and ancillary industry. Recently, the consumption pattern has changed and it has shifted from pure cotton to blended fabric-polyester/cotton, polyester/viscose as the new product is more durable and even cheaper in prices. There is a gradual increase in the share of blended, dyed and printed cloth. Pakistan's cloth export has increased as far as linen, curtain, bed ware and other items are concerned.

It may be noticed that there has been a gradual improvements in the quality of raw cotton produced in the country. Pakistani short and medium staple cotton is reckoned as of high quality. This position could be put to better use through improvement in ginning technology.

The availability of abundant quantities of locally grown cotton and cheap manpower has given Pakistan a competitive edge over others. Pakistan is the cheapest producer of spinning material with a cost differential of 28 per cent with respect to South Korea and of about 25 per cent compared with India in 1990. It is the comparative cost advantage that has enabled Pakistan to a comfortable position, in competition with the countries which are in this field.

Holding a strong position at the lower end of the international market, Pakistan lost grounds during 1970's to South East Asian countries—Koreas textile exports each dollar 17 billion against Pakistan's 2.5 billion dollars annually. Pakistan is now a market leader in cotton yarn along with cotton cloth (where the country's world market share had gone up since 1989, as is shown in Table 1.

TABLE I
Pakistan in the World of Textile

| Items | Position in the World | World Market Share Percentage |
|---|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Cotton Yarn Product (1989) | 5th | 3.66 |
| Cotton Yarn Export (1989) | 1st | 22.3 |
| Cotton Cloth Production (1989) | 5th | 4.07 |
| Cotton Cloth Export (1989) | 3rd | 8.47 |
| Cotton Textile Exports (Madeups) (1986) | 15th | 2.05 |
| Garments (1986) | 26th | 0.62 |

Source : *Cotton World Statistics*.

Both cotton yarn and cotton cloth may be considered as export oriented commodities. Pakistan has increased its share of world cotton production from 8.75 per cent in 1986-87 to 8.63 per cent in 1991-92.² Pakistan is the world's fifth leading producer of cotton. Its position comes after China, the CIS,³ United States and India. In terms of yield per hectore, Pakistan has almost caught up with America but ranks 15th in the world with its per hectore production at 612 Kgs.⁴

Domestic consumption of the raw cotton has been rising — annually about 75 per cent of production is locally consumed and raw cotton exports have fluctuated widely. Pakistan's share of world raw cotton exports in 1990-91 was less than 15 per cent. It was lower than that of United States, Australia and Muslim Central Asia Republics.⁵ Pakistan's textile industry has registered a reversal of trend, especially in the weaving capacity of a mill sector in which the installed capacity looms shrink from 24000 in 1983-84 to 15000 in 1991-92, and the number of working looms was reported to be only 8000. The organized sector, thus, made an all out attempt towards cotton spinning and strived to develop and modernize the weaving sector. Therefore Pakistan's share in the world market of woven goods have increased considerably.

For a viable strategy to make further progress certain steps are essential which are required to be taken :

1. Protect Pakistan's comparative advantage at the lower end of the market.
2. Improve the quality of yarn exports. Some success has been achieved and medium count yarn now accounts for about 60 per cent of Pakistan's total export.⁶
3. The world market for yarn is unlikely to expand rapidly for technological reasons and the income elasticity of demand of especially the lower and medium yarn counts is likely to increase. There is however, always the possibility that the deal may be struck with an Eastern Asian country — China, Japan, South Korea or even Malaysia — for specializing in woven products for the provision of medium and high count yarn from Pakistan. Improvement in woven knitted items for domestic and foreign markets pre-supposes manufacture of higher count yarn.

Textile is likely to remain an important export industry for Pakistan. Pakistan's industry is not at present capable of posing a serious challenge to the market leaders. It is, therefore, essential to correct the structural weakness of the textile sector before any major breakthrough can be expected in the world fabrics and apparel markets.

STRUCTURAL CHANGE IN THE TEXTILE SECTOR

Textile is a declining industry in Pakistan, in structural terms. The weaving apparel sector's share in creating employment has steadily declined, 50.8 per cent in 1976-77 to 39.1 per cent in 1988-89. Though this may be an unrealistic estimate as the textile sector is one of the largest employers of contract and casual labour. UNIDO estimates also show that the production has grown gradual downward trend in the textile sector during 1976-77 to 1988-89. In terms of labour productivity growth during 1977-78 to 1988-89 textile ranked 23rd and weaving apparel 15th out of the total of 28.⁸ It is, therefore, not surprising to note that relatively small number of well established firms (who have been thus encouraged to set up new units) have shown more profits whereas many other textile units have made poor performance. It is now generally observed that the Textile is not only a declining industry in Pakistan but a declining industry worldwide. Restructuring of the textile⁹ industry, therefore, requires so that increase in yarn and fabrics products would enable Pakistan to build its position in the world.

The textile industry contains some of the most successful firms in the country. There are a very large number of silk units also. Production of cotton yarn increased from 448 million kgs. in 1982-83 to over 718 million kgs. in 1990-91. Production of cotton cloth (mill sector) decreased from 335 million square metres in 1982-83 to about 222 million square metres in 1990-91. As Table 2 shows there has been very little change in the composition of yarn production.

The share of the coarse and medium varieties stood at about 80 per cent throughout 1986-87 to 1990-91 period (Table 2). The share of blended yarn, however, almost doubled while that of fine and super-fine yarn varieties fell from 7.3 per cent in 1986-87 to only 2.4 per cent in 1990-91. On the other

hand the production of fine blends of cloth by mill sector declined while that of coarse cloth increased.

TABLE 2
Composition of Yarn Production

(Million Kgs.)

| Item | 1985-87 | % | 1987-88 | % | 1988-89 | % | 1989-90 | % | 1990-91 | % | 1991-92 | % |
|-------------------|---------|-------|---------|-------|---------|-------|---------|-------|---------|-------|---------|-------|
| Coarse | 22405 | 38.29 | 249730 | 36.45 | 275302 | 35.87 | 351262 | 37.96 | 310283 | 39.76 | 220837 | 37.99 |
| Median | 262280 | 44.73 | 311559 | 45.48 | 349000 | 45.48 | 412149 | 44.54 | 328576 | 42.05 | 249560 | 42.80 |
| Fine | 29225 | 4.98 | 29272 | 4.27 | 14943 | 1.95 | 16310 | 1.76 | 12257 | 1.57 | 15273 | 2.6 |
| Super-Fine | 13600 | 2.32 | 17088 | 2.49 | 11172 | 1.45 | 7739 | 0.84 | 6281 | 0.80 | 3030 | 0.80 |
| Mixed and Wool | 9606 | 1.64 | 10189 | 1.49 | 13364 | 1.74 | 14210 | 1.54 | 11655 | 1.49 | 8499 | 1.40 |
| Blended | 47155 | 8.04 | 67203 | 9.81 | 103663 | 13.51 | 123712 | 13.37 | 117711 | 15.08 | 82963 | 14.25 |
| Total | 586371 | | 685031 | | 767434 | | 925382 | | 780363 | | 582182 | |

Source : APTMA Chairman's Review 1991-92, p-18.

The pattern in non-mill sector (especially the power loom sub-sector) is unlikely to be very different though medium varieties of cloth have an increasing share in their production.⁹ It is clear that without an improvement in the quality of yarn production, quality improvements in cloth production are unsustainable, although yarn imports have risen in recent years. Given Pakistan's comparative cost advantages there seems to exist no ground for preferring this indirect method to improvements in fabric quality. Improving the quality of domestic yarn production should be an important policy priority.

The non-mill (i.e., SME) sector dominates fabric production as well as the wearing apparel sub-sector. Some indication of the relative importance of the apparel sector may be obtained from export figures. Table 3 shows that non yarn and non fabric export increased their share in total textile exports from 23.08 per cent in 1978-79 to 41.8 per cent in 1990-91. Export earnings from the export of canvas, knitwear, woven garments, towels and other madeups increased from about \$125 million to over \$10 billion during this period.

Further growth is restricted by the existence of severe quota restriction, fierce competition in world markets and low productivity of the domestic industry.

The Pakistan textile industry continues to be organized on weak foundations technologically. The industry is suffering from serious imbalances. There are inherent weaknesses in all sub-sectors—spinning, weaving, garments and others. There is a growing need for automation in all sectors with a view to improve the quality so that it is in a position to stand in a good competition with the rest of the world.

TABLE 3
Exports of Cotton and Cotton Textile Manufactures
(Million US\$)

| Description | 1978-89 | 1982-83 | 1987-88 | 1989-90 | 1990-91 | 1991-92 July-Dec. |
|-----------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------------------|
| Raw Cotton | 66.19 | 306.34 | 609.97 | 442.99 | 411.30 | — |
| Cotton Waste | 1.48 | 6.43 | 9.23 | 27.77 | — | — |
| Cotton Yarn | 197.60 | 247.32 | 541.02 | 833.71 | 1171.65 | 476.38 |
| Cotton Thread | 5.82 | 12.77 | 3.80 | 3.04 | 3.39 | 1.53 |
| Cotton Fabric | 215.68 | 281.37 | 485.40 | 558.96 | 667.50 | — |
| Tents/Canvas and Products | 27.70 | 93.84 | 30.33 | 28.77 | 31.54 | 29.95 |
| Knitwear | 12.31 | 36.47 | 134.34 | 237.72 | 320.31 | — |
| Woven Garments | 38.04 | 122.70 | 349.76 | 494.03 | — | — |
| Cotton Cloth Bags | 11.24 | 17.90 | 12.34 | 13.38 | 20.51 | 10.99 |
| Other Made Ups | 13.30 | 87.04 | 200.93 | 269.93 | 349.78 | 53.07 |
| Towels | 21.18 | 39.13 | 117.44 | 129.82 | 128.88 | 72.94 |
| Grand Total : | 610.54 | 1251.31 | 2494.56 | 3039.22 | 3575.00 | 644.86 |
| Percentage share in exports | 35.71% | 46.21% | 56.00% | 61.34% | 50.78% | 21.35% |
| Total Exports : | 1709.60 | 2707.68 | 4457.56 | 4954.27 | 6114.00 | 3020.86 |

Source : Textile Commissioner's Office, *APTMA Chairman's Review 1991-92*, p. 24.

The finishing units (with a few notable exceptions) have not been able to rise to the occasion and have not equipped themselves for better output. For

instance good quality grey cloth is not made available to the printing finishing units by the weaving sector. The lack of diversified product development by the weaving sector has also adversely the finishing sector which has been hampered to do what it should.

The loom sector has survived due to favourable government policy as well as market forces. This sector is producing comparatively less costly stuff. But it handicapped because it employs technology of low quality and also faces shortage of finances. These factors tell heavily on its out put.

The main driving force in textile development is the shuttleless looms which is fast emerging as an independent weaving sector. Although initial investment cost is higher in textile industry but the production costs are lower and cloth quality is much better. To maintain competitiveness, Pakistan must increase its capacity of shuttleless looms. By doing so, Pakistan could catch up with the world and its industry in this sector could flourish once again.

The very low value addition in the yarn sector is due to the fact that over 80 per cent of the yarn spun in the country ranges from coarse to medium count. Additional foreign exchange earned from the export of yarn in the 30's range is about 50 per cent greater than foreign exchange earned by the export of the 20's count yarn.¹⁰ Similarly, value addition can be increased by moving to the production of high density fabrics — in particular, denim for which Pakistan's short staple cotton is very suitable. The greater use of shuttleless looms which has been made since 1989 should facilitate such a move. Improvements in dyeing and finishing processes can also contribute to the expansion in the share of high value added textile export.

Modernization and technological upgrading is a central pre-requisite for improving the quality of Pakistan's textile production. As Table 4 shows almost 50 per cent of the spindle age capacity is more than 20 years old. The major proportion of looms in use are of local production, often without stop motion. The trade policy of 1988-89, wherein the emphasis was on placing a ban on liberalizing textile machinery imports. These have increased from Rs. 1.5 billion in 1985-86 to over Rs.3 billion in 1990-91, but this is an indirect system to increasing the import content of Pakistan's textile exports. Investment must be earmarked for increasing the domestic ability to improvise and adapt technology and domestically manufactured good quality textile machinery.

TABLE 4

Age of Textile Machinery in use in Pakistan (1991)

| Age Range | Total Spindles Installed | Total Rotors Installed | Age Range |
|--------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| | Percentage | Percentage | |
| Less than 10 years | 29 | 52 | Less than 6 years |
| 11 to 20 years | 28 | 27.5 | 7-12 years |
| 21-30 years | 18 | 20.5 | 13-20 years |
| Above 30 years | 29 | | |

Source : *Ministry of Industries*.

While utilization rates are clearly satisfactory as far as spindles and rotors are concerned, almost half the looms in the country are lying idle. Moreover, since over 47 per cent of the installed spindles is more than 20 years old, their productivity and quality is less than what is desired.

There are thus strong grounds for exercising caution in adding capacity to the textile sector but there are even stronger grounds for encouraging investment restructuring and modernization and for providing resources for the revival of sick units within this sector.

CONCLUSION

Important findings that appear from this study are that spinning units are more remunerative than weaving units and they benefit a great deal for the very low domestic raw cotton prices. It should not be forgotten that cloth is the basic need industry and that Pakistan's per capita cloth consumption ratio is among the lowest in the world. UNIDO estimates show that in 1986 per capita consumption of total fibres was an average 4.25 kgs. per person LDC's — as against 2.4 kgs. in Pakistan per person. In developed countries this figure was about 19 kgs. per person per year. Even per capita consumption of cotton fibres was double that of Pakistan (3.1 kgs. against 1.5 kgs.),¹¹ in the developing world.

For the development of textile industries in Pakistan the measures listed below should be considered and adopted :

1. On basic needs ground it is necessary to encourage the expansion of cheap cloth. Much of this type of demand can be met by the revival and revitalization of looms based units.
2. Cheap woolen and blended cloth also is an important necessity of the poor and the middle low classes and units which can demonstrate an ability to reduce unit cost over time should be encouraged.
3. In the loom sector there exists considerable under-utilization of capacity. Investment must therefore be focused on revival and restructuring rather than on the creation of new capacity. A closer relationship between the mill sector and the units power looms and hand looms is desirable.
4. Reduce the cost of production of the lowest yarn so that the relative price of coarse and medium cloth is reduced and per capita consumption of cloth is increased.
5. The spinning sector has export potential that can be enhanced if better quality of yarn and thread is produced. Exploitation of this potential requires development of bilateral investment and trade relationships with small number of East and South East Asian Countries such as Japan, North and South Korea, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and perhaps China. It is not inconceivable that the Japanese and the Korean textile multinationals look to Pakistan as source production.

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Savings Income Relationship in two SAARC Countries Bangladesh and Pakistan : Co- Integration Regression Modeling

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and

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Abstract

In this piece of research work we have studied the behaviour of savings measured in terms of Gross National Savings (GNS) and that of income measured in terms of Gross National Product (GNP) of two selected low income countries of the world according to the definition of the world report 1992. The selected countries from low income group are Bangladesh and Pakistan. Our study includes the pattern of savings rates and the relationship between the year to year change in income with that of savings ratios. Further models are developed for the savings-income relationship based on co-integrating regression and error correction mechanism called Engle-Granger two-stage (EGTS) approach and Hendry-type general to specific (GS) approach. For Bangladesh the per capita savings adjust to its long run growth path very slowly following the disturbances but for Pakistan per-capita savings adjusts to its long run growth path moderately following the disturbances.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Keynesian revolution led to the development of modern income and employment theory and its basic building blocks — The consumption function, the saving function and the investment schedule. These functions describe that movements along the consumption and saving functions are caused by changes in disposable income, all other things that influence consumption and saving remaining same. Changes in one or more of the other things will cause shifts in the consumption and saving functions. If saving is a stable function of income, then so is consumption, which is by far the largest component of aggregate demand. Changes in the savings ratio have important implications for both output and employment. A government wishing to

regulate aggregate demand must forecast the savings ratio in order to set its expenditure, taxes and interest rates at levels compatible with the level of aggregate demand it seeks.

Thus study of savings behaviour plays a very important role in the study of economic phenomenon. With this end in view savings behaviour and the savings income relationship have been studied for Bangladesh and Pakistan.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

Our empirical work is based on time series data on savings and income for 22 years from 1971 to 1992 obtained from the well known publication 'World Table' of different years including 1994. This table is published by the Socio-Economic Data Division of the World Bank's International Economics Department. We know that empirical work based on time series data assumes that the underlying time series is stationary. Further it is very important to find out if the relation between economic variables is true or spurious. So before modeling savings income relationship we check for stationarity of the two series and then test for spuriousness of their relationship.

A popular past method of attempting to overcome the problem of spurious correlation has been to estimate relationships between the rates of change of variables rather than between their absolute levels. The effect of looking at the rate of change in a variable is typically to remove any trend element. That is many non-stationary economic time series become stationary when they are first-differenced. Unfortunately when attention is concentrated between rates of change, there is a real danger that valuable information on the long run relationship between the levels of variables will be lost. Further the disturbance term of the first differences equation will be autocorrelated.

To get rid of the above problem we apply the method of co-integration. Two-time series are said to be co-integrated of order d, b denoted by $CI(d, b)$ if:

1. They are both integrated of order d , i.e., differenced d times before the series become stationary.
2. But there exists some linear combination of them that is integrated of order $b < d$.

Co-integrated is the statistical implication of the existence of a long-run relationship between economic variables. That is if two series are co-integrated, the regression on the levels of two variables is meaningful (i.e. not

spurious); and we do not lose any valuable long term information, which would result if we were to use their first differences instead.

Testing for co-integrated will be done by the Co-integrating Regression Durbin-Watson (CRDW) test. In CRDW test we use the Durbin-Watson d value obtained from the co-integrating regression with the null hypothesis $d = 0$ rather than the standard $d = 2$. Engle and Granger conclude that the critical values to test the hypothesis that the true $d = 0$ are 0.511, 0.386 and 0.322 at 1%, 5% and 10% level of significance respectively. Our co-integrated models are described below (1.2.1) and (1.2.2).

The first estimating model is based on the Keynesian absolute income hypothesis, where it is postulated that saving is a function of income which we write in the per-capita term as :

$$(1.2.1) \quad CS_t = \alpha + \beta CY_t + u_t$$

Where, $CS_t =$ Per-Capita Savings at time t .

$CY_t =$ Per-Capita Income at time t .

When two variables are co-integrated, it shows there is long run equilibrium relationship between the variables. Of course, in the short run there may be disequilibrium. The Error Correction Mechanism (ECM) corrects for disequilibrium. The error correcting model between saving and income can be written as :

$$(1.2.2) \quad \Delta S_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \Delta Y_t + \beta_2 \hat{U}_{t-1} + \epsilon_t$$

where Δ denotes the first difference; U_{t-1} is the one period lagged value of the residuals for 1.2.1, the empirical estimate of the equilibrium error term and ϵ_t is the error term with usual properties. Thus ECM makes sound sense since it implies that the lower (higher) is savings compared with its equilibrium value relative to income the greater (smaller) will be the immediate rise in savings. The value of savings is being corrected for the previous disequilibrium error. Hence the term error correcting model. In the above model ΔY_t captures the short-run disturbances in income whereas the co-efficient to error correction term $\hat{U}_{t-1} \beta_2$ captures the adjustment towards the long run equilibrium. If β_2 is statistically significant, it tells what proportion of the equilibrium in savings in one period (year) is corrected in the next period.

In another approach to find a final preferred model we adopt the Hendry type general to specific methodology. From the outset, starting with a general short-run model and testing down to a suitably parsimonious final model. Both long-run and short-run elasticities are estimated together in this approach.

Since we are dealing with annual data we adopt a general model with upto just second order lags before starting our simplification search, that is, we start with the following general model :

$$(1.2.3) \quad \begin{aligned} CS_t = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 CY_t + \beta_2 CY_{t-1} + \beta_3 CY_{t-2} \\ & + \beta_4 CS_{t-1} + \beta_5 CS_{t-2} + U_t \end{aligned}$$

But if the variables CS_t and CY_t are found to be co-integrated then short run relationship can be estimated in ECM form by adopting Hendry-type general to specific (GS) methodology. Further since we are dealing with annual data we adopt a general model involving upto two-year lags only, that is, a model of the type:

$$(1.2.4) \quad \begin{aligned} \Delta CS_t = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 \Delta CS_{t-1} + \beta_2 CS_{t-2} + \beta_3 \Delta CY_t \\ & + \beta_4 \Delta CY_{t-1} + \beta_5 CY_{t-2} + U_t \end{aligned}$$

Using the selection criteria for regression models we shall finally obtain our preferred model between saving and income.

Finally to check for the stability of the parameters of the final model we apply Chow-test (Gujarati, 1995), using the following test statistic.

$$(1.2.5) \quad F = \left[\frac{\epsilon e_p^2 - (\epsilon e_1^2 + \epsilon e_2^2)}{\epsilon e_1^2 + \epsilon e_2^2} \right] \left[\frac{n_1 + n_2 - 2K}{K} \right] F_{(k, n_1 + n_2 - 2k)}$$

where, ϵe_p^2 , ϵe_1^2 , ϵe_2^2 are square of residuals from model estimated using full sample, first sub-period sample and second sub-period sample respectively. p_1 and p_2 are the number of observations in the first sub-period and second sub-period respectively, k is the number of regressors in the equation.

1.3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1.3.1 Bangladesh

For Bangladesh the national savings in real price goes up from 13.78 billions of Bangladeshi Taka in 1971 to Tk. 65.45 billions in 1992, thus representing 4.75 times increase over a period of 22 years. But the real aggregate income increased from 316.22 billions in 1971 to 650.05 billions in 1992, that is, increased approximately two times during the same period.

Model Building :

To perform empirical work with the two series CY_t and CS_t first we check for their stationarity by statistical tests, that is, Dickey Fuller (DF) test. Now to perform DF test for the time series CY_t we calculate t (=Tau) statistic based on the following estimated regression.

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta CY_t &= -160864.65 + 83.34T - .938 C_{t-1} \\ t &= (-4.74)^* \quad (4.78)^* \quad (-4.78)^* \\ (1.3.1.1) \quad R^2 &= 0.583 \quad dw = 2.08 \quad (OA) = 12.58^* \end{aligned}$$

Since the computed value of the Tau (t) statistic is -4.783 which in absolute term is greater than its critical value at 5 per cent level of significance (-3.60), we conclude that the per-capita income series of Bangladesh is stationary.

Similarly to perform DF test for the time series data on per-capita savings (CS_t) following regression equation was estimated :

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta CS_t &= -52497.45 + 26.65 T - 1.44 CS_{t-1} \\ t &= (-5.17)^* \quad (5.18)^* \quad (-6.80)^* \\ (1.3.1.2) \quad R^2 &= 0.726 \quad dw = 2.08 \quad (OA) F = 23.79^* \end{aligned}$$

From the estimated equation we see that the computed value of Tau statistic is -6.80 which also in absolute term exceeds the critical value at 5 per cent level of significance. Hence we conclude that the CS_t series is stationary.

Since both CY_t and CS_t are stationary, we like to test whether the two series follow stochastic or deterministic trend by comparing the F values of the above two regressions with the critical value 7.24 at 5 per cent level of significance as computed by Dickey and Fuller (DF). As the F-values for the above regressions exceeds the DF critical value hence we conclude that CS_t and CY_t series follow deterministic trend.

Since with a deterministic trend, variables can be made stationary by including a time trend in any regression, we regress CS_t on CY_t including a time trend in the regression equation. The estimated equation gives the following results :

$$\begin{aligned} CS_t &= -23223.74 + 11.65 T - 0.078 CY_t \\ t &= (-1.58) \quad (1.53) \quad (0.94) \\ (1.3.1.3) \quad R^2 &= 0.497 \quad dw = 2.79 \quad (OA) F = 9.45^* \end{aligned}$$

As $R^2 < d$ according to Granger and Newbold we do not suspect that the estimated regression suffers from spurious regression. Further the long run

MPS is about 7.8 per cent obtained from the model 1.3.1.3. This suggests the per-capita savings adjusts to its long run growth path very slowly following a disturbance.

Further to find the impact of short-run changes with the long-run behaviours a regression is run with the first differences of CS_t and CY_t and one period lagged value of the residuals from the above savings income function (1.3.1.3). The estimated regression equation is :

$$\Delta \hat{CS}_t = 2.63 + 0.101 \Delta CY_t - 1.49 \hat{U}_{t-1}$$

$$t = (.109) \quad (1.69)^* \quad (6.95)^*$$

$$(1.3.1.4) \quad R^2 = 0.729 \quad F = 24.29^* \quad dw = 1.90 (0A)$$

From the above estimated equation we see that the coefficient of ΔCY_t is significant at 10 per cent level and the coefficient of lagged random error is highly significant.

Including the higher order lagged differences of CY_t and CS_t we get :

$$\Delta \hat{CS}_t = -20.51 + 0.098 \Delta CY_t + 0.178 \Delta CY_{t-1} - 1.41 \Delta CS_{t-1} - 1.55 \hat{U}_{t-2}$$

$$t = (0.764) \quad (1.23) \quad (1.91) \quad (-5.66)^* \quad (-3.67)^*$$

$$(1.3.1.5) \quad R^2 = 0.735 \quad F = 10.4^* \quad dw = 1.58 (0A)$$

There is no problem of autocorrelation and overall regression is highly significant. But it is to be noted that the examination of 't-ratio' shows highly insignificant coefficient of ΔCY_t and the coefficient of ΔCY_{t-1} is significant at 7 per cent level. Further model 1.3.1.4 contains only three variables and model 1.3.1.5 has five variables. This model 1.3.1.4 is more parsimonious equation. Hence we accept the model 1.3.1.4 as our preferred model obtained by Engle-Granger Two Steps (EGTS) procedure. We, therefore, conclude that short-run changes of income in Bangladesh has no impact on its savings pattern and cent per cent discrepancy between the actual and the long-run value of savings is corrected each year. This happened due to low long-run MPS and heavy dependency of Bangladesh economy on foreign aid. To compute the value of Chow statistic for the preferred EGTS model we divided our sample into two sub-periods and used the sum of squares of residuals from two estimated models. The value obtained from Chow statistic is 0.831 where as the critical value of F is 3.29 with (3,15) degrees of freedom at 5 per cent level of significance. Hence we accept the stability of parameters of the preferred EGTS model 1.3.1.4.

Now we shall adopt the Hendry-type general to specific (GS) methodology from the outset, starting with a general short-run model and testing down to a suitably parsimonious final model. But since our co-integrated analysis suggests that a long-run relationship exists, we will be able to express the short-run relationship in ECM form. Further as we are dealing with annual data we adopt a general model involving up to two period lags only. However, such a model can be represented into a second-order ECM. We shall, therefore, estimate our general model in ECM form. This yields :

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta \hat{CS}_t = & -1106.5 + .101 \Delta CY_t + 190 \Delta CY_{t-1} + 321 CY_{t-2} - 1.40 \Delta CS_{t-1} - 1.25 \Delta CS_{t-2} \\ t = & (3.18)^* (1.25) (1.98) (3.52)^* (-5.52)^* (-3.55)^* \\ (1.3.1.6) \quad R^2 = & 0.746 \quad F = 8.22^* \quad dw = 1.72 (0A) \end{aligned}$$

From the above estimates we observe that there is no problem of autocorrelation and the value of R^2 is satisfactory with overall regression highly significant. But examination of the 't-ratios' shows that only the coefficient of ΔCY_t is insignificant and that of ΔCY_{t-1} variable is significant at 10 per cent level. However before we start omitting the variables from the above equation we note that a special case of the general second order ECM is a first order ECM of the type $\Delta CS_t = b_0 + b_1 \Delta CY_t + b_2 CS_{t-1} + U_t$. Now estimation of such a model yields :

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta CS_t = & 954.06 + 0.209 \Delta CY_t + 0.278 CY_{t-1} - 1.45 CS_{t-1} \\ t = & (-3.34)^* (2.76)^* (4.03)^* (-5.77)^* \\ (1.3.1.7) \quad R^2 = & 0.664 \quad F = 11.18^* \quad dw = 2.00 (0A) \end{aligned}$$

The value of F statistic shows that overall regression is highly significant and there is no autocorrelation. Further all the coefficients are highly significant. Hence it is our preferred model obtained by Hendry-type GS method. The Chow statistic gives value 2.47, whereas with (4,13) degrees of freedom the critical value of F is 3.29. Thus we may accept the stability of parameters of the preferred GS model

We now have two preferred models for the savings income relationship of Bangladesh. Equation 1.3.1.4 is based on Engle Granger Two Stage (EGTS) procedure and equation 1.3.1.7 is based on Hendry-type GS approach. They are non-nested equations. So we shall not attempt to choose between them. However the two equations are in fact not at all dissimilar. More importantly EGTS and GS approaches lead to the equations with very similar lag structures, long-run effects being fully felt after just one year.

1.3.2 Pakistan

For Pakistan the real GNP at 1987 price goes up from 232.79 billions in 1971 to 787.86 billions of Pakistani Rupee in 1992, that is, there is 3.38 times increase in income during 22-year period. Whereas the national savings goes up from 21.29 billions to 196.24 billions with the increase of 9.22 times during the same period. Thus increase in savings is 2.73 times larger than increase in income for the economy of Pakistan during the 22-year period.

Model Building :

To test for non-stationarity of the time series data of per-capita income (CY_t) and per-capita savings (CS) of the period 1971 to 1992 we apply the Dickey-Fuller (DF) test. For per-capita income series a regression is run in the following form :

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta CY_t &= -81080.63 + 41.49T - 0.215 CY_{t-1} \\ t &= (-2.87)^* \quad (2.86)^* \quad (-2.14)^{**} \\ (1.3.2.1) \quad R^2 &= 0.503 \quad dw = 2.39 (OA) \end{aligned}$$

For our purpose the critical value of Tau (t) can be compared with the t (=Tau) value of the estimated regression coefficient of CY_{t-1} . The critical value of t at 5 per cent level of significance is -360. Hence the computed value -2.14 is not statistically significant which thus suggests that CY_t time series is non-stationary.

Now we test for stationarity of the first differences of CY_t . To do this we plotted the first differences, from which it is clear that the first differences are approximately stationary. To test the statistical significance of the above assumption we run the regression of the second differences on the lagged variable of the first differences. The estimated regression equation is :

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta^2 \hat{C}Y_t &= -132.86 - 0.876 CY_{t-1} \\ t &= (3.52)^* \quad (-3.89)^* \\ (1.3.2.2) \quad R^2 &= 0.46 \quad dw = 2.02 (OA) \end{aligned}$$

Now the critical Tau value at 5 per cent level of significance is -2.89 and our computed value in absolute term exceeds the critical value, so we conclude that first difference of CY_t is stationary.

Dickey-Fuller test with the per-capita savings data through the following regression equations :

$$\Delta CY_t = -69887.03 + 35.49.49 T - 0.546 CS_{t-1}$$

$$t = (-2.67)^{**} \quad (2.67)^{**} \quad (-2.32)^*$$

(1.3.2.3) $R^2 = 0.290 \quad dw = 1.83 \quad (0A)$

$$\Delta^2 \hat{CS}_t = 67.65 - 1.10 \Delta CS_{t-1}$$

$$t = (1.82) \quad (-4.69)^*$$

(1.3.2.4) $R^2 = 0.550 \quad dw = 2.02 \quad (0A)$

We conclude that per-capita savings data for Pakistan is non-stationary, whereas it's first difference series is stationary.

Since both the series of first differences of per-capita income and per-capita savings are stationary, i.e., (1), so the linear combination of these two variables might be stationary. For this purpose we check for the stationarity of the residuals obtained from simple linear model. The estimated results and corresponding value of DW statistic are given below :

$$CS_t = -1112.04 + 0.393 CS_t$$

$$t = (-8.72)^* \quad (15.00)^*$$

(1.3.2.5) $R^2 = 0.918 \quad dw = 1.63 \quad (0A)$

Now by applying Co-integrating Regression Durbin-Watson (CRDW) test we see that the residuals are stationary (since $dw = 1.63$ and critical value for non-stationarity of the residuals is 0.386 at 5 per cent level of significance). Hence we conclude that per-capita income and savings are co-integrated, that is, there is long-term equilibrium relationship between these two variables. Further looking at the co-integration regression, we see that the long-run MPS is 0.39, which suggests that per-capita savings adjusts to its long-run growth path moderately following the disturbances. Of course in the short run there may be dis-equilibrium and we use the Error Correction Mechanism (ECM) to correct for disequilibrium. The estimated simple ECM model is :

$$\Delta \hat{CS}_t = 5.161 + 0.367 \Delta CY_t - 0.839 U_{t-1}$$

$$t = (0.12) \quad (1.50) \quad (-3.31)^*$$

(1.3.2.6) $R^2 = 0.389 \quad dw = 1.73 \quad (0A) \quad F = 5.74^*$

The results show that short-run change in per-capita income in Pakistan have insignificant effect on per-capita savings and that .83 of the discrepancy between the actual and the long-run or equilibrium value of per-capita savings is corrected each year. This also leads to think that the economy is highly dependent on foreign aid. The Chow statistic yields the value 0.109 with (3,15) degrees of freedom, which falls below the critical value 3.20 at 5 per

cent level of significance. Thus we may accept the stability of parameters of simple EGTS model 1.3.2.6.

But low value of R^2 suggests for inclusion of higher order lagged differences of CY_t and CS_t . Estimation of which yields :

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta \hat{CS}_t = & -9.44 + 0.460 \Delta CY_t + .079 \Delta CY_{t-1} - 0.875 \Delta CS_{t-2} - 1.53 \hat{U}_{t-2} \\ t = & (0.211) (2.07)^{**} (.375) (-4.25)^* (-5.33)^* \\ (1.3.1.7) \quad R^2 = & 0.678 \quad F = 7.89^* \quad dw = 2.06 (0A) \end{aligned}$$

Though the coefficient of ΔCY_{t-1} is highly insignificant but R^2 has improved highly. So this can be taken as our preferred model obtained from the EGTS approach. The Chow statistic for this model yields the value 1.68 with (5,10) degrees of freedom, which falls below the critical value 3.33 at 5 per cent level of significance. Thus we may accept the stability of parameters of higher order EGTS model 1.3.2.7. Hence this is our preferred model obtained by EGTS approach.

Now we shall adopt the Hendry-type general to specific (GS) methodology. But since our co-integration analysis suggest that a long-run relationship exists, we will be able to express the short-run relationship in ECM form. Now a general model involving upto two period lags only can be represented into a second-order ECM form. We shall, therefore, estimate our general model in ECM form which yields the estimates :

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta \hat{CS}_t = & -1712.0 + .503 \Delta CY_t + .123 \Delta CY_{t-1} + .611 CY_{t-2} - .894 \Delta CS_{t-1} - 1.59 CS_{t-2} \\ t = & (4.90)^* (1.79) (.451) (4.98)^* (-3.98)^* (-4.37)^* \\ (1.3.2.8) \quad R^2 = & 0.680 \quad F = 5.94^* \quad dw = 2.11 (0A) \end{aligned}$$

From the above estimates we observe that there is no problem of autocorrelation and the value of R^2 is satisfactory with overall regression highly significant. But examination of the 't-ratios' shows that the coefficient of ΔCY_{t-1} , is highly insignificant and that of ΔCY_t is significant at 10 per cent level. Now estimation of the first order ECM yields:

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta \hat{CS}_t = & -935.83 + 0.337 \Delta CY_t + 0.330 CY_{t-1} + 0.823 CS_{t-1} \\ t = & (-3.05)^* (1.08) (3.22)^* (-2.97)^* \\ (1.3.2.9) \quad R^2 = & 0.390 \quad F = 3.63^* \quad dw = 1.76 (0A) \end{aligned}$$

The value of F statistic shows that overall regression is highly significant and there is no autocorrelation. Further all the coefficients are highly significant except that of ΔCY_t , but the value of R^2 has reduced substantially. Hence our

preferred model obtained by Hendry-type GS method is the model with two period lag values (1.3.2.8). The Chow statistic for this model yields the value 1.17 with (6,8) degrees of freedom, which falls below the critical value 3.58 at 5 per cent level of significance. Thus we accept the stability of parameters of the preferred GS model 1.3.2.8.

We now have two preferred models for the savings income relationship of Pakistan. Equation 1.3.2.7 is based on Engle Granger procedure and equation 1.3.2.8 is based on Hendry-type GS approach. They are non-nested equations. So we shall not attempt to choose between them. However the two equations are in fact not at all dis-similar. More importantly EGTS and GS approaches lead to the equations with very similar lag structures and long-run effects being fully felt just two years.

1.4 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

For Bangladesh CS_t and CY_t series follow deterministic trend. Since with a deterministic trend; variables can be made stationary by including a time trend in any regression, we regress CS_t on CY_t including a time trend in the regression equation. The estimated equation gives the following results :

$$\begin{aligned}\hat{CS}_t &= -23223.73 + 11.65 T - 0.078 CY_t \\ t &= (-1.58) (1.53) (0.94) \\ R^2 &= 0.497 \quad dw = 2.79 \quad (OA) \quad F = 9.45^*\end{aligned}$$

As $R^2 < d$ according to Granger and Newbold we do not suspect that the estimated regression suffers from spurious regression. Further the long run MPS is about 7.8 per cent, which suggests the per capita savings adjusts to its long run growth path very slowly following a disturbance. For the short-run savings income relationship of Bangladesh we have two preferred models. The model based on Engle Granger Two Stage (EGTS) procedure is :

$$\begin{aligned}\Delta \hat{CS}_t &= 2.63 + 0.101 \Delta CY_t - 1.49 \hat{U}_{t-1} \\ t &= (.109) (1.69) (6.95)^* \\ R^2 &= 0.729 \quad F = 24.29^* \quad dw = 1.90 \quad (OA)\end{aligned}$$

From this model we conclude that short-run changes of income in Bangladesh has no impact on its savings pattern and cent per cent discrepancy between the actual and the long-run value of savings is corrected each year. Perhaps this happens due to low long-run MPS and heavy dependency of Bangladesh economy on foreign aid.

Further the model based on Hendry-type GS approach is :

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta \hat{CS}_t &= -954.06 + 0.209 \Delta CY_t + 0.278 CY_{t-1} - 1.45 CS_{t-1} \\ t &= (-3.34)^* (2.76)^* (4.03)^* (-5.77)^* \\ R^2 &= 0.664 \quad F = 11.18^* \quad dw = 2.00 (0A) \end{aligned}$$

The two models are in fact not at all dissimilar. More importantly EGTS and GS approaches lead to the equations with very similar lag structures, long-run effects being fully felt after just one year.

Per-capita income and savings data of Pakistan are co-integrated, that is, there is long-run relationship between these two variables. From the Co-integration regression we see that the long-run MPS is 0.39 which suggests that per-capita savings adjusts to its long-run growth path moderately following the disturbances. Preferred model for the short-run savings income relationship of Pakistan based on EGTS procedure is :

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta \hat{CS}_t &= 9.44 + 0.460 \Delta CY_t + 0.79 \Delta CY_{t-1} - 0.875 \Delta CS_{t-1} - 1.53 \hat{U}_{t-2} \\ t &= (0.211)^* (2.07)^{**} (.375) (-4.25)^* (-5.33)^* \\ R^2 &= 0.678 \quad F = 7.89^* \quad dw = 2.06 (0A) \end{aligned}$$

Whereas preferred model based on Hendry-type GS approach is :

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta \hat{CS}_t &= -1712.0 + .503 \Delta CY_t + .123 \Delta CY_{t-1} + 611 CY_{t-2} - .894 \Delta CS_{t-1} - 1.59 CS_{t-2} \\ t &= (4.90)^* (1.79) (.451)^* (4.98)^* (-3.98)^* (-4.37)^* \\ R^2 &= 0.680 \quad F = 5.94^* \quad dw = 2.11 (0A) \end{aligned}$$

EGTS and GS approaches lead to the models with very similar lag structures, long-run effects being fully felt after just two years.

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Book Review

S. M. Burke and Salim Al-Din Quraishi,

Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah : His Personality and Politics,

Oxford University Press, 1997, Price : Rs. 495

This study is of two authors, the research work was the contribution of Mr. Quraishi and the manuscript was written by Mr. S.M. Burke. This book is a re-telling of the developments which resulted in the creation of Pakistan. The major difference is that these events revolve round the role played by Quaid-i-Azam in the formation of these events. The legal and legislative acumen of the Quaid have been left out and the major emphasis is on his political contributions.

The basic new theme of the volume is that the British welded India into a single Nation. Tagged to this idea is the assertion that Mr. Gandhi and not Mr. Jinnah was the one who introduced religion in politics, which caused division. The British stood for United India, as in their view, United India could defend itself against the aggressive designs of Russia.

The incompatibility of Hinduism and Islam have been discussed. In this context the temperament and style of leadership of Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah have been analysed. Surprisingly both the leaders respected Dadabhai Naoroji. Mr. Gandhi is reported to have described him as his *Dada* (grandfather). Quaid-i-Azam has been compared with Mustafa Kamal Pasha, but Quaid said "My strength and longest gun is the reasoning." He was respected "for his outstanding integrity and competence." Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah were leaders with vast difference in qualities they possessed.

The authors have given a documented record of the role of Quaid-i-Azam in the years before entry and after joining the Muslim League. His task as ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity has been given explained. The Lucknow Pact is the main reference in this context, which brought Muslim League and the Congress on the common platform and a common accord was worked out

and agreed upon. It is noticed that Mr. Gandhi did not figure out in this exercise of pact formation.

There was a difference between Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah over the strategy of advancing political objectives. Mr. Jinnah was against Mr. Gandhi's agitational politics. The role of Mr. Jinnah expanded in the years from 1920 onward. His contributions as the leading spokesman of Muslims in the form of Fourteen Points, Round Table Conference and the subsequent struggle for the achievement of Pakistan after 1940 has been discussed in detail.

In this volume the narrative of the creation of Pakistan has been woven round the role of Quaid-i-Azam. The study brings out most vividly the strong will with which Quaid-i-Azam fought the battle of Muslim India and triumphed in his struggle for the creation of an Islamic State in the world, a rare achievement which is an eternal tribute to his wisdom and statesmanship.

DR. M. ASLAM QURESHI

Statements

SOUTH ASIAN REGIONAL COOPERATION

January to June, 1996

POVERTY ERADICATION

New Delhi, India : January 3-4, 1996

The Second Meeting of the Finance and Planning Ministers of SAARC member states was held in New Delhi on 3-4 January 1996 to review the progress achieved in eradicating poverty in South Asia. Minister of External Affairs, Pranab Mukherjee chaired the meeting, which was opened by SAARC Secretary-General Naeem U. Hasan who also delivered a statement at the inaugural session. All member states participated in the meeting.

The discussions focused on the impact the serious consequences of widespread incidence of poverty in the SAARC countries. The member states stressed their firm resolve to carry forward their efforts in the key areas by (a) appropriately prioritising their development efforts in order to have the maximum possible impact on poverty eradication; (b) undertaking special poverty eradication programmes taking all policy imperatives into account; (c) improving the institutional environment and resource availability for the attainment of the goals relating to sustained growth in income and employment generation and poverty eradication; and (d) developing strategies for greater social mobilisation and community participation.

The meeting also emphasised that intensified regional cooperation would contribute significantly to poverty eradication in the region. In this context, it welcomed the operationalisation of SAPTA and stressed the need for concerted efforts to expand areas of economic cooperation in the SAARC region.

Other issues discussed during the meeting included the role of NGOs in the evolution of poverty eradication programmes. It reiterated that steps be

These Statements have been prepared by Syed Karim Haider, Pakistan Study Centre, University of the Punjab, Quaid-i-Azam Campus, Lahore.

taken to bring about a closer interface between Government agencies, NGOs and community organizations engaged in poverty eradication so as to bring about convergence in actions at all levels, particularly at the grass-root level.

The report adopted at the end of the meeting noted that acute deprivation among significant segments of the peoples of the SAARC countries constituted a major challenge. It underscored the need to sustain actions already initiated by the member states at the national level to eradicate poverty by the target date of 2002 AD.

The Ministers, in their report, recommended that (a) while the meeting of the first two-tiers may continue to be held annually as stipulated by the Eighth SAARC Summit, a flexible approach may be adopted on the timing/periodicity of the meeting of the third-tier comprising of the Minister of Finance and Planning of SAARC countries; (b) member states would designate appropriate Nodal Agencies for the establishment of networking arrangements in order to regularly exchange information and share experience on poverty eradication; (c) member states would forward to the SAARC Secretariat annual report highlighting the progress made by them in the area of poverty eradication for dissemination in a consolidated form to all member states; and (d) the relevant SAARC Technical Committees would take up, with sharper focus, the issue of poverty eradication in its broadest sense in order to intensify actions in the areas falling under their purview.

The report affirmed the commitment of member states to address the child labour issue in some of the SAARC countries through evolving a holistic approach towards poverty eradication in which the problem of child labour would receive appropriate attention.

MEETING OF COMMERCE MINISTERS OF SAARC MEMBER STATES

New Delhi, India : January 8 - 9, 1996

The First Meeting of Commerce Ministers of SAARC member states was held in New Delhi on 8-9 January 1996 to provide greater impetus to intra-SAARC trade under the Agreement on SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) and to promote economic cooperation in the region. The meeting was inaugurated by the current Chairman of SAARC, Prime Minister of India, P.V. Narasimha Rao. In his inaugural address, the Prime Minister of India emphasised the importance of enhancing substantially regional trade and economic cooperation so as to increase the bargaining

strength of the SAARC region in the post-Uruguay Round scenario. The meeting, attended by the member states, was chaired by Minister of State for Commerce of India and leader of the India delegation P. Chidambaram. He urged SAARC member states to consider the possibility of adopting a 'negative list' approach in the matter of extending tariff and non-tariff preferences to each other.

SAARC Secretary General, Naem U. Hasan, in his statement at the Inaugural Session, presented a resume of SAARC's initiatives and ongoing activities in the field of trade and economic cooperating among the member states. Directors Ashok K. Attri and Tahir Iqbal Butt also participated in the meeting.

The Commerce Ministers and leaders of delegations welcomed the operationalisation of SAPTA, effective from 7 December 1995, which coincided with the completion of the first decade of SAARC. They reiterated their commitment to acceleration the SAPTA process including the full implementation of all the provisions of the SAPTA Agreement and to the realisation of South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) as the goal preferably by the year 2000 but not later than 2005.

They welcomed the convening of the Inter-Governmental Group (IGG) on Trade Liberalisation, and its first meeting on 14-15 March 1996 in Sri Lanka, which would initiate the second round of trade negotiations. They agreed that the second round should consider removal of non-tariff and trade control barriers so that trade in items of export interest of the member countries receives the desired impetus. They further agreed that IGG would also carry out their negotiations for extending the tariff concessions so as to make them wider, deeper and more meaningful. The meeting decided that the process of the second round of Negotiations should be concluded before 31 July 1996.

The Commerce Ministers and leaders of delegations also agreed that businessmen should be issued multiple entry visas on application.

The underlined the importance of exchange of information and simplification, harmonisation and streamlining of customs and related procedures and decided that meetings of Customs Administrations of the SAARC countries should be held once every six months in order to achieve rapid progress in the initial stage. They welcomed the offer of Pakistan to host the second meeting.

The meeting also discussed development of business information network, promotion of a SAARC Arbitration Board, and other issues like public bulk purchases and transport and transit improvement.

The Commerce Ministers decided to meet on an annual basis for regular consultations in order to meet the target set for achieving South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) and to pursue the various other economic cooperation measures.

INDIA HOSTS THE FIRST SAARC TRADE FAIR

New Delhi, India : January 9 - 14, 1996

The first SAARC Trade Fair was held in New Delhi on 9-14 January 1996 with its theme as 'Cooperation for Growth'. The Fair, organised as a part of the commemoration of the first decade of SAARC, was jointly inaugurated by the Commerce Ministers and leaders of delegations of member states. Various engineering goods, gems and jewellery, leather goods and footwear, consumer electronics and consumer goods, food products, textiles and garments, jute and coir products, handicrafts, gift items, etc., from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka were on display and sale. Food festival, Film Festival, Cultural and Music Programmes from various SAARC member countries were other attractions at the SAARC Trade Fair.

The Fair served as an effective instrument for direct promotion of intra-SAARC trade, as well as for raising the general awareness level in the region of the importance of trade among the countries for economic development. It provided a befitting venue for the representatives for the business and industry of the SAARC member countries to discuss various issues connected with promotion and expansion of intra-SAARC trade.

During the SAARC Trade Fair, the Commerce Ministers and leaders of delegations held an interactive meeting with a cross-section of the SAARC business community organised by the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) in collaboration with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI). They felt that such interaction with their business communities, who were the essential medium for their trade growth, was extremely useful in promoting their shared objectives.

The Fair was organised by the India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO), New Delhi in association with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry on behalf of SCCI and was sponsored by the Ministry

of Commerce of India. The Second SAARC Trade Fair would be held in Pakistan in January 1997.

SAARC SEMINAR ON TESTING OF ELECTRICAL POWER ENGINEERING EQUIPMENT

Bangalore, India : January 29 to February 1, 1996

A 'SAARC Seminar on Testing of Electrical Power Engineering Equipment' was organised at the Central Power Research Institute (CPRI), Bangalore, India from 29 January to 1 February, 1996 under the Calendar of Activities of the SAARC Technical Committee on Science and Technology. The Seminar provided its participants the opportunity to gain additional knowledge as well as to familiarize themselves in the testing and evaluation of electrical equipment. The main areas covered included those relating to : High Voltage; Insulating Materials; Short Circuit Testing; Transmission Line Towers and Accessories; Cables and Power Capacitors.

SECRETARY - GENERAL'S ROUND OF MEETINGS

January, 1996

Naeem U. Hasan, after taking over as the Secretary - General of SAARC called on the following dignitaries during January 1996, and had valuable exchange of views of SAARC related issues. He also apprised them on the on-going activities of SAARC :

Meeting with dignitaries of Nepal :

1. Prime Minister, Sher Bahaur Deuba.
2. Minister for Foreign Affairs, Prakash Chandra Lahani.
3. Minister for Commerce, Fatteh Singh Tharu.
4. Minister for Water Resources, Pashupati S.J.B. Rana.
5. Foreign Secretary, Kedar Bhakta Shrestha.
6. Mayor of Kathmandu, P.L. Singh.

Meeting with dignitaries of India :

1. Minister of External Affairs, Pranab Mukherjee.
2. Foreign Secretary, Salman Haider.

SAARC WORKSHOP ON FORMULATION, MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF LEGISLATION OF INFANT MILK SUBSTITUTES AND RELATED MATTERS

Kathmandu, Nepal : February 9 - 11, 1996

A SAARC Workshop on Formulation, Monitoring and Implementation of Legislation on Infant Milk Substitutes and Related Matters was held in Kathmandu from 9 to 11 February 1996. The Workshop attended by representatives from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, considered a draft SAARC Model Code for protection of breast feeding and young child nutrition in the SAARC region.

Participants in the Workshop finalised the draft for consideration by the Technical Committee on Health Population Activities and Child Welfare schedule to be held in New Delhi from 30 April to 2 May 1996. The proposed Code incorporates concrete suggestions for popularising breast feeding and specific steps to be taken by the Member Countries.

SECRETARY - GENERAL'S ROUND OF MEETINGS

Colombo, Sri Lanka : February, 1996

SAARC Secretary-General, Naeem U. Hasan during his visit to Colombo to attend the SAARC Housing Ministers Conference during the last week of February 1996, called on the following dignitaries in Colombo :

- (i) Sirimavo Bandaranaike, Prime Minister.
- (ii) Lakshman Kadirgamar, Minister of Foreign Affairs.
- (iii) Kinsley T. Wikramaratne, Minister of Internal and External Trade, Commerce and Food.
- (iv) Nimal Siripala de Silva, Minister of Housing, Construction and Public Utilities.
- (v) D.M.S.B. Dissanayake, Minister of Youth Affairs, Sport and Rural Development.
- (vi) Darmasiri Senanyake, Minister of Media, Tourism and Aviation.
- (vii) Mahinda Rajapakse, Minister of Labour and Vocational Training.

During his meeting with the Prime Minister, the Secretary-General apprised her of the recent developments in SAARC, particularly the on-going efforts of the organisation in the area of poverty eradication and economic cooperation and trade in the region. Similarly, the Secretary-General while meeting with the Ministers, had extensive discussions of SAARC related issues and exchanged views on matters of interest to the region.

The Secretary-General also met the Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, R.C.A. Vandergert and had extensive discussions on all important SAARC matters.

SAARC HOUSING MINISTERS MEET IN COLOMBO

Colombo, Sri Lanka : February 28, March 1, 1996

The SAARC Housing Ministers' Conference was held in Colombo on 28 February to 1 March 1996, with the primary focus to formulate a SAARC collective position preparatory to the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) scheduled to be held in Istanbul in June 1996. The Conference was attended by all Member States and the SAARC Secretariat was represented by Secretary - General Naeem U. Hasan and Director Ahmed Latheef.

The Ministerial Meeting of the Conference was preceded by a meeting of the Officials, which formulated the draft of the Colombo Resolution on Human Settlements and submitted it to the Ministers for their consideration.

The Housing Ministers' Conference was opened by Secretary-General, Naeem U. Hasan, and chaired by the leader of the Sri Lankan delegation, Nimal Siripala de Silva, Minister of Housing, Construction and Public Utilities. In his inaugural address, the Minister highlighted the on-going programmes of his country in poverty alleviation and housing. In this context, he stated that these programmes were aimed at creating a balanced human development in low income settlements in Sri Lanka in the future. The Minister added that the objective of the shelter policy in his country is to cater to the present and future generations and also to fulfill the nation's infrastructure needs in the context of a rapidly changing demographic, economic and social environment.

The leaders of delegations of all Member States presented their country statements in which they emphasised the issues and concerns of Member States in the area of urban development and human settlements in the region.

They also shared their views on the two overall themes of Habitat II Conference, i.e. (i) Adequate Shelter for All, and (ii) Sustainable Human Settlements Development in an Urbanising World.

The SAARC Secretary - General in his statement drew the attention of the Conference to various initiatives taken by SAARC in the area of human settlements development. While highlighting that a fifth of the world's population live in the region, he expressed the hope that the deliberations of the Conference, particularly the Colombo Resolution on Human Settlements would provide a positive contribution to the outcome of the Habitat II Conference and help to improve the living environment of the peoples in the region.

The Colombo Resolution on Human Settlements adopted by the Ministers incorporates views of Member States on major issues and concerns before the Habitat II Conference. The key areas identified by the Ministers relate to eradication of poverty, creation of an enabling environment for human settlements development, development of a sustainable human settlements approach in an increasingly urbanising world, and capacity building and institutional management. The Resolution also highlights those areas in which cooperation and coordination among SAARC Member States as well as at global level should be further strengthened.

Recognising the critical importance of the issue related to urbanisation and housing in the region, the Conference felt that there is a need to institutionalise the process of regional cooperation and consultation in the field of shelter and human settlements within the SAARC frame-work.

While considering the Colombo Resolution, discussions were also held on the relevant sections of the draft Global Plan of Action of the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlement (Habitat II).

The Colombo Resolution on Human Settlements has been forwarded to the Secretariat of the Habitat-II Conference as the collective input from SAARC Member States to the Conference.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT HELD IN NEW DELHI

New Delhi, India : February 28 - 29, 1996

The Tenth Meeting of the SAARC Technical Committee on Women in Development participated by all Member States was held in New Delhi on

28-29 February 1996. The meeting was inaugurated by the Minister of State for Women and Child Development of India, Ms. Vimla Verma. In her inaugural address, the Minister highlighted that SAARC had through the projection of a collective SAARC position at the Beijing Conference, focused attention on urgent concerns of the region on such issues as eradication of poverty; mainstreaming gender perspective; political, economic and social empowerment of women; women's access to health, education and nutrition; elimination of violence against women and girl children as well as survival, protection and development of the girl child. The meeting was chaired by the Joint Secretary of the Minister of Women and Child Development of India, A. K. Sinha. The SAARC Secretariat was represented by Director, Ms. Kunzang C. Namgyel.

The Committee, during its two-day meeting, considered several issues of importance for the development of women and children, particularly the Girl-Child. It reviewed the progress made in the implementation of the Plan of Action for Women and decided that in order to make the exercise more feasible, the review, henceforth, would be carried out biannually. The Committee, while reviewing the SAARC Decade Plan of Action for the Girl-Child (1991-2000 A.D.) noted that the Eighth SAARC Summit had directed that a comprehensive mid-decade review of the implementation of the Plan be prepared for submission to the Ninth Summit. In this context they discussed the common format designed for the purpose and decided on the methodology for completing its work within the time-frame. The committee noted that the Workshop scheduled to be held in New Delhi in September 1996 specifically to address this issue would be the forum at which this matter would be taken up.

While discussing the follow-up of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, Member States highlighted the steps being taken by their respective countries to implement the decisions and commitments in the Platform of Action adopted at the Beijing Conference. They noted that more detailed discussions would take place at the SAARC Workshop scheduled to be held in New Delhi in 1997, on the subject.

The Committee discussed issues relating to the particularly vulnerable group of girl children in the region, i.e., Girl-Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances (GCEDC) and approved the methodology for the preparation of a Regional Overview. As directed by the Eighth SAARC Summit, the

Overview alongwith specific recommendations to address the problems faced the these Girl-Children would be presented to the Heads of State or Government at the Ninth Summit.

The meeting also discussed matters relating to the publication of the fourth issue of the *SAARC Solidarity Journal* and decided that the theme of the next issue would be "Women in the informal Sector." It also decided that the issue would be brought out to coincide with the Ninth SAARC Summit.

The meeting drew up the *Calendar of Activities for 1996*, which included three workshops to be held in India, Maldives and Pakistan.

The Eleventh Meeting of the Committee would be held in India during the last quarter of 1996.

DELEGATION OF SAARC CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY VISITS GERMANY AND BRUSSELS

March 3 - 12, 1996

A delegation of SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) led by its President, Salman Rahman visited Germany and Brussels from 3rd March to 12th March 1996. The representatives of the National Federations of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of SAARC Member Countries participated in the SCCI programme to Germany and Brussels. Ashok K. Attri, Director in the SAARC Secretariat accompanied the delegation. The visit of the SAARC Chamber was sponsored by the Freidrich-Naumann-Stiftung.

The delegation held discussion in Bonn with the representatives of the Government of Federal Republic of Germany dealing with South Asia in its Ministries of Foreign Affairs Economic Cooperation and Development, Economics. The SCCI delegation also attended Joint Seminar in Hamburg with the East Asian Association, the National Federation of German Industries and the Federation of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry on the subject of "South Asia on the Path of Regional Cooperation." The delegation was also received by the Minister of Economic Affairs of Hamburg. The topic of discussion with the Chambers of Commerce and Industry in Stuttgart was "What Investment Opportunities does the South Asian Region have to offer to the Germany Industry?" and "What are the Export Prospects of Goods from the SAARC Countries?"

The delegation also held discussions with the Export Academy of Baden Wurttemberg, Reutlingen, IFO Institute for Economic Research, Munich and

Daimler Benz, Sindelfingen, apart from visiting the International Handicrafts Fair at Munich.

In Brussels, the delegation held discussion with several senior representatives of the European Commission as well as with the Eurochambers to apprise them about the organisation and the activities of SCCI and to explore the possibilities of developing cooperation between these organisations and SCCI.

While in Europe, the delegation also interacted with the Ambassadors and other diplomats of SAARC Countries in Germany and Brussels.

MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF THE SAARC DOCUMENTATION CENTRE (SDC)

Male', Maldives : March 7 - 8, 1996

The Third Meeting of the Governing Board of the SAARC Documentation Centre (SDC) was held in Male' on March 7 - 8, 1996. The Meeting was attended by representatives from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Director, Tahir Iqbal Butt represented the SAARC Secretariat.

In his inaugural address, the Minister of Planning, Human Resources and Environment of Maldives, Ismail Shafeeu highlighted that timely information and access to accurate data is vital in order to realise the common aspirations of Member Countries to achieve sustainable social and economic progress. In this context he mentioned that the establishment of SDC and the creation of a data base of documents generated within Member Countries and the region as well as access to international data bases would benefit research and education, public administration and inter-governmental coordination. He added that at the broader level, it would benefit the people of the region as a whole, promoting greater interest and understanding of its unique cultural and scientific heritage.

During the Meeting, the Board reviewed and expressed satisfaction on the progress in the implementation of activities/programmes proposed for 1995-96. The Board also made several recommendations such as establishment of South Asian Information Network (SAINET) which is likely to be operational by end of this year. The main objective of SAINET is to facilitate transborder

information flow among SAARC Member States for exchange of information in the fields of science and technology, industry, development matters, etc. The network being established at the SAARC Documentation Centre, New Delhi will provide Members access to information on trade and other subjects. The electronic data network will interconnect the NFPs in Member Countries, SDC, SAARC Secretariat and other regional institutions that support information interchange. The Board also chalked out its Action Plan for 1996-97 which includes short-term courses; attachment training, and seminars and workshops on relevant fields. In addition it also includes the Creation of Value-added Database on selected areas and commissioning techno-economic studies.

MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF THE SAARC TUBERCULOSIS CENTRE (STC)

Kathmandu, Nepal : March 14, 1996

The three-day Fifth Meeting of the Governing Board of STC concluded in Kathmandu on 14 March 1996 with a renewed call to intensify action to prevent and control Tuberculosis in the SAARC region. The Governing Board noted with great concern that Tuberculosis continued to pose a serious threat to all the Member States in the SAARC region with an annual new incidence of one million TB patients. The Board reviewed the activities of the Centre during 1995 and also approved the work programme of the Centre for the same year which include five major activities. According to the proposed programme, the Centre's activity during the coming fiscal year would include amongst others (i) a SAARC Consultative Meeting on TB and AIDS; (ii) a workshop for formulation of guidelines of coordination in Government and Private sector/ NGO initiatives of TB Control; (iii) a seminar on Production, Marketing/Distribution and Quality Control of Anti TB drugs in the region. Other ongoing activities of the Centre would also continue. The Governing Board also finalised the recommendation of the Centre's budget for 1996-97 which would be submitted to the next Session of the Standing Committee for approval.

SECOND ROUND OF TRADE NEGOTIATIONS UNDER SAPTA BEGINS

Colombo, Sri Lanka : March 14 - 15, 1996

The Second Round of Trade Negotiations under SAPTA was launched in Sri Lanka by the Meeting of Inter-Governmental Group on Trade Liberalisation

held in Colombo on March 14-15, 1996. The Meeting was held under the Chairmanship of Secretary, Ministry of Internal and External Trade, Commerce and Food of Sri Lanka, N.V.K.K. Weragoda. All Member States participated in the Meeting and held bilateral/multilateral trade negotiations for expanding the lists of products and deepening the tariff cuts under SAPTA. The SAARC Secretariat was presented by Director, Ashok K. Attri.

The President of Sri Lanka, Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga sent a message to the Meeting in which she reiterated Sri Lanka's commitment to implement all components of SAPTA for timely launching of South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA). The Meeting was inaugurated by Kingsley T. Wickramaratne, Minister of Internal and External Trade, Commerce and Food of Sri Lanka. In the Inaugural Session, Ashok K. Attri, Director, SAARC Secretariat outlined the background and mandate of the meeting.

The Inter-Governmental Group held in-depth discussion on modalities for conducting trade negotiations including various approaches like product-by-product basis, across the board tariff reductions, tariff reduction on sectorial basis and by adopting direct trade measures. The Group decided to conduct trade negotiations by adopting a combination of these approaches, without precluding the product-by-product approach. The Group also agreed on the need of fast-track approach for negotiations to conclude the Second Round of Trade Negotiations by July 31, 1996. The Meeting further agreed that all attempts should be made to realise SAFTA by the year 2000 A.D.

Sri Lanka proposed that all businessmen in the region should be given SAARC Visa Exemption stickers for free mobility within the region and information that in Sri Lanka no restriction are applicable on visits on businessmen from the region. It was also recommended that a special meeting of the Group should be held to examine broad spectrum of trade facilitation measures such as transport, professional and financial services, port, shipping, air transport, etc.

The Group felt that the SAARC Secretariat should continue to procure latest trade publications and computerised trade databases available on CD-ROMs developed by UN organisations like World Bank, IMF, ESCAP, etc., to disseminate information from the same to the concerned economic researchers, etc. and to assist IGG by providing best possible information. The Group also felt that on-line information service "SAARC Net" of SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) should also be available in the

Secretariat for the purpose of promotion of foreign trade of SAARC Member Countries. Bearing in mind the economic conditions of the Least Development Countries (LDCs) in the SAARC region, the Meeting also decided to keep a day earmarked in the next IGG Meeting, to be held in June 1996, for discussion on LDCs.

MEETINGS IN MARCH 1996

Following is the tentative schedule of activities to be held in March 1996 :

- 7-8 Third Meeting of Government Board of SAARC Documentation Centre (SDC), Male'.
- 12-14 Fifth Meeting of Governing Board of SAARC Tuberculosis Centre (STC), Kathmandu.
- 12-14 Seminar on Enhanced Role in NGOs in Rural Development, Islamabad.
- 14-15 Meeting of IGG on Trade Liberalisation to initiate the Second Round of Trade Negotiations, Colombo.
- 14-15 Fifth South West Asia Symposium, Tokyo (*to be financed under Component-I of SAARC-Japan Special Fund*).
- 17-28 Technical Training and Skills Development, Islamabad (SAVE TV programme to be financed under SAARC-Japan Special Fund).
- 19-20 Thirteenth Meeting of Technical Committee on Science and Technology, Islamabad.
- 21-29 Familiarisation Tour in Sri Lanka (*under Technical Committee on Tourism*).
- 25 Two-Week Training Programme on Transmitter Engineering and Modulation System, Islamabad (*SAVE Radio programme to be financed under SAARC-Japan Special Fund*).
- 27-28 Meeting of Experts in the Field of Primary Health Care, Islamabad.
- 29-30 Second Meeting of Chairperson of the Technical Committees (MCTC), SAARC Secretariat, Kathmandu.

THIRTEENTH MEETING OF SAARC TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Islamabad, Pakistan : March 19 - 20, 1996

The Thirteenth Meeting of SAARC Technical Committee on Science and Technology was held at Islamabad on 19-20 March, 1996 under the auspices of Ministry of Science and Technology and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan. Besides delegates from Member States, Director, Tahir Iqbal Butt at the SAARC Secretariat attended the Meeting.

The Meeting was inaugurated by Dr. S.M. Qureshi, Secretary, Ministry of Science and Technology of Pakistan, who in his address emphasised upon more effective cooperation among SAARC Member States to address common problems such as poverty alleviation, energy shortage, high rate of population growth and inadequate infrastructure for Science and Technology development, etc., through science and technology. In this context he stressed the importance of pooling the human and institutional resources of the SAARC Countries to achieve their common objectives.

During the two days meeting, the delegates deliberated upon critical issues relation to the development and application of science and technology in the SAARC region. The Committee considered a number of feasible projects for implementation during the next two years. The Committee also reviewed its own functioning and requested Member States to forward their evaluation and assessment. For the future course of action, the Committee identified two workshops for the year 1997. The Workshop on the development, acquisition and transfer of technology in the small and medium industrial sector will be held in Sri Lanka, while the workshop on Monitoring and Aflatoxins/Mycotoxins in Food and Feed will be held in Bangladesh. In addition the Committee proposed the holding of two other projects, i.e., Training of the Popularisers for Science Popularisation in SAARC Countries (Pakistan); and Two-week Training Workshop on Plant Transformation (Pakistan).

FAMILIARISATION TOUR IN SRI LANKA UNDER TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON TOURISM

Colombo, Sri Lanka : March 21 - 29, 1996

A Familiarisation Tour was organised in Sri Lanka from 21st March to 29th March 1996 under the Technical Committee on Tourism. Representatives

from Member Governments and from Travel Trade of Member States participated in the Familiarisation Tour. During the course of one week, the delegates visited various places of tourist interest in Sri Lanka and familiarised themselves with the special features of different tourist sports. Among other places in their tour itinerary, the participants visited Anuradhapura, the capital of Sri Lanka from 5th Century B.C. to 10th Century A.D., Mihintale, Sigirya (5th century A.D. Frescoes) Royal Capital, Dambulla Cave Temple, Spice Gardens at Matale and Batik Centre, Kandy, Botanic Gardens at Peradeniya, etc.

Similar Familiarisation/Educational Tours are also scheduled to be held in other SAARC Member Countries during the course of this year. In order to promote intra-SAARC tourism, the participants from Travel Trade are expected to familiarise themselves with the tourist features of other SAARC Countries and make efforts for promoting intra-SAARC tourism.

MEETING OF THE SAARC NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS TO CONSIDER SAARC YOUTH AWARDS SCHEME

Kathmandu, Nepal : March 29 - 30, 1996

The National Focal Points (NFPs) from all Member States met at the SAARC Secretariat, Kathmandu on March 29-30 1996 to consider the proposed SAARC Youth Awards Scheme (SYAS). The Scheme has been designed with the objective of providing suitable recognition to outstanding young talents and encourage the overall development of the youth in the region. The Meeting was opened by Ahmed Latheef, Director, SAARC Secretariat. National Focal Point from India, Sudhir Vyas was elected as Chairperson of the Meeting.

After detailed deliberations, the meeting finalised the SAARC Youth Awards Scheme and recommended it for the Council of Ministers' approval. The Meeting recommended that for the first three years, only one award would be given each year under the Scheme. In the first year the award would be for "Outstanding Social Service in Community Welfare" and in subsequent years, awards would be given in turn for the categories of "New Inventions and Discoveries," and "Creative Skills." The Meeting proposed that the Scheme would be reviewed at the end of the three-year period with a view to streamlining it further and making it more broad-based. The Meeting also proposed that the Scheme may be implemented beginning from the calendar

year following its approval by the Council of Ministers. The overall responsibility of coordination in respect of the Scheme would be with the SAARC Secretary-General.

SECOND MEETING OF CHAIRPERSONS OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEES, WITH PARTICIPATION OF NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS FROM SAARC MEMBER COUNTRIES

SAARC Secretariat, Nepal : March 29 - 30, 1996

The Second Meeting of Chairpersons of the Technical Committees, with participation of National Focal Points from SAARC Member Countries, was held at the SAARC Secretariat on 29 - 30 March 1996. The Meeting was opened by Prabal S. J. B. Rana, Director, SAARC Secretariat and was attended by participants from all Member States. Dr. A. K. Kundu, Deputy Director-General (P), Director-General of Health Services, Government of India and Chairman of the Technical Committee on Health, Population Activities and Child Welfare was elected as Chairman of the Meeting.

SAARC Secretary-General, Naeem U. Hasan made a brief statement in which he underscored the need for effective functioning of the Technical Committees.

The Meeting focused on specific issues such as the conduct of meetings of the Technical Committees; selection, preparation, holding and reporting on the activities under Technical Committees; implementation of decisions and recommendations from various activities; and monitoring, evaluation and coordination.

The Meeting underlined the need for sustained efforts by Member States to implement the recommendations/decisions of the First Meeting of Chairpersons of Technical Committees (MCTC) as well as the First Special Session of Standing Committee at the earliest, to the extent possible, in order to improve the functioning of the Technical Committees to make them more cost effective and result-oriented.

The Meeting stressed the need to conform to the relevant decisions of the First Special Session of the Standing Committee with regard to monitoring, evaluation and coordination. It requested the SAARC Secretary-General to include in his Analytical Report his recommendations on possible measures to strengthen the evaluation mechanism.

The Meeting felt the need for greater interaction between the National Focal Points and Sectoral Focal Points for effective implementation of SAARC activities being hosted in each Member State.

To further strengthen inter-sectoral coordination, the Meeting felt that all Technical Committees should exchange their Reports with each other through the SAARC Secretariat. It requested the SAARC Secretariat to circulate to all Member States the comments, if any, received from the Chairpersons of the Technical Committees through National Focal Points.

Among the other recommendations made by the meeting, it was proposed that in the Second Decade of SAARC, selection of activities should be done increasingly with the aim of implementing concrete programmes and projects including transfer of technology, human resources development and harnessing of natural resources in the region as envisaged in the SAARC Charter and as also contained in the directives of the First Special Session of the Standing Committee.

SECRETARY - GENERAL'S ROUND OF MEETINGS

Male', Maldives : March, 1996.

SAARC Secretary - General, Naem U. Hasan undertook his introductory visit to the Maldives in March 1996. During the meeting with the President, the Secretary-General discussed several important issues relating to SAARC, including the Ninth SAARC Summit to be held in the Maldives. While meeting with Ministers, the Secretary-General discussed the on-going programmes of SAARC in promoting greater cooperation in the respective areas covered under the Integrated Programme of Action of SAARC. The Secretary - General called on the following dignitaries in Male' :

- (a) Maumoon Abdul Gyoom, President.
- (b) Fathulla Jameel, Minister of Foreign Affairs.
- (c) Salah Shahib, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.
- (d) Dr. Mahmed Latheef, Minister of Education.
- (e) Ms. Rashida Yoosuf, Minister of Youth, Women's Affairs and Sports.
- (f) Hassan Sobir, Minister of Fisheries and Agriculture.
- (g) Ahmed Abdulla, Minister of Health and Welfare.

During his visit to Male', the Secretary-General also met the Heads of the three SAARC Diplomatic Missions in the Maldives, i.e., High Commissioners of India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

In Kathmandu, the Secretary-General called on the Minister for Information and Communications of Nepal, Chirinjibi Wagle. He also met the Ambassadors of Bangladesh, Pakistan, China, and the United Kingdom in Kathmandu.

OTHER ACTIVITIES/PROGRAMMES HELD IN MARCH 1996

Under SAARC - Japan Special Fund

- (i) Fifth South-West Asia Symposium, March 14-15, 1996, Tokyo.
- (ii) Technical Training and Skills Development Programme, March 17-28, 1996, Islamabad.
- (iii) Two-week Transmitter Engineering and Modulation System, March 25, 1996, Islamabad.

Other Activities

- (i) Seminar on Enhanced Role of NGOs in Rural Development, March 12-14, 1996, Islamabad.
- (ii) Meeting of Experts in the field of Primary Health Care, March 27-28, 1996, Islamabad.

PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES FOR APRIL 1996

Following is the Tentative Programme of Activities for April 1996 :

- 16 - 18 Second Meeting of the Governing Board of SAARC Meteorological Research Centre (SMRC) in Dhaka.
- 17 - 18 Meeting of Experts on Bio-Processing of Foods and Enzymes, Kathmandu.
- 21 - 22 Seminar on the Role of Mass Media in Drug Abuse Prevention, Dhaka.
- 21 - 23 Fourth Meeting of Technical Committee on Communications, Male'.
- 23 - 24 Workshop on Production of Instructional Material for Secondary Level Science Education, Islamabad.

- 23 - 24 Workshop on Integrated Forest Management, Thimphu.
- 25 - 26 Third annual meeting of Liaison Officers on Suppression of Terrorism, New Delhi.
- 30 April Fourteenth Meeting of the Technical Committee on Health, Population Activities and Child Welfare in New Delhi.
- 2 May Meeting of Producers to undertake joint production on "SAARC Year of Literacy - 1996."

SAARC AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION CENTRE

Dhaka, Bangladesh : April 9 - 11, 1996

The Tenth Meeting of the Governing Board of SAARC Agricultural Information Centre (SAIC) was held in Dhaka on April 9-11, 1996. The Meeting was attended by the Board Members from Member States. The SAARC Secretariat was represented by Director, Prabal S.J.B. Rana.

B.R. Kafle of Nepal was elected as Chairman of the Board for the year 1996-97 replacing Dr. Mangala Rai of India.

The Board noted that since the inception of SAIC in 1988, the Centre had completed the following programmes : Directory of Agricultural Institutions in SAARC Countries; Directory of Agricultural Periodicals of the SAARC Countries and updating of these two Directories; Directory of Agricultural Scientists and Technologists on Agroforestry in the SAARC Region; Gender issues in South Asian Agriculture, SAIC Progress Reports; SAIC Newsletter; Database on Fish Diseases in SAARC Countries; SAIC Bibliography on Potato; Databases on Biotechnology in SAARC Countries Agriculture and Post-harvest Technology; Reprography Bulletin Microfiche; Audio Visual Media Production on Homestead Vegetables; and Microfiche of two thousand non conventional literatures.

The Board also reviewed the progress in the on-going programmes of SAIC, i.e., renewable Energy Resources in SAARC Countries; Livestock Production and Management in SAARC Countries; database on Risk Management, acquisition of Conventional and Non-Conventional publications in Agricultural fields from SAARC Member States; Microfilming and Microfilming of Non-Conventional information materials; Directory of Training Programmes (Short and Long) in SAARC Countries; Directory of Counterpart Scientists Meeting and Workshop Proceedings; Periodic Services

(Current Awareness/SDI Services, etc.); Audio-Visual Media Production and Reproduction of New Technologies; Study of Agricultural Information Systems Services in SAARC Countries.

The new programmes to be taken up during 1996-97 include : Union Catalogue of Holdings of Ph.D. Theses from Agricultural Universities/Deemed University Agricultural Institutions from SAARC Member Countries and holding of a regional Workshop on Agricultural Information Needs, Mode, Mechanism and Information Flow in SAARC countries.

SAARC SECRETARY - GENERAL COMPLETES HIS OFFICIAL VISITS TO BANGLADESH AND BHUTAN

April 12 - 15, 1996 and April 25-29, 1996

Secretary - General, Naem U. Hasan continued his introductory visits to the Member Countries during April 1996. He visited Bangladesh from April 12-15, 1996. During his visit, he paid courtesy calls on the President of Bangladesh, Abdur Rahman Biswas, and Chief Advisor to the President, Muhammad Habibur Rahman during which he apprised them of recent developments in SAARC to promote regional cooperation in South Asia. The Secretary-General highlighted in particular, the on-going efforts of Member States towards the eradication of poverty from the region and touched upon the progress made by the three-tier mechanism established within the SAARC framework to exchange information and experiences in the implementation of poverty alleviation programmes. He also briefed the President on the developments in the area of economic and trade cooperation. In this context, he informed that the recently concluded Inter-Governmental Group meeting in Colombo began the second round of trade negotiations under the SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA).

The Secretary-General also met the Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh, Farooq Sobhan and other senior officials of the government and had detailed discussions on matters relating to SAARC. They exchange views on further strengthening the process of regional cooperation through SAARC during the second decade and also the role of the Secretariat in this regard. They discussed ways and means of strengthening the Secretariat in future with a greater role and mandate for the Secretary-General in view of the increasing responsibilities of the regional forum. They further discussed issues relating to cooperation with international and other regional organisations, including ASEAN and the European Union. The discussions also included preparatory

steps and matters relating to the Ninth SAARC Summit due to be held in the Maldives.

During his stay in Dhaka, the Secretary-General also met the President of the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Salman F. Rahman, and Vice-President, A.K.M. Shamsuddoha. They exchanged views on issues relating to economic and trade cooperation among Member States. In particular, they discussed the role of the SAARC Chamber in this important area.

The Secretary-General attended a special function organised by the recently established South Asian News Agency (SANA) based in Dhaka. Speaking at the function at which the Bangladesh Foreign Secretary was present, the Secretary-General highlighted the role of the media in promoting cooperation in the region through greater people-to-people contact.

During the Secretary-General's visit to Bhutan from April 25-29, 1996 he was granted an audience by His Majesty King Jigme Singye Wangchuck. The Secretary-General apprised the King on the on-going activities of SAARC, particularly the developments since the Eighth SAARC Summit in New Delhi in May 1995 and had discussions on a wide range of issues relating to SAARC including those before the forthcoming Ninth SAARC Summit in the Maldives.

The Secretary-General called on the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dawa Tsering, during which they had detailed discussions on all important SAARC issues. They exchanged views on the process of strengthening the role of the SAARC Secretariat in keeping with the added responsibilities assigned to it. They also focused attention on the future direction of the Association following completion of its first decade in December 1995.

The Secretary-General also called on the Minister for Trade and Industry, Om Pradhan and apprised him on the recent developments in the field of trade and economic cooperation among the Member Countries. In particular, he highlighted the steps being undertaken following operationalisation of SAPTA in December 1995 and the on-going efforts towards achieving the goal of SAFTA by the year 2000. The Secretary-General's talks with the Planning Minister, C. Dorji focused on the broad area of development issues in general and poverty alleviation in particular. They expressed satisfaction at the steady progress made by Member States in this regard.

The Secretary-General also met the Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Khandu Wangchuck. During the course of discussions with the Deputy

Minister, the programmes and activities being undertaken under the Technical Committee on Agriculture, including matters relating to preparation for the forthcoming World Food Summit were raised. Likewise during his meeting with the Deputy Minister of Health and Education, T.J. Rixin the on-going programmes under the Technical Committees on Health, Population Activities and Child Welfare; and Education, Culture and Sports came under discussion.

UNDP TEAM APPRISES THE SECRETARIAT OF ITS PROJECT ON POVERTY ALLEVIATION

April 17, 1996

A UNDP team met the SAARC Secretary-General, Naeem U. Hasan and other officials of SAARC at the Secretariat on April 17, 1996, and briefed them on the UNDP Project "Institutional Development at the Grassroots for Poverty Alleviation" (undp/unops/ras/94/500). Present during the briefing were UNDP Resident Representative, Ms. Carroll Long, Shoaib Sultan Khan - UNDP Consultant for the Project, officials from UNDP, SAARC Secretary-General and Directors from SAARC Secretariat. In addition, all SAARC Ambassadors in Kathmandu, and concerned officials from His Majesty's Government of Nepal also attended the briefing session.

The session was opened and chaired by the SAARC Secretary-General, who welcomed the participants to the Secretariat and briefed the participants on the developments in SAARC in the area of poverty alleviation. Secretary-General touched upon the efforts of SAARC in addressing this challenge in the regional context and highlighted that important lessons could be learnt from the success stories in the region. The UNDP Resident Representative, while making introductory remarks, gave the background of the project.

UNDP Consultant for the Project, Shoaib Sultan Khan briefed the participant on the project. He highlighted that the project was conceived as a result of the remarkable work done by the Independent South Asian Commission on Poverty Alleviation formed by SAARC and the strong commitment by the SAARC leader during their Seventh Summit in 1995. He outlined the scope of the project and informed the progress so far made in Member Countries.

This Poverty Alleviation Project which is seen as the first step in a regional effort by UNDP/UNOPs in collaboration with SAARC is being presently implemented in six Member Countries, where specific districts have

been identified during the initial phase of the programme. The Project is designed in keeping with the broad strategy of social mobilisation and emphasis on a pro-poor intensive agricultural development strategy with emphasis on food production by the small farmers, to be followed by decentralized, labour intensive small scale industrialization.

Dr. Jaysingh Sah, the National Project Coordinator for the project in Syangla District of Nepal shared his experience and presented the annual progress report for 1995.

SAARC METEOROLOGICAL RESEARCH CENTRE

Dhaka, Bangladesh : April 16 - 18, 1996

The Second Meeting of the Government Board of the SAARC Meteorological Research Centre (SMRC) was held in Dhaka on 16-18 April 1996. The meeting was inaugurated by M.A. Hakim, Secretary, Ministry of Defence of Bangladesh. Representatives from all Member States attended the meeting. SAARC Secretariat was represented by Director, Liaquat Ali Choudhury.

The Meeting reviewed the activities of the Centre scheduled to be held during the calendar year 1995. It also finalised the work programme of the Centre for 1997 in keeping with its broad objective to promote appropriate action and to create an opportunity for the scientists in the region to carry out extensive joint research on complex and difficult challenges in SAARC region related to weather and climate.

The Meeting decided that all efforts would be made to fully operationalise the Centre before the target date of 1998 and to that end, it took a number of decisions on the administrative and financial management of the Centre. The Board also finalised matters relating to recruitment of Professional Staff of the Centre to undertake the bulk of its substantive work. The Meeting also finalised the budget of the Centre for 1997.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS MEETS IN MALE'

Male', Maldives : April 21 - 23, 1996

The Fourth Meeting of the Technical Committee on Communications was held in Male' on 21-23 April, 1996. The meeting inaugurated by the Minister

for Transport and Communications of Maldives Ahmed Zahir, was attended by delegates from all Member States. Director K. C. Namgyel represented the SAARC Secretariat.

During the three-day meeting, the Committee deliberated on various issues relating to the development of communications, both postal and telecommunications in the SAARC region. The Committee considered indepth, the draft Memorandum of Understanding for cooperation between SAARC and ITU. There was general consensus among the Member States on signing the MOU which would provide for ways and means of ensuring close cooperation and coordination of efforts between SAARC and ITU in implementing programmes as mutually agreed upon for the development of telecommunication in the region. However, the final decision with regard to the signing of the MOU would be taken at the next Session of the Standing Committee.

The Committee decided that the next SAARC Letter Writing Competition — the fourteenth in the series would be coordinate by Pakistan. Among other subjects, the Committee reviewed the status of activities for the year 1995-96 and also decided upon the Calendar of Activities for the Year 1996-97, which includes a three-day Seminar on Customer's Care, to be held in Pakistan in September/October 1996; a three-day Seminar on Wireless in Local Loop 'WILL' to be held in India in February 1997 and a four-day 'Workshop on Postal Marketing' to be held in Bangladesh during January, 1997. The Chairmanship of the Technical Committee on Communications would now pass on to Nepal for the next two years, i.e., 1997 and 1998, under the system of rotation adopted in SAARC.

SAARC SECRETARIAT ATTENDS FIFTY-SECOND SESSION OF ESCAP

Bangkok : April 17 - 24, 1996

The 52nd ESCAP Session focusing on the main theme of "Rural Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific" was held in Bangkok on 17-24 April 1996. On behalf of the SAARC Secretariat, Director, Ashok K. Attri attended the annual session. Representatives of the SAARC Secretariat have been attending important meetings of ESCAP in a consultative

capacity, following signing of the Framework Agreement between SAARC and ESCAP in February 1994.

The Session devised strategies for the alleviation of rural poverty and focused on infrastructure development, issues of sustainability, and emerging issues, such as food security and the impact of the Uruguay Round of multilateral negotiations on the agricultural sector.

While in Bangkok, Mr. Attri also took the opportunity to review with the concerned officials of ESCAP the progress in the implementation of the Framework Agreement between SAARC and ESCAP, particularly in the field of trade and economic cooperation.

SAARC WORKSHOP ON INTEGRATED FOREST MANAGEMENT IN THIMPHU

Thimpu, Bhutan : April 23 - 24, 1996

A SAARC Workshop on Integrated Forest Management was held in Thimphu on 23-24 April, 1996 under the auspices of Forestry Services Division, Ministry of Agriculture of Bhutan. The activity was financed under SAARC-Japan Special Fund. Participants from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka attended the Workshop.

The Workshop provided a valuable forum for exchange of information and experiences in forestry management and led to several concrete recommendations to enhance cooperation in the field. Specific areas included in the recommendations relate to strengthening the information base, exchange of successful developmental models for integrated forest management, exchange of experts and consultants, sharing of facilities (institutes, pilot demonstration areas, etc.) and study tours, training courses, etc.

SECRETARY-GENERAL'S ROUND OF MEETINGS IN NEPAL

SAARC Secretary-General, Naeem U. Hasan called on the following Ministers in Nepal during April 1996 :

- (i) Khum Bahadur Khadka, Minister for Home Affairs.
- (ii) Bhim Bahadur Tamang, Minister of Law and Justice.

- (iii) Bimalendra Nidhi, Minister for General Administration.
- (iv) Arjun Nursing K.C., Minister for Health.
- (v) Kamal Thapa, Minister for Local Development.
- (vi) Bal Bahadur Ral, Minister for Labour.
- (vii) Bijaya Kumar Gachhadar, Minister for Works and Transport.

During the meetings, the Secretary-General apprised the Ministers of the on-going programmes and activities of SAARC. The Ministers shared their views with the Secretary-General on ways of further strengthening regional cooperation in their respective areas.

MEETINGS OF WORLD TOURISM ORGANISATION

Kathmandu, Nipal : April 29 - 30, 1996

Kathmandu was the venue for the Thirty-third Meeting of the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) Commission for South Asia and a Technical Seminar on Public-Private Partnership in Tourism which were held here on 29-30 April 1996. These meetings organised by WTO, Madrid at the invitation of His Majesty's Government of Nepal were attended by a total of 31 participants from the region including those from Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Director, Ashok K. Attri represented the SAARC Secretariat at both the meetings, during which he briefed the delegates about the steps being taken under the framework of SAARC for promotion of intra-SAARC tourism and for promotion of the SAARC region as a tourist destination.

VISITORS TO SAARC SECRETARIAT

April 3 - 30, 1996

- (i) Delegation of Association of Exploration Geophysicists (AEG) from Hyderabad, (India) on April 3, 1996.
- (ii) Lyonpo Dawa Tsering, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bhutan, on April 4, 1996.
- (iii) A.H.M. Fowzie, Minister of Health, Highways and Social Services of Sri Lanka, on April 15, 1996.

- (iv) MS. Caroline Elmes, Head of South Asia Division, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London, on April 19, 1996.
- (v) M. Dupuy, Canadian Member of Parliament and former Cabinet Minister on April 19, 1996.
- (vi) A delegation, comprising Richard McTaggart, Country Programme Analyst, Bangladesh Programme and Prabin Manadhar, Director Programme and Projects from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) on April 30, 1996.
- (vii) A delegation, comprising Edmund J. Appelbaum, First Counsellor of the delegation of the European Commission in India and Dr. Alain Vandersmissen of the South and Southeast Asia, Directorate-General IB, European Commission, Brussels, on April 30, 1996.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, POPULATION ACTIVITIES AND CHILD WELFARE

New Delhi, India : April 30 — May 2, 1996

The Fourteenth Meeting of the Technical Committee on Health, Population Activities and Child Welfare was held in New Delhi on 30 April — 2 May, 1996. The Meeting was inaugurated by J. C. Pant, Secretary, Department of Family Welfare, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare of India. The meeting was attended by participants from all Member States. The SAARC Secretariat was represented by Director, Liaquat Ali Choudhury.

The Meeting took a comprehensive set of decisions in key areas including (a) emerging problems in the field of communicable and non-communicable diseases and need for inter-country cooperation, and (b) improvement of nutritional standards particularly for children and women in the SAARC region. It also considered the possibility of planning specific SAARC initiatives in these areas. In this context, the Committee decided to designate the National Institute of Communicable Diseases (NICD) in New Delhi to collect and disseminate information on a number of infectious and communicable diseases such as Malaria, Tuberculosis, New Strains of Cholera, AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, Japanese Encephalitis, Dengue fever, etc. The Committee designated NICD, New Delhi to act as the SAARC Focal Point for collection and dissemination of information on non-communicable diseases like

cancer, cardiovascular diseases (hypertension, coronary artery disease, rheumatic heart diseases). On nutrition, the Committee stressed the need for closely monitoring the evolution in the nutrition situation in the SAARC region and the need for sustained implementation of National Nutrition Policy and Plans of Action of Member Countries focused on reducing malnutrition, enhancing household food security, provision of micro-nutrients and food fortification where necessary.

The Committee also carried out Annual Review of the Situation of Children in SAARC Countries for the year 1995 in the light of the relevant inputs collected for the purpose from all the Member Countries. The Review highlighted the significant progress achieved by SAARC countries in such areas as infant mortality, neo natal mortality, universal child immunization and enrollment for primary education during the recent years. It, however, also highlighted the necessity for undertaking further steps to make substantial progress in certain other areas where progress have been comparatively modest. In this context, the Committee recommended that Member Countries should consider additional measures to significantly reduce maternal mortality and acute manifestations of malnutrition among children and women. The Committee also recommended that the Member Countries should also step up efforts to prevent drop out of school going children especially girls from academic programmes. In order to further consolidate the gains in the key area of immunization, especially with reference to Pulse Polio Immunization, the Committee requested Member Countries to have two common dates in all the SAARC countries for Pulse Polio Immunization Campaign. Member countries were urged to designate 7 December 1996 and 11 January 1997 as Common SAARC Polio Immunization Days for the first phase of common immunization.

SUB-GROUP OF CASAC MEETS IN KATHMANDU

Kathmandu, Nepal : May 7 - 8, 1996

The Sub-Group of the Executive Committee of Coalition for Action on South Asian Cooperation (CASAC) met in Kathmandu on 7-8 May 1996. In addition to discussing CASAC's programmes for 1996, the meeting reviewed developments relating to South Asian Regional Cooperation since November 1995. The meeting also discussed and made a number of decisions regarding further steps to strengthen the linkage between the SAARC Secretariat and CASAC.

Directors from the SAARC Secretariat also participated in the meeting. Director Ahmed Latheef read out the Secretary-General's statement, in which he highlighted the important role of independent groups such as CASAC in supplementing the efforts of SAARC in strengthening regional cooperation in South Asia.

CASAC is an independent group working to accelerate progress of South Asian Regional Cooperation through national and regional level activities.

While in Kathmandu to attend the CASAC meeting, former SAARC Secretary General K.K. Bhargava and a founder member of CASAC met Secretary-General Naeem U. Hasan, during which they reviewed the programmes and activities of CASAC and shared views on strengthening cooperation between CASAC and SAARC.

SECRETARY-GENERAL ATTENDS WILTON PARK CONFERENCE MEETS WITH SENIOR BRITISH OFFICIALS AND THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY-GENERAL

London : May 7-10, 1996

SAARC Secretary-General Naeem U. Hasan attended the Wilton Park Conference in London from 7-10 May 1996 as a guest speaker representing SAARC. The Conference, which had "India and her Neighbours" as the subject for discussion, was attended by over fifty participants from different fields.

Speaking on the subject "How can regional trade and economic interaction best be promoted," the Secretary-General summarized some important developments that have taken place in the direction of greater commercial and economic cooperation within SAARC. He also highlighted a number of obstacles existing in the region, such as reliance of member states to meet their import requirements from within the region, and constraints to trade expansion within the region due to restrictive policies and other impediments. While sharing his impressions and ideas as to how SAARC could further promote regional cooperation in the economic and trade fields, the Secretary-General expressed his view that economic cooperation among the SAARC countries can be significantly stepped up by addressing the problems identified in the Trade Manufacturers and Services Study conducted by SAARC in a committed and sustained manner.

The two-day Conference in its conclusion highlighted that the way forward for regional cooperation in South Asia lay in combining effective economic initiatives with confidence building measures and the promotion of dialogue at every level.

While in London the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office organised a two-day programme for the Secretary General which included calls on the Deputy Speaker of the British Parliament, Michael Morris, Minister of States Jeremy Hanley and other senior officials of the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department of Trade and Industry. The Secretary-General also had a meeting with representatives of BBC and discussed possible cooperation between BBC and SAARC.

The Secretary-General also called on Commonwealth Secretary-General Chief Emeka Anyaoku and had a meeting with Dr. Humayun Khan, Director General of the Commonwealth Foundation.

VISITORS TO THE SECRETARIAT

May 1 — 29, 1996.

- (i) H. E. Mr. Ibrahim Hussain Zaki, Minister of Tourism of Maldives, May 1, 1996.
- (ii) National Defence College Team from Pakistan, May 8, 1996.
- (iii) Delegation from the Coalition for Action on South Asian Cooperation. (CASAC), May 8, 1996.
- (iv) H. E. Mr. L.F.D.M. Soares Guimaraes, Ambassador of Brazil (Based in New Delhi), May 20, 1996.
- (v) H. E. Mrs. Jocelyn Henriquez - King, Ambassador of Venezuela (based in New Delhi), May 20, 1996.
- (vi) Mr. Abdul Latif, Chief, Regional Section for Asia and Pacific, UNDCP, Vienna, May 20, 1996.
- (vii) Delegation to the South Asian Consultation on Social Clause in Multilateral Trade Agreements, May 23, 1996.
- (viii) Mr. Khairul Huda, Managing Director, Investment Corporation of Bangladesh, Dhaka, May 27, 1996.
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(x) Mr. K.R. Venugopal, Senior Policy Adviser, UNDP, May 29, 1996.

UNDCP-SAARC WORKSHOP ON DRUG TRAFFICKING AND DRUG ABUSE CONTROL

Colombo, Sri Lanka : May 15-17, 1996

UNDCP - SAARC Workshop on Drug Trafficking and Drug Abuse Control was held in Colombo on 15-17 May 1996. The Workshop inaugurated by Secretary, Ministry of Defence of Sri Lanka, Chandrananda de Silva, was attended by participants from all SAARC member countries. Consultant at the National Dangerous Drugs Control Board and former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Colombo, Prof Nandadasa Kodagoda made the opening presentation and the UN Resident Coordinator in Colombo Arve Ofstad made the Welcome Address. SAARC Secretary-General, Naeem U. Hasan and Director, P P. Jayasooriya from the SAARC Secretariat also participated in the Workshop and made statements. Chief of the UNDCP Regional Section for Asia & Pacific, A. Latif also spoke at the inaugural session.

The Workshop which was chaired by Dr. Diyanath Samarasinghe focused on the critical areas of drug control and demand reduction, in particular sub-regional strategies to address them. The Workshop while drawing up strategies, also recommended Plans of Action in these two areas for implementation at the national and regional levels.

The strategy relating to drug control is aimed to prevent cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and consumption of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substance, through regional cooperation among the SAARC countries, to a measurable extent within 2-3 years and a continuing reduction thereafter bringing about a progressive reduction in drug related crime, accidents, and imprisonment in the region. The Plan of Action drawn up includes strengthening the existing SAARC Drug Offenses Monitoring Desk (SDOMD) established in Colombo, taking steps to enhance drug law enforcement through improved mobility, communication, surveillance techniques and laboratory capacity.

Considering that demand reduction is an essential element in overall drug control, the strategy to address this issue recommended by the meeting stresses on participatory preventive action, addressing, particularly youth, school-goers, workers and female population. It also includes research and development on preventive education and treatment/rehabilitation modalities, with a view to making the procedure more scientific and more effective. The

Plan of Action proposes SAARC/UNDCP action for exchanging information and training, especially with regard to innovative and promising approaches developed within the region, better inter-country co-operation, and improving the NGO activity within the region.

The Workshop, which was the first activity organised since SAARC and UNDCP signed a Memorandum of Understanding in August 1995, is an important step in furthering cooperation between the two organisations in the critical area of drug control and drug abuse.

NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS DEALING WITH SAARC DOCUMENTATION CENTRE

Kathmandu, Nepal : May 21 - 22, 1996

The First Meeting of the National Focal Points (NFPs) dealing with the SAARC Documentation Centre (SDC) was held at Kathmandu on May 21-22, 1996. The meeting was attended by the Coordinators from all Member Countries and Director, Tahir Iqbal Butt from the SAARC Secretariat.

While inaugurating the meeting, National Planning Commission Member from Nepal, Dr. Bal Gopal Vaidya stated that most of the developing countries are not able to allocate sufficient resources in the generation and dissemination of information and Member Countries in the SAARC region should therefore make collective efforts to strengthen cooperation in the vital field.

The meeting discussed the role of Coordinators in strengthening the system and made a number of important decisions to enhance their role. They also discussed the availability of Information Resources in their respective countries. Noting that there was sufficient information available in the region, the meeting discussed and agreed upon strategies to effectively disseminate information about these resources. They include streamlining the communication channels between the SDC and NFPs and establishing a proper mechanism to publicise the activities and programmes in this field.

SAARC Documentation Centre was established in New Delhi in May 1994 as the third regional Centre under the SAARC framework. The Centre which functions as the hub of the SAARC Documentation System (SDS) has its repositories in the member states, the SAARC Secretariat and other SAARC regional centres.

**SAARC-UNDP COOPERATION ACCELERATES GROUP
VISIT TO SYANGJA ORGANISED****May 24 - 25, 1996**

SAARC Secretary-General Naeem U. Hasan Resident Representative of UNDP in Kathmandu, Ms. Carroll Long; SAARC Ambassadors in Nepal and selected Ambassadors of donor countries and regional agencies as well as representatives from the media, participated in a field visit to Syangja — a district in Nepal — organised by UNDP from 24-25 May 1996. The trip provided an opportunity for the participants to gather first-hand information on the poverty alleviation programme being implemented by UNDP under the project No. RAS/96/600.

The programme of the three-day trip included visits to Shreekrishna Gandaki Village Development Committee of Syangja District; Kaligandaki Hydropower Project office at Beltari; Drinking water project at Barichaur; Kaligandaki project; Jaipate High School; as well as meetings with village specialists at Jaipate and village organisation members at Mirmiphant.

On May 25, 1996, the participants visited the District Development Office, Arjun Chaupari Market, Champari High School. They met with village organisation/women's organisation at Chaupari and witnessed a cheque handing over ceremony for the construction of a village road.

In the context of their poverty alleviation programme, UNDP has been trying to promote self-sufficient village organisations which would be able to undertake and sustain development works for their members. Resource generation through appropriate saving/credit scheme is at the very core of the programme and UNDP is encouraging these organisations to be self financing in nature. Only in some exceptional cases, UNDP is providing seed money to the members of the village organisations.

The visit also gave a unique opportunity to assess first-hand the UNDP led initiatives to promote social mobilisation in the member countries to eradicate poverty. UNDP has undertaken this initiative to follow up on some of the relevant decisions taken by the SAARC Head of States or Governments in the context of specific SAARC commitment to eradicate poverty from the SAARC region, preferably by the year 2002 A.D.

UNDP has recently established a special Unit in Kathmandu to monitor and coordinate SAARC/UNDP cooperation in poverty eradication.

**SECRETARY-GENERAL MEETS THE MINISTER FOR YOUTH
SPORTS AND CULTURE AND THE VICE-CHAIRMAN OF
NATIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION OF NEPAL**

May 29, 1996

SAARC Secretary-General, Naeem U. Hasan called on the Minister for Youth, Sports and Culture, Bal Bahadur K.C. on May 29, 1996. During his meeting, the Secretary-General apprised the Minister on the programmes and activities in the areas of Youth, Sports and Culture being undertaken under the auspices of SAARC Technical Committee on Education, Sports and Culture. The Secretary-General informed the Minister about the programmes for encouragement of Youth in the region, especially the proposed SAARC Youth Awards Scheme. The Minister informed the Secretary-General of the projects and programmes of His Majesty's Government of Nepal relating to youth, sports and culture.

The Secretary-General also met the Vice Chairman of National Planning Commission, Prithavi Raj Legal at Singha Durbar. During their meeting, the Secretary-General and the Vice-Chairman exchanged their views on the activities of SAARC in general and in particular cooperation among member countries in the areas of trade, and poverty alleviation. In this context, the Secretary-General apprised the Vice-Chairman of SAARC-ESCAP Project on 'Regional Poverty Alleviation Programme' - SAARC Seven Sisters : District Development Coordination and Improved Project Design, which is going to be launched at the SAARC Secretariat in June 1996.

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES IN JUNE 1996

Kathmandu, Nepal : June 4 — 28, 1996

1. Training Programme for Regional/District TB Programme Coordinators, Kathmandu, 4-8 June 1996.
2. Meeting of Group of Experts for Conducting the Tripartite Study for Expansion of Economic Cooperating including Sub-Regional Cooperation and Informal Trade, New Delhi, 6-7 June 1996.
- 3.- One Week Training Workshop on Precipitation and Flood Forecasting during the Southwest Monsoon Season, Lahore, 10-16 June, 1996. Under SAARC - Japan Special Fund.

4. First Meeting of the Governing Board of the South Asian Development Fund (SADF), Dhaka 17-18 June, 1996.
5. Seminar on Privatisation in Road Sector, New Delhi, 20-22 June 1996.
6. Meeting of Experts on Bio-processing of Foods and Enzymes, Kathmandu, 25-26 June, 1996.
7. Meeting of Producers — Joint TV and Radio Productions on "SAARC Year of Literacy 1996," Colombo, 25-26 June, 1996.
8. Workshop on Essential New Born Care, Madras, 26-28 June 1996. Under SAARC - Japan Special Fund.

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Chronology of Important Events

SOUTH ASIAN REGION

January to June 1996

BANGLADESH

- January 2* : The ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) unveiled a list of 270 candidates to contest Parliamentary elections on February 7, 1996 as the opposition renewed threats to resist the vote.
- 4* : Retired Army Lieutenant General Mir Shawkat Ali held a closed-door meeting with Bangladesh opposition leader Sheikh Hasina Wajed in a further effort to break a deadlock over elections due in February.
- 8* : It was reported that Bangladesh was paralyzed at the start of an opposition leader strike aimed at ousting Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and at least to propel was injured in scattered vigilance.
- The Bangladesh Election Commission said General Elections had been postponed, for a second time, for February 7 to February 15.
- 23* : Bangladesh Ambassador-designate to Bhutan M. Mirzanur Rahman said efforts were underway to boost bilateral trade between the two SAARC countries.
- February 4* : It was reported that hundreds of Pakistanis stranded in Bangladesh since 1971, staged a noisy protest in Dhaka against delay in their return to Pakistan.
- 14* : Bangladesh Chief Election Commissioner Justice A.K.M. Sadeque said the army had been deployed throughout the country to counter increasing violence on the eve of general elections.
- 16* : The Bangladesh Nationalist Party of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia won unexpected easy victory in general elections, but boycotting opposition leaders dismissed the vote and pledged fresh action to paralyze the country.

- February 24:* Bangladesh Prime Minister Khaleda Zia warned the opposition against violence as a fresh three-day anti government protest strike gripped the capital Dhaka and other cities.
- 25: Bangladesh opposition activist clashed with police and fought gun battles with government supporters in a campaign to force Bangladesh's newly re-elected Prime Minister, Begum Khaleda Zia, from power.
- 20: Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina of the Awami League told Richardson at the US Embassy that Bangladesh would face more turmoil unless the result of this month's election was annulled and a fresh poll held within 90 days under a neutral caretaker administration.
- March 5:* It was reported that of Bangladesh former President Khondhkar Moshtaque Ahmed, died in Dhaka.
- 9: Bangladeshi Prime Minister Khaleda Zia had asked President Abdur Rehman Biswas to convene all-party talks in a concession to the opposition amid a continuing political stand off.
- 10: The Awami League President, Sheikh Hasina had requested the President Abdur Rahman Biswas to promulgate an ordinance immediately for forming a neutral caretaker government since there is now no "Legal Prime Minister" in the country.
- 11: Begum Khaleda Zia rejected one of the opposition's principal demands, denying she would not annual February 15 general elections and wanted to solve the crisis through talks.
- 15: It was stated that a total of 272 members of Parliament out of 300 was sworn in following controversial polls on February 15, 1996 which was boycotted by the opposition.
- 16: It was reported that Bangladesh government decides to use army to open strike paralyzed Chittagong Port.
- 19: The Head of the governing Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), Begum Khaleda Zia, was sworn in as Prime Minister for a second time in defiance of opposition protests.
- Bangladesh new 13-Member Cabinet was sworn in.
- 26: The Bangladesh Parliament, attempting to end a political crisis which had gripped the nation for months, passed a bill setting up a non-party government to oversee all future general elections.
- 26: The Bangladeshi opposition rejected a government bill for all future general elections to be held under a neutral caretaker administration.
- 30: Prime Minister of Bangladesh Begum Khaleda Zia resigned and handing over power to a neutral caretaker government.

- April 1* : Former Chief Justice, Muhammad Habibur Rahman, Chief Adviser in the Neutral Provisional Administration that took office after the resignation of Khaleda Zia; who had been the target of a two-year opposition campaign. In his first address to the nation, Habibur Rahman said, "only free elections can repair disharmony in national life that is hampered because of political reasons."
- 7 : Begum Khaleda Zia easily won the February 15, polls which was boycotted by the opposition. She was resigned on March 30, 1996 allowing President Biswas to dissolve Parliament and appoint 11-Member, non-party caretaker government headed by Ex-Chief Justice Mohammad Habibur Rahman.
- The Presidential official said that Bangladesh's Chief Election Commissioner, accused by opposition leader of being partisan in the country's last elections, had resigned.
- 9 : Bangladeshi Finance Adviser Wahid-ud-Din Mahmud vowed to international donors that the caretaker government would revitalize the country's economy, gathered by two years' political turmoil.
- 22 : It was stated that caretaker government of Muhammad Habibur Rahman plans to ban bank loan defaulters from contesting general elections in Bangladesh.
- The newly appointed Chief Election Commissioner, Mohammad Abu Hena, met leaders of several political parties to arrive at a consensus on poll schedule and requested them not to raise controversial issues.
- 28 : The announcement by Chief Election Commissioner Muhammad Abu Hena that crucial general elections would be held on June 12, 1996.
- May 2* : Jailed former President Hossain Muhammad Ershad's plan to contest Bangladesh election took a step forward, when his party depute collecting application forms for him.
- June 14* : Sheikh Hasina Wajjad of the Awami League was preparing to form Bangladesh's new government.
- It was stated that results from 29 of 300 elected seats were held up after the independent Election Commission ordered partial re-polling on June 19 in 27 stations disrupted by violence and a recount in two others.
- 23 : The Awami League had won June 12 polls 1996, had secured 146 seats and Bangladesh Nationalist Party bagged 116 seats in a 300-seat house while Jatiya Party of jailed Military leader Hussain Muhammad Ershad secured third position with 32 seats.
- 23 : The Chief of the Awami League Sheikh Hasina Wajjad was sworn in as Prime Minister of Bangladesh.

June 23 : The President of Bangladesh Abdul Rahman Biswas, Administered the oath of office to Sheikh Hasina Wajjad who defeated Mrs. Khaleda Zia.

Former Bangladesh President Husain Muhammad Ershad, released on Parole, is sworn in as member of Parliament and then driven back to the Dhaka Central Jail.

29 : Bangladesh's new Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajjad warned senior defence officials not to meddle in politics, as she began attempts to reach out to the armed forces and repair a long and troubled relationship.

INDIA

January 4 : The Indian Consulate General was sealed in Karachi and its 18 staff members left for New Delhi via Bombay with their families.

13 : Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao said in New Delhi that India would accept the US help in settling its dispute with Pakistan over Kashmir, but that the two countries would eventually have to resolve differences themselves.

14 : India asked Pakistan to withdraw 15 staff members from the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi.

16 : India rejected preconditions for resumption of talks with Pakistan and said that its offer for dialogue was still open.

20 : According to Press Trust of India, India blamed Pakistan for stalled dialogue and expressed its readiness to resume unconditional talks on disputes between the two countries.

March 9 : Indian High Commission in Islamabad rejected allegations of its involvement in the recent killings of two Americans in Karachi.

16 : Responding to allegations made by Indian State Minister, R.L. Bhatia, a Pakistan foreign office spokesman described these allegations as false and clarified that 117 Indian nationals were undergoing imprisonment for their being involved in criminal activities and there were no prisoners of war.

April 10 : Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao said in New Delhi that India was ready to resume talks with Islamabad without any preconditions.

11 : India's Election Commission told Bangladesh to make its National Polls transparent and end controversies which forced former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia to step down last month.

15 : Indian Minister for External Affairs Pranab Mukherjee warned of a potential arms race in the subcontinent if Washington lifted curbs on supplying US warplanes to Pakistan.

June 24 : In India, Congress (I) finds strong ally in Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) in UP.

NEPAL

- February 18* : Nepalese Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba a long visit to India with reassurances from New Delhi on a water-sharing agreement and trade ties.
- March 13* : Nepal's Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba is to postpone a trip to China after the Communist Opposition registered a non-confidence motion.
- 26* : The Nepal Communist Party - United Marxist and Leninist Party suffered a 90 to 106 defeat in a no-confidence vote against the oust coalition government of Sher Bahadur Deuba.
- April 13* : Nepalese Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba is depart for China on a week-long official visit to seek economic cooperation and strengthen ties between the two neighbours.
- June 24* : It was stated that the Nepali government had ordered the arrest of about 100 people suspected of involvement in one of the Himalayan Kingdom's biggest financial scandals.

SAARC

- February 19* : Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar said in Colombo, that a Seven-Nation South Asian summit scheduled for April in New Delhi had been postponed on the request of Pakistan.
- May 4* : Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao said that there was difference of opinion with President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari on certain issues. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) could provide a forum to resolve issues among member-countries, "left unresolved by history". The Delhi Declaration adopted at the conclusion of the eighth SAARC summit held in New Delhi called upon the UN not to limit the focus of its attention to narrow and isolated range of objectives.

SRI LANKA

- January 1* : Sri Lanka President Chandrika Kumaratunga said that her government would take all major steps to stop the war with Tamil Tigers within one year.
- 4* : Media Minister Dharmasiri Senanayake said Sri Lanka had applied to join the 18-Nation Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) to gain stronger economic bargaining power within a regional grouping.
- 16* : Justice and Constitutional Affairs Minister G.L. Peiris said a draft of a new constitution aimed at ending the country's dragging ethnic war through a power-sharing arrangement with minority Tamils.

- February 14* : It was reported that Sri Lankan Air Force and Navy destroy a flotilla of boats and arms-bearing ship belonging to Tamil rebels.
- 26 : Sri Lankan opposition leader Ranil Wickremesinge roundly criticized the government for its war effort against Tamil Tigers separatists and for letting security in the capital Colombo lapse.
- March 16* : It was reported that Tamil rebels killed eight soldiers in Sri Lanka.
- April 8* : President Chandrika Kumaratunga brought Sri Lanka under a state of emergency in a surprise move described by the opposition as a blatant attempt to settle crucial local elections.
- May 2* : The Sri Lankan Government had decided to appoint the former Chief of Staff of the Army General Gerry H. DeSilva, as the new High Commissioner to Pakistan.
- 2 : Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga said that her government would begin direct talks with Tamil people on a peace plan to end the ethnic war.
- 4 : Sri Lanka calls off Jaffna offensive, promises speedy recovery of displaced persons.
- 6 : In Sri Lanka, 18 Tamil rebels and 14 Armymen died in Batticaloa district clash.
- June 27* : It was stated that Tamil rebels declare their opposition to a unitary form of government in Sri Lanka.

List of Publications 1981 - 96

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130. Sarfaraz Hussain Mirza *Pakistan-Nipal Relations and Future Prospects*, Vol. II, No. 1, January 1997.

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Bibliographical references should be completed in respect of the title of the book, the name of the author, the year and the place of publication.

Utmost care should be taken to prepare statistical data for publication. All headings, columns, rows, symbols, units of measurement, periods, political and geographical areas, and sources should be clearly stated in each statistical table, instead of giving such explanations in the text.

Tables, maps, and diagrams should be numbered and given at the end of the article, each on a separate sheet of paper. They should be clearly drawn so that they are suitable for photocopying as submitted.

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The Editor reserves the right to make editorial revisions.