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**Problem of National Identity of the Middle
Class in Bangladesh and State-Satellite
Television**

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**Thesis submitted to the University of Warwick for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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This thesis is dedicated to the Language Martyrs and
Millions of People who sacrificed their lives in the
Liberation Movement of Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is about the construction and reconstruction of the national identities in Bangladesh, from the Pakistan era to the birth of Bangladesh, to present time. In the light of this political framework, I am looking at the ways in which the state, through the control of the medium of television sought to shift a more syncretic and secular nationalism to a more Islamicist one called Bangladeshi nationalism. I am also looking at Satellite television and the way in which this ruptures the national identities.

The study employs the qualitative method to offer an elaborate description of the problem of this national identity by exploring the role of TV officials as cultural artists and the political brokers, as well as the state, in utilising the medium of television for inculcating the certain kinds of identities. The responses of the various professional groups as the middle class viewers of the state television and satellite television in this context has been examined, regarding the question of national identity.

The qualitative method has been employed in this work to obtain an in-depth analysis of the problem of nationalism and its association with the history, culture and religion of the middle class in Bangladesh. Through such a procedure this work contributes in demonstrating the fragmentation, multiplicity and plurality of the national identities of the middle class of Dhaka City who find the narrative of the history of the Liberation War and cultural heritage in anomalous ways in various televised programmes under the different political constituencies of Bangladesh.

Key Terms

- Bangali:** In the context of this thesis the term refers a nationalism based on Bengali language, syncretic culture and secular spirit.
- Bangladeshi:** The term has been used in this thesis to indicate a nationalism based on the religio-territorial distinctive identity of the people of Bangladesh.
- Bengali:** The term indicates the name of a language in this thesis. It is the State Language of Bangladesh. This language is also spoken by the people of the West Bengal in India.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AL	Awami League
ADP	Annual Development Project
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BNP	Bangladesh Nationalist Party
BTV	Bangladesh Television
CNN	Cable News Network
CSP	Civil Service of Pakistan
DBS	Direct Satellite to Broadcasting
DD	Doordorshan (Indian national telecasting)
ETV	Ekushy Television
GATT	General Agreement on Trade and Tariff
GNP	Gross National Product
JSS	Jatio Sangskritik Sanggathon
JP	Jatio Party
MTV	Musical Television
NBA	National Broadcasting Authority
NEC	Nikkon Electric Company
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NIP	New Industrial Policy
RIP	Revised Industrial Policy
STAR TV	Satellite Television Asian Region
STV	Satellite Television
TV	Television
TVRO	Television Receive Only Dish
US	United States
USSR	United States of Soviet Russia
VCR	Video Cassette Recorder

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This thesis is about the invention and reinvention of national identity in Bangladesh involving Bangali versus Bangladeshi nationalism, which has generated a massive debate in post-independent Bangladesh. This thesis explores the nature of the problem of this identity by focusing on interactive association between middle class and television in Bangladesh.

Context of the Study

Historically, Bangladesh has emerged as a modern nation state, based on Bangali nationalism and there was no problem with the concept of this cultural nationalism until 1975. The birth of Bangladesh as a nation state on the basis of a separate linguistic cultural identity demonstrated a new form of development in the process of nation formation in the region. It raised new question on the problem of national identity and challenged the concept of nationalism based on religious nationalism. The area seemed to have moved away in 1971 from its initial commitment to 'Muslim Nationalism', which had earlier helped the creation of Pakistan and opted for a secular nationalist ideology. Although the concept of Bangali nationalism is the antithesis of the religious ideology of the pre-1971 era, the passion for secularism did not last long as the country soon passed into a period of uncertainty following the death of the founding father, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Indeed, since 1975 the state has moved into the opposite direction where the state principles of secularism and Bangali nationalism, enshrined in the Constitution of 1972, have already been replaced by an open commitment to an Islamic way of life (Ahmed, 1983: i). This resurgence of Islam has been blended with a new form of nationalism, which is called Bangladeshi nationalism in contemporary Bangladesh.

The difference between Bangali and Bangladeshi nationalism the thesis finds lies on the conflicting interpretation of religion and culture, including the notion of syncretic Bangali culture and the ethos of Islamic cultural tradition. Whereas language and culture remain as two important elements in Bangali nationalism to express the symbolic identity of the people of Bangladesh who collectively share the homogeneous social customs and behaviour as the inhabitant of their common territory, there Bangladeshi nationalism defines Bangladesh predominantly as a Muslim region by emphasising on Muslim cultural heritage in case of defining the national identity of the people of Bangladesh.

By analysing, the root of the conflict of these two of types of nationalist discourse the thesis discovers their intricate association with the doctrine of Two-Nation Theory, on which Pakistan was founded and India was divided. The Theory of Two-Nation was based on the idea that Hindus and Muslims were the two separate nations due to which they could not co-exist in a united India. Hindus and Muslims might be intermingled all over and every region of India, they might be having common ancestors but according to the doctrine they were proclaimed to be two nations- two Indians. Whereas the Indian Muslim League demanded for a separate homeland for Muslims based on that Two-Nation Theory, there the Congress leaders of India perceived such analysis as unnatural. India in their conceptualisation remained as a secular state, constituting one culture and one nation where all Indians irrespective of their religions were the successors to the common cultural heritage (Chitkara, 1997).

The middle class of Bangladesh contributes in a paradoxical manner in the process of the construction and reconstruction of several themes and sub-themes of nationalism. Its double role has been manifested in the transformation of the society from the religion based Muslim nationalism to linguistic based secular Bangali nationalism, particularly between 1952 and 1971 as well as in replacing that Bangali nationalism to Bangladeshi nationalism by regarding the religious distinctiveness as the determinants of its collective identity. Although the middle class of Bangladesh

played the historical role in the construction of Bangali nationalism by inspiring the people with a new sense of nationalism based on language, culture and tradition and paved the way for the Bangali nationalist movement, in post-75 Bangladesh that middle class contradicts itself with its new political doctrine where religion has been amalgamated with its national identity.

This shifting of the boundary of the dominant national identity from culture to religion offers an interesting insight to the social scientists. Indeed, the ambivalence in the middle class of Bangladesh is remarkable since at one-time linguistic and at another period religious identity appears as dominant indicator in its national identity. While the middle class has emphasised its differences with others at different times in different ways, the choice of its symbols has also been changed. Thus, in 1947 after the partition of India, the middle class of the then East Bengal tended to distinguish itself more from its Hindu neighbour than any other and emphasised the Islamic content of its national identity. That religion based Bangali Muslim nationalism was modified in 1967-71 when language appeared as a powerful instrument primarily in response to domination by the Urdu speaking Pakistani elite, especially for those in Eastern Bengal who lived under Pakistani Colonial rule (Ahmed, 2001: 4).

The current ambiguity of the middle class in Bangladesh has been more problematic. Torn between the forces of secularism and militarism, the middle class is now facing a profound dilemma about its own history, culture and religion. Although since 1975 Bangladesh has been tinged with militarism which has reinforced the Islamic principle and anti-liberation forces (Jahangir, 2002) and has struggled for constructing its own Bangladeshi culture which in its own language would not only be isolated from the Bangali culture in neighbouring India but would also be acknowledged by the whole world, it has not succeeded in fulfilling these objectives. Instead of solving the problem of national identity, it has generated a new one. Due to military intervention in power politics, over the course of the last couple of decades Islamic content has a greater influence in the society.

Within the few years of independence as Bangladesh has been transformed into the period of political turmoil, the search for identity of the middle class has been mixed up with a wave of scepticism about the history of their liberation war, root of Bangali culture, the spirit of secularism and the Islamic ideology (Khan, 2002: 7-24). Since the nationalist ideology of the middle class thus has undergone a great deal of transformation, the people who belong to the class are now in an age of identity crisis. They therefore wonder who they really are. Are they Bangali or Bangladeshi or Muslim? Are they Bangali in the first place and Muslim in the second place? Or are they Bangladeshi in the first place or Bangali in the second place or vice-versa? The concept of nationalism thus suffers from a series of contradictory features: Bangali versus Muslim nationalism as well as Bangali versus Bangladeshi nationalism.

Statement of the Problem

The nationalism dilemma is not a new phenomenon in Bangladesh. It is in fact an old debate in a novel form. The problem of identity of the middle class in Bangladesh is formulated in the contradiction between the two major elements of their identity: compound-religion and language. Because of the duality of heritage, Bangladesh has not been intertwined into a single whole to form a frame of consensus on national identity (Banu, 1992: 150). Since the middle class of Bangladesh is faced with such a dilemma regarding their national identity, a section has attempted to overcome the problem by disowning the indigenous element of Bangali culture and merging their identity completely into the whirlpool of the religio-cultural tradition of medieval Islam. In parallel there are others who not only have ignored the pervasive impact of Islam but have also discovered their identity on the basis of purely indigenous Bangali cultural milieu (Ahmed, 1983: 39).

Scholars have attempted to explain this dilemma of nationalism from their own point of view. According to the liberal secular intellectuals, the political ambition of the

military bureaucrats is responsible for the replacement of national identity in post-independent Bangladesh. In the name of Bangladeshi nationalism, they argue it has revived the Islam based civilisation of Bangali Muslim in contrast with culture based Bangali nationalism (Khan, 2002: 10). The argument has been challenged by the conservative and Islamic scholars who assert that the Muslims of Bangladesh have been drawn by religious bond with Islamic world for centuries. Religion according to their analytical framework remains as a powerful force in the nationalist project to determine the political and cultural identity of the people of Bangladesh. Although the birth of Bangladesh seemed then to be a negation of the religious ideology, after the political change of 1975, the military administration of Ziaur Rahman proceeded to render an Islamic character to the state because it was expected (Maniruzzaman, 1994: 14).

Immediately after the inception of Bangladesh the linguistic based secular and cultural nationalism thus faced the new challenge as the religious spirit was revived with too much zeal. Although a delicate question which includes where the ultimate loyalties of the people of Bangladesh lies has been originated from this replacement of national identity, no satisfactory answer has been given in this regard. Rather a group of scholars like Jamil Ahmed (2002: 304) has attempted to simplify the issue by arguing that Bangali nationalism is neither religious nor linguistic based in character. It is rather a synthesis of both. Mushrafi's argument is no way different as she also urges that language and religion as both are equally powerful will continue to exert an authoritative influence on the middle class of Bangladesh (Mushrafi, 1986: 215).

Nationalism thus remains as a complicated phenomenon in Bangladesh. In the context of such ongoing debate about the themes and sub-themes of nationalism, this research offers a new insight to comprehend these complexities of national identities in the context of the socio-political and cultural history of the middle class and their relation with the visual media, both state-owned and satellite television.

Aim of the Study

Since in Bangladesh the problem of identity crisis brings into a sharp focus between the concept of Bangali as well as Bangladeshi nationalism, this research looks at the contribution of the middle class and television in case of promoting and shifting these two modes of nationalist discourse. The aim of this thesis is to investigate the ways in which television has altered and shifted the ways in which the nationalist identity is projected and produced.

It is often argued that media produces inclusive and exclusive form of nationalist identities with varying degree of significance (Deol, 2000). As nationalism is a pertinent subject for a visual medium like television, the investigation, which I propose to make in this study, is to know how the concept of nationalism is produced and reproduced by the languages and programmes of state television in Bangladesh in order to create new identity and political choice among its middle class. Although television is one of the major disseminators of culture in Bangladesh, it does not function independently, as it is state controlled. Accordingly, the influence of television on politics of identity cannot be understood without looking into the whole fabric of political procedure of the governing elite of Bangladesh. The broad concern of the present study therefore is to provide a sociological analysis about the role of the government of different political shades and the middle class intellectuals including the cultural artists and the news broadcasters, who contribute in the process of formation and transformation of nationalism by using the cultural medium of television.

The advent of satellite television has become another controversial issue in Bangladesh today. Although the remote cultures have become accessible in the daily life of the middle class viewers in Dhaka City through the programmes of satellite television, this free flow of foreign culture has equally raised several possibilities and

concerns. The study also seeks to explain the nature of the recent identity crisis of Bangladesh in the context of the penetration of global culture.

Theoretical Relevance

In order to conduct this piece of research, the researcher considers a number of theoretical paradigms in connection with middle class, nationalism and television, three key concepts of the proposed study.

Middle class is one of the most problematic concepts of the study, which needs to be understood historically and sociologically. This thesis does not adopt the concept of the middle class as either one, which is identifiable in a positivist sense or as a group, which is culturally homogeneous. Rather it takes the insight of Wahrman (1995) who denies accepting the argument that middle class plays the central role in activating the political events in history. By placing the political process at the centre, he rather argues that politics exerts a greater role in making the image of middle class in social history. By analysing the relevant historical researches, Wahrman draws the conclusion that middle class is an imagined community, an invented conception. He goes on to argue that the characteristics of middle class, which are often considered as universal, do not exist in reality. The very conceptualisation of middle class is the resultant features of the political processes and political languages. By examining the patterns of historical development from French Revolution to the period of Reform Bill of 1832, the author has attempted to show how the political configurations, such as French Revolution, French War and Reform Bill of 1832 created the very idea of English middle class.

This theoretical insight of Wahrman occupies an important place in the thesis since the linguistic movement, supported by the early television, created and gave space for a very specific kind of national identity in pre-independent Bangladesh, which was driven by the middle class individuals.

Another important aspect of Wahrman's analysis is that, the image of middle class in his view is invented under the particular political circumstances, and accordingly it has been considered as a myth by him. Myth does not deny the things, as its function is to talk about them and gives them a natural and eternal justification. By adopting this view from Barthes, Wahrman stresses that this is what exactly the middle class does by rendering itself as a natural and self-evidently visible part of the society. By simplifying the complexity of human acts, it provides a cogent story line that explains its origins and justifies its existence. As middle class creates its own image in such a way to protect its own self-interest, it was not so much the 'rising middle class' that was the crucial factor in bringing about the Reform Bill of 1832. Rather according to Wahrman's analysis, it was more the Reform Bill of 1832 that was the crucial factor in cementing the invention of the ever-rising middle class (Wahrman, 1995: 18).

In the light of these scholarly arguments, this thesis adopts Wahrman's insight to examine the nature and character of the middle class of Bangladesh in order to understand its fragmented national identity. Indeed, Wahrman has documented the social construction of the middle class under different political environments with its different political idioms, philosophies and narratives (p.223-272). The image of the ever-rising middle class in his analysis is a political production. Although the pattern of the historical development of the middle class of Bangladesh is different from the English middle class, this research aims to explore its contradictions and complexities by analysing the socio-political and cultural history in Bangladesh. Hence, whereas Wahrman emphasises on political languages including the political speeches, debates, pamphlets in the formulation of the myth of the middle class, there by investigating the nature of the several streams of nationalism in association with the major political processes of Bangladesh, this work intends to demonstrate how the notion of the both Bangali and Bangladeshi middle class were produced by the language and the image of television.

Middle class and nationalism are two interrelated phenomena. Historically, both are post-feudal concepts and seen as the response to modernisation, which is identified with the breakdown of the traditional social order based on ascribable status, the erosion of the religious authority and associated with secularisation (Keating, 1996: 2). While both middle class and nationalism represent the expression of the outlook of secularism against the theocratic value system of medieval culture, contain the notion of equality of right against the hierarchical society of feudalism and reveal the idea of cultural modernity, their association is inseparable. Both are conceptualised and formed in the framework of the philosophy of modernism, equality of right and secularism. While the phenomenon of nationalism is so closely associated with the middle class including certain traits and characteristics, for Wahrman, the Englishness of the English middle class is very apparent in its colonial guise.

Despite such affiliation, the term nationalism like middle class also suggests that it is one of the most ambiguous concepts in the present day vocabulary of political and analytical thought (Alter, 1994). Although we find multiple categorisations of theories in nationalism, this section will mainly review the modernisation theories, primordial views and subaltern approaches in order to understand the contemporary theoretical debate on nationalism.

The scholars who have made important contributions to our understanding of nationalism from the modernisation perspective are Kedourie (1960), Gellner (1983), Anderson (1983), Hobsbawm (1990). These theorists explain the genesis of nationalism through the industrial transformation of European society and its spread throughout the rest of the world through colonialism. Nation in their view is not a universal phenomenon. Although nations tend to imagine themselves as old (Eriksen, 1993: 101), they are rather modern and the direct result of particular development in late eighteenth-century western European and North American history (Alter, 1994: 1). Being modern phenomenon nationalism precedes the nation and engenders nation. The nation belongs to a particular and historically recent period and relates to a

certain kind of modern territorial state, the nation state (Hobsbawm, 1990: 47). Nationalism is not the awakening of the nations to self-consciousness. Rather it invents nation where they do not exist (Gellner, 1964: 169).

By refusing to define a nation by a set of external and abstract criteria, Anderson conceptualises the nation as an imagined political community. He fundamentally negates the classical image of nation and argues that the nation is thought out, created. For Anderson, all communities are in fact imagined. Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/ genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined (1983: 6). Indeed, one of his important contributions is that he intends to establish the link between the origin of national consciousness and the introduction of print capitalism. Nationalism according to his theoretical framework was a product of print capitalism as well as associated with the advent of vernacular-based political wisdom. His central thesis is grounded on the argument that communication and media contributed in the emergence of nations as imagined communities (1983: 37-46).

Both the paradigms of Anderson and Wahrman have been employed in this work as they emphasise on the conceptualisation of nationalism and middle class by challenging the conventional historical narratives. While both the terms are regarded as the invented conceptions, in the light of these theoretical frameworks this thesis intends to demonstrate how the national identity is conceptualised by the middle class as well as is imagined and invented by television in Bangladesh. The originality of this research work lies on the fact that, it does not merely follow the Andersonian model. Rather it demonstrates its distinctiveness by exploring the contributions of the television in case of constructing and the reconstructing the national identity in Bangladesh. Instead of the print media, it brings into focus the role of television, a visual medium, in the formation and transformation of national identity in the context of different political environments and configurations in Bangladesh.

The modernisation theories have been reviewed by the primordialists on the issue of the modern origin of the nations. By focusing on the historical and social origins of nations, Smith (1986: 216), the main primordialist has argued that ethnicity provides one of the most pivotal models in the formation of modern nations. Hence, it was made possible because of the presence of a relatively homogeneous ethnic core. By declining the great divide between the pre-modern and modern Hastings also addresses that, ethnicity turns into nations when their specific vernacular moves from an oral to written usage for the production of a literature and particularly for the translation of Bible (1997: 1-2).

The theoretical debate on nationalism has entered a new stage since the late 1980s (Ozkirmli, 2000: 191), due to the rise of a new approach which explores the contradiction in the mainstream writings of nationalism because of its Eurocentric or West-centric (Yuval-Davis, 2000) outlook and gender-blind character. According to this new approach, although women were and are never absent from the nationalist discourse, most theorisation about nations and nationalism, sometimes even those written by women (for example Greenfeld, 1992) have ignored gender relations as irrelevant. This important gap was filled by scholars like Nira Yuval-Davis (2000), Floya Anthias (1989) and Deniz Kandiyoti (1991) who categorised the major dimensions of nationalist projects into genealogical, cultural and civic dimensions and argue that gender relations play an important role in each of these dimensions and are crucial for any valid theorisation of them.

The Western theories of Third World nationalism have also been criticised by a group of scholars, notably by the Subaltern Studies Group of India, who have offered a 'non-Western centric' interpretation of anti/ post-colonial nationalism. Scholars like Partha Chatterjee and Ranjit Guha endeavour to reveal how the hegemonic discourse of the West served to suppress the voices of the subalterns of the former European colonies. As the most important instrument in this process was knowledge, Chatterjee demonstrates (1986) how Western theorists with their emphasis on the power of

reason and the dominance of the empirical method, have assumed that their presuppositions are universally valid and through the impact of Western education, have imposed concepts of nationalism on non-Western people to the detriment, if not destruction, of their world views.

Among these contemporary scholarships on nationalism, the study adopts the 'imagined community' model of Anderson in order to investigate the historical development of nationalism in Bangladesh. As Anderson speaks of the transition from sacred communities and dynastic realms to the 'imagined community of nation' (1983: 17-8), his model has become particularly useful for this study. Bangladesh has come into being as a nation state on the basis of Bangali nationalism after the independence from Pakistan in 1971. Although Pakistan was a theocratic state where Islam was used to determine the Muslim identity for its people, there Bangali nationalism flourished as linguistic based cultural nationalism to resist the aggression of Urdu language and dominance of Pakistani culture.

In the process of the creation of Bangladesh as a modern nation state, Bangali nationalism thus emerged as a novel nationalism, both culturally and politically by including language and cultural factor as well as ideology of secularism. Indeed, the key factor for the adoption of the model of 'imagined community' is that this study traces the role of television in case of promoting Bangali national identity among the middle class in Dhaka city by considering the arguments of Anderson who has explained the linkage between print capitalism and imagined political community. Moreover, this thesis extends the argument of Anderson from the sphere of the print media to electronic media by analysing the role of television in case of formation and transformation of national identity among the middle class of Dhaka city in Bangladesh.

Hobsbawm's thesis has also been used in this piece of work to understand the nature of Bangladeshi nationalism as an invented nationalism. His writing on invented

tradition can be considered as a repudiation of the theory of pre-modern origin of national tradition. Although a group of scholars in Bangladesh is now considering the Bangladeshi nationalism as an original form of nationalism for its people, this thesis will retrace its root as an invented nationalism in the analytical framework of Hobsbawm and will show the instability of the invented national identities.

One of the major objectives of the thesis, the researcher has already mentioned, is to investigate how television does function paradoxically in Bangladesh for the production and reproduction of national identity among her middle class. In examining this role of television in the context of socio-political and cultural atmosphere of Bangladesh, this thesis considers the centrality of television in shifting and shaping the national identities. Indeed, extending the theoretical model of Anderson, this research strongly emphasises on the role of television in case of promoting Bangali national identity among its middle class leading up to independence in Bangladesh.

Research Method

This thesis addresses the issue of nationalism in relation to middle class and television in Bangladesh, which has emerged as a modern nation state in 1971. It traces the replacement of Bangali national identity from a secular cultural identity to Bangladeshi nationalism particularly in the context of Islamisation process of Bangladesh. The study therefore focuses on some historical conditions and major political processes, which contributed in making these differences. The method, which is used in the study, is fundamentally socio- historical. In order to get an insight about the middle class of Bangladesh, its struggle for linguistic right and liberation, its changing perception and the ideas after the political change of 1975 as well as the development process of state and satellite television in Bangladesh, this thesis offers a socio-historical analysis.

Since the proposed research deals with a number of inter-related issues including middle class, nationalism and television, ranging from their social origins to recent social, religious and political developments, it depends on both primary and secondary sources of data collection. Among the primary sources, the speeches of major political leaders, constitutional documents, and brochure of Bangladesh television (BTV) are included. The opinion of the middle class viewers, a group of TV officials/ artists and intellectuals of Dhaka city are also analysed in the study to know how they find the reflection of their national identity in the programmes of BTV and STV in the changing context of socio- political and cultural atmosphere of Bangladesh.

These semi-structured depth interviews were conducted during the period of fieldwork in Dhaka, at the first phase from August 2001 to February 2002 and later from July 2003 to December 2003. The first substantive chapter of the thesis is particularly based on the ideas, contributions and political affiliation of the cultural artists and the news broadcasters of the television who played the significant role in producing the programmes to promote the Bangali national identity among the middle class viewers in Dhaka city. The chapter also explores the impact of the programmes of television in the case of constituting the Bangali national identity on the basis of the expression and perception of the middle class viewers of Dhaka city.

This research depends on the qualitative method because of its interpretative approach and character. As I want to bring into focus the problems of the themes, sub-themes of nationalism and the inherent contradictions of the middle class character, an in-depth qualitative approach is needed. Indeed, by analysing the role of television since this thesis intends to investigate its association with the political culture and nationalism dilemma of middle class, without a close in-depth study, I do believe it would not be possible to get the actual scenario. Not only that, as satellite television is a recent phenomenon in Bangladesh, this aspect of my research work also needs to be explored and therefore depends on qualitative method.

I employ the semi-structured depth individual interview (from semi-structured format to more open-ended discussion) in the research because of the character of my research topic and research questions. The issue of Bangali versus Bangladeshi nationalism has generated the heated political debate in Bangladesh today because of the interpretation and reinterpretation of history, culture and religion from the conflicting point of views. As this thesis attempts to reopen these debates by investigating the historical and cultural programmes of television, it uses the semi-structured depth individual interview.

Importance of the Study

This research offers a new insight to understand the process of construction and reconstruction of national identity through the medium of television in Bangladesh. Most previous studies on nationalism in Bangladesh have attempted to explain the concept of nationalism either from the ideological or political point of view. By avoiding this traditional mode of approach, the study considers nationalism as a historical invention, especially through television. Although television emerged in the decade of sixty in Bangladesh, no sociological research has been conducted in this field yet. While the subject remained unexplored this thesis contributes almost in the virgin land by examining the problem of nationalism in nexus with the state and satellite television and offering an in-depth analysis about the imagination and invention of the national identity in Bangladesh,. As the scholars of Bangladesh equally overlook the problem of nationalism in the context of the penetration of satellite television, this work enters a new phase of scholarship by showing how the national identities are shaped and reshaped by the state and satellite television in Bangladesh over time.

Although nationalism is one of the burning issues at the moment in Bangladesh, the process by which the state-control of television has sought to stamp a particular form

of nationalism on to the national psyche has remained unexplored. Nationalism is still considered as a subject of political debate or political matter in Bangladesh. In the environment of such prevailing reality, this research proposes to turn the existing political dispute into a sociological debate by covering a variety of issues including several themes and sub-themes of nationalism, complexities of middle class as well as construction and reconstruction of the national identity by the state television. Moreover, it aims to fulfil the gaps of the previous studies since some of the delicate issues and fundamental questions have neither been touched nor answered by those studies. Hence, the study intends to start its quarry from the end point of the previous scholarly works which have been done by Ahmed (2002), Banu (1992), Mushrafi (1986) etc. in order to trace the root of the current debate of Bangali versus Bangladeshi nationalism. This thesis thus is a useful reading for the students, scholars and politicians who are interested in the ways in which the national identities are sought to be created.

Conclusion

This research is a challenging and stressful work due to its qualitative and political nature. The researcher would not be in an easy condition since some of the questions, which are raised through this work, are very sensitive and directly contradict with the popular political sentiment. Despite this existing reality, I do believe that this research will contribute in the national development of Bangladesh by unveiling some hidden issues and raising civic awareness against political polarisation and political division of the nation.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Introduction

A review of literature is an essential part in any research process. I have reviewed several bodies of Bengali, South Asian and Western literatures, articles, newspapers and reports from the multi-disciplines in order to get an insight about the proposed research subject. In this chapter, I will shed light on those specific intellectual traditions, which help me to understand the problem of nationalism in the context of social construction of middle class and television in Bangladesh.

Middle Class and its Problem of Definition

For a thoughtful and insightful discussion of middle class, I have considered a number of historical and contemporary documents. By analysing those scholarly literatures I have found that defining the middle class has always been contentious due to its heterogeneous and fragmented character (Butler, 1995: 26).

Although from the general perspective middle class is often perceived as a class, which embraces the burgeoning social groups who are considered to exist between the lower and the upper class (Robison, 1990: 27), there is no consensus among the scholars about its exact definition and its composition (Kidd and Nicholls, 1998; Savage, et al 1992: xi). The major problem in writing about the middle class is its boundary problem. Whether the middle class would be placed into the binary oppositions or would be described by their own distinctive role is a subject of great debate (Butler, 1995: 26).

Various types of literature have attempted to advance our knowledge of the middle classes from the conflicting points of view (Savage, et al 1992). Thus, there are some abstract analyses where the middle class has been placed in the framework of the class structure and stratification. These go back a long way to the works of Marx and Engels (1948) and Weber (Giddens, 1973, 1984) and in the

recent past have been particularly evident amongst Marxists who try to explain the relationship between the middle class, the capitalist and working classes (Wright, 1989; Abercrombie and Urry, 1983). There is another type of literature, which comprises of broad descriptive overviews of work, culture and lifestyles of middle classes. Lewis-Maude (1949) and Raynor (1969) have particularly focused on this aspect of the middle class. Finally, there are a good number of studies on the changes in occupational and social mobility on the middle class. Goldthorpe (1980) in this context has popularised the concept of service class due to arrival of the new members of the middle class – the office workers, the managers, the scientists who are neither the capitalist nor did they correlate with earlier conception of the industrial workers. They had arisen as a result of the growing size and scale of industrial, commercial and state bureaucracies (Vidich, 1995: 2).

Political and Cultural Role of English Middle Class

The political and cultural role of the English middle class has been analysed in the homeland of the colonisers and reflected in its politics and philosophies. A group of classical and modern sociologists have highlighted the role of the English middle class for introducing the laissez-faire as the principle of trade and breaking the monopoly of political privileges, which the owners of feudal estates enjoyed before (Raynor, 1969; Robertson, 1987). This new group of people, who came to share these rights, did not require the religious sanction. Rather they rose into the higher social and political grades by their wealth, education and power. By emphasising the importance of the natural rights of man and human dignity, it became a major engine for the fundamental transformation of the society (Misra, 1961: 3). It was also the presence of the aggressive entrepreneurial spirit among the middle class that came to confront the aristocracy with demands for the abolition of patronage and the Reform of Parliament (King and Raynor, 1969: 49-50).

There is a couple of studies which focus on the particular lifestyle and political influence of the middle class by arguing that the old bourgeoisie or protestant ethic of hard work and gentlemanliness helped the rising middle class to

accommodate a new political order in the nineteenth century. Perkin (1969) in his book has asserted that, the prime mover of eighteenth century social and economic life was emulation, a competitive urge to out-earn and to make one's way into the ranks of England's relatively open ended life. In Hutbar's work, the appreciation for good manner, a respect for the voice of the authority, belief in hard work and enterprise as well as the spirit of patriotism has been identified as the important marker of the cultural distinctiveness of the middle class (1976).

Such perspective has been challenged by Wahrman who has argued that politics is the major terrain where the various choices of the particular conceptualisation of society are contested (Kidd and Nicholls, 1998). By avoiding the unilinear narratives, which often project the universal existence of British middle class, he has portrayed it as an imagined community, which was invented by the political process and political language of the society. Hence, by raising the question, how, why and when the British did come to believe that they lived in a society around a middle class, he has emphasised on three political events. French Revolution, French War and Reform Bill of 1832 in his account played the significant role in creating the image of middle class as 'ever rising sun' (1995).

Among these scholarly works the thesis relies primarily on Wahrman's narrative as it intends to explore the diverse national identities which are created by the middle class with new political vocabularies to construct its ever rising image in the context of changing political configuration of Bangladesh.

Emergence of Middle Class in South Asia

The above scholarly works demonstrate that, there is no consensus among the scholars about the social formation and the basic features of middle class. Since the emergence of middle class in South Asia is also a complicated social process, this literature review points out some of the debates about this question.

The emergence of the middle class in South Asia including contemporary India and Bangladesh is the result of a long evolutionary process, which is particularly

connected with the history of the nineteenth century. Whereas the history of nineteenth century has been marked as the history of modernism, nationalism and Bengal Renaissance by one group of scholars (Ahmed, 1994; Sarkar1981) there is also another model, which creates a particular narrative of middle class in the light of Hindu Revivalism and Muslim Separatism (Osmany, 1992; Muhammod, 1981). Due to such scholarly debates and the contrasting interpretations of history, there is no straightforward way to define and analyse the character of that middle class either as a progressive or the conservative class. Rather this debate demonstrates the middle class of South Asia as a problematic phenomenon since its inception. While the middle class emerged through a paradoxical condition where modernism, rationalism, secularism confronted with religion, tradition and culture the subsequent periods of history had also been determined by these contradictory features of the middle class. Hence, by considering the middle class as a contentious class, this thesis explores its dual character and paradoxical operation in the context of the political environment of the pre and post-independent Bangladesh.

Although the growth of European middle classes and their social importance was connected with the rise of capitalism, the history of Indian middle class reveals a quite different story. Their history is exclusively connected with English education, improved communication, commercial progress, land reform process and the administrative system of the said period. Among the much early historical writings, B. B. Misra's (1961) book presents a descriptive overview of the middle class by tracing its growth and development from about the middle of the eighteenth century to modern times. It has particularly focused on the composition and character of the middle classes by revealing their heterogeneity, conflicting interest and professional variation. Such descriptive account is still helpful for any researcher of today. Indeed, there is an attempt to show how the Indian middle class exhibited an element of uniformity in their behaviour as well as in their mode of thinking and social values.

Binoy Ghos (1969) has also documented the historical pattern of the emergence of middle class in his book, particularly by focusing on Bengal. Desai's (1976) analysis is an attempt to examine the social background of Indian nationalism in the context of social development of Indian middle class and their responses to Western education and philosophy. The work of the both scholars are inspirational for the researcher as these include a comparative analysis to trace the social origin, the upward mobility of the nineteenth century middle class, and their positive and negative influences in the society.

Due to advent of British rule in India, a heterogeneous middle class who was merchants, traders as well as professionals emerged for the first time in colonial Bengal. Among them the educated middle class who were generally known as *Bhadralok* and *Ashraf* particularly draw the attention of the both early and modern social historians because of their association with the anti-colonial nationalist projects. Hence, in order to know about how the terms *Bhadralok* and *Ashraf* could be conceptualised, I have reviewed some more literatures.

The development of *Bhadralok* as a distinctive cultural group linked to English education and professional position became an important subject in the writing of the authors like Broomfield (1968), Khan (1987), Murshid (1983), Sarkar (1981), Sarkar (2002) etc. In their analysis *Bhadralok* remained as a status group, who were predominantly Hindu, the dweller of the Calcutta city, gained a new sense of cultural identity and got a passionate attachment to Bengali language and literature. As a distinct cultural group it revealed its aesthetic experience by breaking its association with older culture of the extravagant *Zamindar* and *Kabiwalas*. It cultivated its own cultural artefact with more sophistication and moralist zeal by divorcing itself from the pattern of consumption of Babu Culture and dogmatic ways of the general mass (Sarkar, 2002: 169).

Babu is an old Bengali word of Persian origin which was used by the Bangali social satirists with a negative connotation in the early nineteenth century. The word then was used by them to satirise the culture of the 'Nouveau Riche' for

their upward economic and social mobility. By adopting the term, the British coloniser also used it in a negative usage for the demonstration of the social climbing or money grubbing attitude of the Indian middle class in colonial India (Sinha, 1995:17).

Although the *Bhadralok* demonstrates the antagonistic relation with the aristocracy and greater gentry, Bhattacharjee (1992: 58-67) in his writing has attempted to manifest how the aristocratic culture of century had been replaced by the Babu culture. The emergence of Babu Culture has challenged the concept of the 'gentility' of the *Bhadralok* class. In the culture of *Bhadralok* class there was a concern to cultivate a 'civilised' outlook, based on the learning of liberalism and rationalism from Western education. The term Babu broke that image as it showed those *Bhadralok* who then displayed a lavish life, patronised the cultural consumption and spent the time in convivial settings. By exploring the 'middleness' of the *Bhadralok*, Chatterjee (1992: 41) portrays another image of the class. By revealing the ambiguity of the middle class, he particularly focuses on the subordinated and dominant attitude of the nineteenth century *Bhadralok*. It was such a class, which was politically and economically dominated by the British on the one hand, but created its own hegemony in its cultural sphere and social institutions, on the other hand.

Like the concept of *Bhadralok*, *Ashraf* is another complicated phenomenon which reveals the complex social structure of the Muslim community of the nineteenth century India. By examining the social evolution of Bengal Muslim between the sixteenth and nineteenth century, Karim (1980), Ahmed (2001) and Eaton (2001) have emphasised on this concept to demonstrate their segregation from the other strata of the Muslim community. *Ashraf* identity according to their analysis was the cultivation of high Persian-Islamic civilisation and a claimed descent from the immigrants from west of Bengal. The distinctive place of that status group rested upon their refusal to engage in agricultural operations as well as in case of opposing the Islamisation of native Bangalies who did.

Although both *Bhadralok* and *Ashraf* were that small group of people who enjoyed their educational and occupational privileges as well as economic position, their difference was fundamental. Whereas the *Bhadralok* succeeded in creating an autonomous world of Bengali art and literature in the context of print media, vernacular and indigenous culture, there the *Ashraf* considered themselves as the representatives of an authentic Islamic culture and formed a distinct social entity by adopting Urdu rather than the Bengali as their own vernacular. As the conflict between the local and alien culture thus was started by the both strata it put an impact in the historical discourse of the sub- Continent of India. The social origin of the crisis between Bangali versus Muslim identity, which is very much connected with the paradoxical socio-political environment of Bangladesh, thus could be traced in the social division as well as distinct outlook of the *Bhadralok* and *Ashraf*.

The crucial changes evident in the nineteenth century as involved the novel formation of profession, the rising Muslim middle class, who were popularly known as 'Bangali Muslim' became another problematic concept for the social scientists. The concept has an ambiguous character due to which its emergence entailed a problematic relationship with aristocratic and indigenous culture. As the class has been formed with very close links to educational provision and economic prosperity, its value of cultural artefacts found the association with Muslim gentry- by excluding their relation with indigenous culture of Muslim peasants and artisans of rural Bengal (Karim, 1980). The scholars including Ahmed (2001), De (1998), Umar (1999), have attempted to find out the fundamental problem in conceptualising the notion of Bangali Muslim by analysing their religious ideas, political thought and vernacular (Ahmed, 2001).

Cultural and Political Attributes of the middle class in Colonial India

The South Asian scholars have also used a variety of ways of seeking to understand the nature and the role of the middle classes in nineteenth century Bengal. Social progress, religious reforms, the remaking of gender and the developments of print media and language discourses have particularly received

much attention. Judgements have also been debated regarding their relation and role with the term Renaissance.

Much of the debate on the character of nineteenth century middle class has been centred on the idea of transition from tradition to modernity, orthodoxy to liberalism, colonial dominance to political emancipation, which is closely associated with the image of Renaissance. Two scholarly traditions help us to understand its complex relation to the history of colonial Bengal and modernism. In the writing of the scholars like Ghosh (1969), Sarkar (1981), Bhattacharjee (1986), Ahmed (1994), the term Renaissance has been portrayed as a cultural awakening which was first felt in Bengal due to impact of British rule, transformed economy and modern education. By exploring the role of the demagogues of the Bengal Renaissance this scholarship carries the clear implication that, through their activities and social thought they contributed in advancing the country towards economic and political emancipation from the colonial rule and also towards the social progress of its people from the stagnant condition in which they had been rotting in the eighteenth century.

In the eye of this group of scholars the first quarter of the nineteenth century has been characterised as the initial phase of the reform movement in the areas of religion, gender and social thought. Within the Muslim community the contribution of Sir Syed Ahmed, Abdul Latif and Syed Ameer Ali has been evaluated with great regard by Masselos (1985), Ahmed (1994), Osmany (1992). The scholars appraised their role for their effort to bring about the Islamic Renaissance by introducing Western knowledge and modern outlook within their community.

This interpretation of Renaissance as being modern and progressive has been negated by a group of modern sociologists and historians who seek to demolish the excessive adulation of nineteenth century intellectuals and reformers as their activities had been hindered by the colonial constraints (Sarkar, 1999: 316). Renaissance in their narrative was exclusively urban in nature and confined within

the socially privileged class who did not have any direct relation with the masses. Their activities were hindered by the class interest as many of them were the wealthy landowners and the indigenous capitalist bourgeoisie (Bhattacharjee, 1992; Manjur, 1990). The scholars of sub-altern studies has contributed in the debate in modifying the historiography of anti-colonial nationalism through a focus on 'pressures from below' and exploring the ways in which elite nationalism might have both inspired and constrained the popular initiatives (Sarkar, 1999: 316).

The modern scholars have also examined the importance of the relationship between the printing press and the expansion of the colonial middle class. Sarkar (2001: 4) has particularly focused on that resource of the nineteenth century in order to demonstrate how popular vernacular prose, newspaper helped both the highbrow and lowbrow to reflect their distinctive interests and values. The development of a distinctive culture as was linked to professional position, the literary aspect of the bi-lingual colonial middle class has also drawn the attention of the scholars like Kaviraj (1995), Chakrabarty (1999), Chaudhuri (2002). Chaudhuri's (2002) work has explored those poets who were the first members of newly formed Indian middle classes to express themselves in literary term inherited from an education in English.

Bankim and his writing become one of the central themes in Kaviraj's analysis to show how he contributed in the forming of the Bangali world of modernity. Bankim according to Kaviraj (1995: 162) gave to the modern Bangali the palette with which it became possible for the first time to paint intellectual and imaginative pictures of modernity. Bankim, in his view, inaugurated a modern and mature form of historical self-reflection as well as shaped a language, which had the richness, variety, and suppleness to engage in such a task.

By examining the nature of the bilingual text Chatterjee has demonstrated how the colonial middle class was influenced by the European logic and metaphysics to dispute with the Indian philosophical discourse. The middle class nationalists

although did manage to preserve an autonomous world of literature, Chatterjee argues their mind was split into two. Both contestation and mediation had been rooted within the new middle class mind (1992: 44-45). Whereas these scholarships emphasise on the literary works to portray the construction of the nationalist spirit of the middle class in the colonial period, this thesis brings into the focus the historical construction of the nationalist ethos of the Bangali middle class through television from 1964 to 1971.

Although the literature is few on middle class women of the colonial Bengal Murshid (1983) has attempted to disclose how a section of English educated Bangali men exposed their women to the process of modernisation during the late nineteenth century and how women responded to those male efforts. Amin's (2001) analysis was based on the selected writings of Rokeya to show how her dream was an attempt to bring about a change in societal attitudes to women.

Middle Class in Contemporary Bangladesh

In the light of the political atmosphere of contemporary Bangladesh, the role of the military bureaucrats, foreign aid and the expansion of the middle class has been explored by Roy (1994), Sobhan (1993), and Ali (1993) etc. These scholars have also attempted to trace the social origin of the 'Nouveau Riche' of Bangladesh by analysing the impact of militarization, free-market economy and policy of denationalisation. Although gender is still a neglected subject in the academic field of Bangladesh, Kabeer's work is an exception in this case who has intended to show the changing role of women in the context of nationalism paradox (1989). All these sociological analysis and political controversies provide a framework for the study to comprehend the political procedure and politics of identity of the middle class in Bangladesh today.

Nationalism and its Problem

Nationalism is a chameleon like phenomenon, capable of assuming a variety of forms. It is a multidimensional concept, which includes several elements such as common descent, language, territory, political entity, customs or religion.

Both the primordialist and the modernist school interpret the origin and character of nationalism, from the conflicting perspective. In the view of the primordialists nations are primordial entities embedded in human nature and history which can be identified through distinctive culture expressed by way of language, religion and culture (McCrone, 2000: 10). The essence of the modernist view is that nationalism is a cultural and political ideology of modernity, a crucial vehicle in the 'great transformation' from traditionalism to industrialism, and in particular the making of the modern state. Nationalism in this framework becomes the successor to religion as secular glue, which binds the society together. For modernists it is a result of social breakdown and the collapse of traditional values, which replaces religion as the key to salvation for a secular generation (McCrone, 2000).

For the foundation of the principles of modern nation, modernists emphasised on homogeneous linguistic culture with a distinctive vernacular. The modern nations in their view are the cultural artefact (Anderson, 1983). The modernists also consider the modern nations as industrial societies with a high degree of economic and cultural integration, which do not tolerate significant and abiding cultural inequalities (Gellner, 1983: 25).

As the modernisation theory considers nationalism as a modern phenomenon, cultural artefact and secular doctrine where the language plays the crucial rule, the theory is very much related to this work. While the thesis explores the emergence of Bangladesh as a modern nation state in the light of the linguistic based secular Bangali nationalism, which falsifies the Two Nation theory of theocratic Pakistan, modernisation theory is appropriate within such historical context.

Nationalism and its Relation with Middle Class

Despite the ideological differences, both the modernists and primordial philosophies acknowledge the contribution of the intellectual in generating the cultural nationalism as well as providing the ideology for political nationalism

(Gellner, 1983; Anderson, 1983; Hobsbawm, 1990; Smith, 1991, 1997; Hutchinson, 1987; Hroch, 1996; Eriksen, 1993; A-Cin Hsiau, 2000). For Smith it is the intellectuals-poets, musicians, painter, or the folklorists who propose and elaborate the concepts and languages of the nations. The first true nationalism in Andersonian conceptualisation was developed in the various Creole-led independence movements. The publications and writing of Creole intellectuals in his view contributed in fostering the national consciousness in the colonial countries (1983: 47-65).

While these scholarships highlight the role of the intellectuals for shaping the concept of the national identity and influencing the nationalist movement, the researcher finds the importance of these literatures in her own work. To bring into focus the role of a group of cultural activists as TV officials who performed a significant role by portraying the distinctive cultural traits of Bangali nationalism on TV screen from the year 1964-1971, the thesis finds the relevance of this tradition in the work.

Anti-colonial Nationalism and its Problem

Anti-colonialism is one of the main forms of nationalism. Colonialism Breuilly understands (1985: 125) can be seen as conquest, and nationalism as the means by which the conquest was brought to end. In the light of the modernist doctrine of nationalism, colonialism enabled many non-European societies to acquire the European characteristic. Nationalism in this doctrine is an ideal wholly conceived

in Europe and a completely alien concept in Asia and Africa (Deol, 2000). The doctrine of nationalism it asserts has been diffused in Asia and Africa through the Western educated elite. Since the indigenous elite were imbibed by current European political thought and were deeply stirred by European dominance, the disaffected Western educated bi-lingual elite constituted the vanguard of anti-colonial nationalism in Asia and Africa (Kedourie, 1960; Anderson, 1983 and Gellner, 1983).

This view of the modernist has been challenged by the scholars of the Sub-altern Group as well as the primordialists. Gellner and Anderson, both the scholars have been criticised by Chatterjee as they have universalised Western experience for the rise and diffusion of nationalism and underplay the experience of colonialism. Indeed, for him both anti-and post-colonial nationalism, although is a derivative discourse was never totally dominated by the Western models of nationhood (1986). By separating the domain of culture into two spheres, the material and spiritual, he has argued that, Third World nationalism could not imitate the West in every aspect of life, for then the very distinction between West and the East would vanish and the self-identity of national culture would itself be threatened (Chatterjee, 1993, 1995).

The modernist paradigm on colonialism has also been criticised by the primordialists because of its self-contradictory features. Although the modernists argue that nationalism superseded a religious view of the world, by citing the example of Asia and Africa, they demonstrated (as Smith) that it is in some sense rather a religious belief system. The approach is influential to understand how the traditional discourse focused on spiritual emotionalism, being an integral part of age-old religion in the anti-colonial nationalist movement in India. This analysis is also helpful for this research work to understand the insight of the Islamists and the Bangladeshi nationalists who consider Islam as the most important determinant of the collective identity of Bangladesh by claiming their descent from the Islamic civilisation.

Role of Middle Class in anti-Colonial Nationalist Movement

Like the mainstream scholars of nationalism the scholars of India and Bangladesh have also expressed their opposite views about the role of middle class in anti-colonial nationalist movement (Deol, 2000; Ahmed, 1994; Chowdhury, 2002; Umar, 1999). Although *Bhadralok* Hindu and *Sharif* Muslim have spearheaded the nationalist movement, their search for identity could not find the enlightened road to a composite nationhood. By investigating the reason of it, the scholars

have discovered that both groups of middle class suffered from the inner contradiction. Hence, at the one hand, the colonial middle class manifested a growing interest in European and national thought whereas on the other hand, there was an increasing attachment with them to the traditional ideas and religious orthodoxy.

The dichotomy in the social outlook of the Hindu and Muslim middle class profoundly affected the subsequent course of the nationalist movement in India. Indeed, in the last decade of the nineteenth century, nascent Hinduism was infused with Hindu-revivalism due to which the idea of composite and secular nationalism embracing Muslim and other communities did not occur in the country (Osmany, 1992). In order to search for identity, the Hindu intelligentsia was not only swayed by fervent patriotism but also developed a Hindu ethos by putting emphasis on Hindu mythology, vocabulary, symbols and traditions. Since at this stage of history Indian nationalism was dominated by a Hindu middle class and had a Hinduism look, it created a sense of fear within the middle class of Muslim community (Poddar, 1977: 34). This sense of fear was further sharpened by the vitriolic writings of Bankim Chandra on the Muslims (Osmany, 1992: 19). This stress on Hindu nationalism not only alienated the Muslim middle class but also produced an intellectual and cultural apprehension due to which they started their own movement to find out their distinct and different destiny. Hence, then they were inspired by the belief that the Muslims in India were bound by common interests, and ideologically as well as emotionally they constituted a Muslim nation in India (Masselos, 1985: 125).

By negating such religious interpretation, a group of modern sociologists have focused on the process of 'embourgeoisement' (middle class factor) to understand the complex nature of nationalism in India. For Ahmed (1997), Umar (1999) etc. thus neither religion nor communalism rather middle class itself emerged as a key factor for the analysis of the communal problem and the Partition of India. These phenomena in their view are the resultant features of the politico-economic clash of interest between middle stratum of the Hindu and

Muslim communities. Indeed, by examining the conflict of Hindu-Muslim middle class, the scholars have demonstrated how for variety of self-interests, a feeling of fear grew among the middle stratum of the both communities. The spirit of nationalism since in their analysis did not cease to move on a mono-dimensional plane due to self-interest of the colonial middle class, the approach has increased researcher's knowledge to analyse the present day crisis of national identity of Bangladesh in the light of the political and material objectives of the both Bangali and Bangladeshi middle class.

Role of Language in the Nationalist Movement

The role of language has been increasingly investigated by the mainstream scholars in the social construction of national identity. Whether language is a necessary or sufficient criterion of national identity although remains, as a subject of great debate, the view that a person's individuality resides in its language is very old. Herder (1744-1803), a classical German scholar is often regarded as the originator of the theories that treat nationalism as a movement based on pre-political communities of language. These Herderian ideas are now central to the 'ethno-symbolist' approach to nationalism (Benner, 2003). Language has also become a determining marker of nationality for the scholars of modernisation school who do believe that nations are quite novel in their territorial consolidation, cultural homogeneity and political integration through legal citizenship rights (Anderson, 1983; Breuilly, 1982; Gellner, 1983; Hobsbawm, 1990; Kedourie, 1960).

For the growth of national consciousness Anderson (1983: 9-36) has exclusively emphasised on print language which was inseparably associated with the vernacular and the imagination of the modern nation. The convergence of capitalism and the print technology on the fatal diversity of human language in Andersonian model created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation. Language for Anderson is important not only for its symbolic value. Rather language itself is an instrument, which contributes in the imagination of a nation.

In the recent past some more works have been done on language issue where Crameri (2000) has attempted to discover the ways through which the novelistic language express the collective history and the national identity in Post-Franco Catalonia. Ramaswamy's (1997) work is another example, which demonstrates how one's love for one's language can go to such an extent that one, may be willing to give up one's life in its name. The issue of one's emotional attachment to his/ her mother's tongue thus has been indicated in her work. These linguistic discourses contribute in the thesis in identifying the association among the vernacular nationalism and the emergence of Bangladesh as a modern nation state in 1971. This thesis takes from and extend the Andersonian model to analyse how does language play an instrumental part in case of imagining the Bangali national identity among the people of Bangladesh, through television.

It is often argued that the emergence of Bangladesh as a modern nation state is the result of the Bangali nationalist movement due to which Two-nation Theory of Pakistan has been falsified. Although a couple of Western scholars have attempted to analyse the birth of Bangladesh as a separatist movement either by emphasising on geographic factor (Alter, 1994: 115) or socio-economic conflict (Jaffrelot, 2002: 18-22) or political process (Breuilly, 1985: 229-230), most scholars of Bangladesh have negated this view by considering the struggle of Bangladesh as a Liberation Movement which can not be regarded as merely a war to achieve only independence for Bangali nation (Ahmed, 1995: 5). It was in their view a culmination of a series of struggles and its purpose was to establish democracy, nationalism, socialism and secularism for a total revolution in society (Cowdhury, 2002; Umar, 2002; Ahmed, 1994).

The birth of Bangladesh they also argue was the first instance of a linguistic nationalist movement succeeding in creating a new state in the post-colonial period. At the end of the British colonial rule when India was partitioned in 1971 on the basis of Two-nation Theory, two successor states – the predominately Hindu India and predominately Muslim Pakistan were created. Bengal Muslims

then enthusiastically joined Pakistan emphasising their Muslim identity. But when the ruling elite in Pakistan started an assault on Bengali language and culture, Bangali Muslims resisted the attack by stressing their Bangali identity over the prevailing Muslim identity. The struggle for the assertion of linguistic identity together with their struggle for democratic participation and economic emancipation ultimately made the break-up of Pakistan in 1971 (Jahan, 2002: 42).

Indeed, after the creation of Pakistan it was soon seen that the West Pakistan was being turned into a supplier of raw materials and consumer of finished goods (Khan, 1996: 69-73). As Pakistan was a geographical incongruity, where the two halves of Pakistan were around 12000 miles apart, Islamic fervour was the only cementing factor in that case (Singh, et al 1999: 1). But the slogan of Islamic solidarity and brotherhood did not last long. A new phase of conflict started between the Bangali and non-Bangali Muslim middle class over the language issue since then language became the determining principle of domination in all aspects of social life. Historically, the language issue took the form of a conflict with the rulers of Pakistan within the months of the inauguration of the new nation. Then the central government of Pakistan gave strong indications that Urdu was preferred as national language and Bengali could not have a place alongside Urdu (Bakul, 2000; Shafi, 2001; Anwar, 1998; Mukul, 1999).

The conflict assumed the more complex form in February 1952 when the Pakistan police fired upon the student demonstration in Dhaka, which resulted in the killing of a number of students. The blood of the martyrs of Language Movement brought about a new cultural and political awakening for the Bangali Muslim middle class in East Bengal. Since then they gradually came to realise that, their national identity was Bangali rather than Muslim. As language itself emerged as a new factor for the construction of that new cultural identity, for the scholars of Bangladesh, it is right to say that Bangali nationalism was born out of that feeling. Hence, the legacy of 1952, consecrated by the deaths and sacrifices of 1971, they argue provides the basic principles for Bangladesh; the secular nationalism with

roots in language, soil and democracy (Chowdhury, 1996; Ahmed, 1994; Murshid, 1994; Umar, 2000).

Although the linguistic movement was initiated and led by the teachers, students and intellectuals, it was not confined only as a cultural movement within the middle class of then East Pakistan. Rather it soon turned into a political one including the lower echelon, the working class and the common people who joined the Bangali students and political nationalists for autonomy of former East Pakistan in 1954, revolt against Ayubian autocracy in 1969 and fought for the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971. Indeed, due to uneven economic and cultural development of two wings of Pakistan, the relationship between and among the classes within that colonial state was not equal. Under the circumstances, both the cultural and political nationalists of East Pakistan played the dominant role in revealing the exploitative and repressive role of the Pakistani colonial state through their cultural and political movements.

However, nationalism is not only an expression of the articulation of class hegemony. Rather it is also an expression of the neutralisation of people in a historical situation (Jahangir, 2000:34). While a class can not assert its hegemony without articulating the people in the nationalist discourse, the Bangali middle class needed the support of the subaltern to mobilise the class movement against the Pakistani colonial discourse. Hence, by organising the urban workers, rural peasantry and the common people, the Bangali middle class acquired the political strength and gathered momentum for the Bangali nationalist movement by challenging the theocratic basis of Pakistan.

Resurgence of Islam and the Problem of National Identity in Bangladesh

By analysing the socio-political history since Pakistan era to post-independent Bangladesh, this thesis identifies both Bangali nationalism and Bangladeshi nationalism as two distinct categories to demonstrate how the confrontation between the language and religion, indigenous Bangali culture and Islamic

tradition has been started as the fundamental problem of the nationalist discourse in contemporary Bangladesh. Although Bangladesh was achieved through a secular nationalist movement, the country sees the resurgence of Islamic political spirit after the first military coup of 1975. Most Islamic parties although opposed the Bangali nationalist movement, the resurgence of these forces has been one of the most significant political issues of Bangladesh since 1975. Indeed, between August 1975 and March 1982, Bangladesh placed greater importance on improved tie with the Middle East countries and used every symbol to highlight the Muslim identity. Since during the period the country has been transformed from the secular state to theocracy, the Constitution of Bangladesh enacted by the Constituent Assembly in 1972 had been amended in 1979. Thus, Bismillahir-Rahmanir Rahim (In the name of Allah, the merciful and magnificent) and complete trust in Allah were made the part of the Bangladesh Constitution by General Ziaur Rahman through a Martial Law Ordinance in a referendum in 1977 and then formally through the fifth Constitutional Amendment in 1979 (Kabir, 2002: 160).

In order to understand the mode of political change of Bangladesh the writing of several scholars has also been re-examined. Scholars like Jahangir (2002), Anisuzzaman (1999) Ahmed (1994) have attempted to demonstrate how the Liberation War of Bangladesh was fought against the political abuse of Islam, or how did Bangalies achieve a consensus on down playing religion as a central principle of the new found sovereignty. They also focus on secularism, which had been incorporated as one of the fundamental principles state policy of new constitution during the period of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. But there is another intellectual trend, which has intended to explain why General Zia and Ershad saw the significance of having Islam as a basic principle of state policy (Khan, 2002: 8). A group of scholars like Maniruzzaman (1994), Ziring (1994) have justified the rule of military bureaucrats and highlighted the role of Zia for giving the new Bangladeshi identity to its people by deleting the term Bangali nationalism from the constitution. The term Bangladeshi nationalism in their view has been justified

for the people of Bangladesh as it marks their difference from the people of West Bengal.

Since Islam has been blended with this new form of identity, this change demonstrates not only a new political trend in the society. It also indicates a new crisis of national identity, which has assumed a complex form since post-75 Bangladesh. Several questions have been raised about the role of Islam in the politics of Bangladesh with contradictory interpretations. The liberal secular and leftist intellectuals of the country attribute the rise and expansion of Islamists in Bangladesh to the function of the country's prolonged military authoritarian rule since the overthrow of the secular, Bangali nationalist and socialist regime of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on 15 August 1975. They also argue that these communal, reactionary and pro-Pakistani military governments, as part of their legitimisation efforts allowed the Islamists to organise and expand (Ahmed, 1994 and Malek, 2001). The Islamists on the other hand suggests that Bangladesh is one of the most populous Muslim countries in the world. Hence, in a country with about 85% Muslim population, Islamic resurgence is natural and expected. This philosophy has been supported by the exponent of the Bangladeshi nationalism who stress on religio-territorial distinctiveness of Bangladesh by disowning the cultural heritage and linguistic identity of the people of the country (Hamid; Huda; Anam, 1994).

Since thus Islam has assumed an important place in the context of on going debate between the secular versus non-secular nationalism in Bangladesh, I have also reviewed the work of those scholars who consider religion as one of important determinants of nationalism. Although for the modernist nationalism supersedes a religious view of the world (McCrone, 2000: 10), Hastings contradicts the view by arguing that nations, ethnicity, nationalism and religion are four distinct and determinative elements within European and world history. None of these can be safely marginalised by either the historians or the politicians concerned to understand the shaping of modern societies (Hastings, 1997:4). As the relation of religion and nationality is historically varied a group of scholars has attempted to

demonstrate how religion contributes in continued existence of nationality in diverse ways. In the 'Saffron Wave' Hansen thus argues that Hindu nationalism has emerged and taken shape neither in the political system nor in the religious field, but in the broader realm of public culture – the public space in which a society and its constituent individuals imagine and represent themselves through the political discourse, cultural expression, and representation of state (Hansen, 1999: 4).

Jaffrelot's work traces the changing fortunes of the extreme Hindu nationalism that in his view have become successful by adopting the strategy of ethno-religious mobilisation focusing on emotive issues such as Ayodhya movement (1993). Peter Van der Veer analyses the historical contradiction of Hindu and Muslim identities by arguing that these are spread by the institutionalised devotionalism and shaped over time by pilgrimage, migration and more recently by print and visual media (der Veer, 1994).

Focusing on gurus and their involvement in the World Hindu Council (VHP), Mckean unveils how gurus are the key players in popularising militant as well as moderate forms of Hindu nationalism (Mckean, 1996). She equally demonstrates how gurus and the VHP popularise Hindu nationalism through the imaginary such as the goddess, mother India and her martyrs sons and daughters.

By analysing the relation among state, Islam and nationalism a group of scholars like Vatikiotis (1991), Mehmet (1990), Brenner (1993), have shown the contradiction between Islam and nationalism because of the religio-political demands of Islam. Since Islam is more than a religion as well as a whole tradition and a political culture, these scholars have found the persistent contradictions in the political behaviour of Muslims within the nation state outside and beyond it. Not only that, by demonstrating how Islam is used as a handy device by the weak state in several countries of the world, Nasr's (2001) study looks to the Islamisation process.

Gender and Nationalism

Gender has become another important subject in contemporary nationalist project. The scholars including Yuval-Davis (2000), Anthias (1989) Kandiyoti (1991) have attempted to provide a gender understanding of nations and nationalism. Indeed, they have investigated the gender formation of sanctioned male theories and brought into focus women's active cultural and political participation in the process of nation formation.

In the philosophical framework of the Subaltern Group, the position of women was also central to the colonial gaze in case of defining the indigenous culture (Chakrabarty, 1997; Visweswaran, 1997). One of the central themes in the process of cultural decolonisation for Chatterjee (1990) was the redefinition and reconstruction of sexuality and gender relations. The home in his narrative became the discursive site of nationalist victory in India when the world has been ceded to colonial state. The male nationalists then turned towards home and redefined women's place within it as a spiritualised inner space in order to contest with the colonial hegemony.

By focusing upon the development of Hindu cultural nationalism of nineteenth century Bengal, Sarkar has also attempted to demonstrate how due to print revolution the issue of gender including widow remarriage, Sati became the subject of public oral debate as well as how women and their domestic work served as the target of both nationalist appeal and blame (2001). Amin in her work also focuses on gender by arguing that, for the transformation of the colonial society into a form of modern state, the issue of women's reform movement had compelled the male reformers and the nationalists of the time to actively consider the question of middle class women's participation on public life (2001: 140).

As these scholarships explore the role of women in the nationalist movement, the study appreciates their approach by revealing the history of nationalist movement of Bangladesh. Indeed, by analysing the significance of linguistic movement of 1952, the thesis endeavours to show how gender becomes an important issue in

the Bangali cultural nationalism where women's *Saree, tip or bindi* and black badge assumed the form of indicator for distinguishing the Bangali national identity from that of the Muslim identity of Pakistan.

Television, Politics and their Paradoxical Relation

In order to get the theoretical knowledge about the reciprocal influence of television and politics, several body of literature including both old and modern have also been reviewed. The appraisal of media study is influenced by the modernisation thinkers who contribute in introducing the view that media is power. A number of early modernisation theorists notably Lerner (1958), Schramm (1964) are influential in this case who have explored the role of media in the context of development and social change of the Third World countries. In the recent years, the power of media has been re-examined by the media analysts but their focus has been shifted from development communication to political communication (McNair, 1995). Two distinct interpretations have been found in this regard to demonstrate the complex interrelation between television and politics. By emphasising on the ubiquitous influence and the pervasive role of mass media scholars like Bourdieu (1998), Browne (1997) argue that television plays the key role in providing the ideas, shaping people's attitude and forming the public opinion through the demonstration of images and events. While media thus embraces the power, for Mancini, Swanson (1996) and Street (2001) they contribute in determining the fate of the politicians and the political procedures by directing the governments and their constituents.

This image of media has been critically re-evaluated by another model of scholarship which affirms how mass communication contributes to the process of political transition depends on the form and function of the media in a given society. Its function is often shaped by socio-economic, political as well as cultural factors (Goodwin and Whannel 1990). The works of Maxwell (1995), Splichal (1994) and Gupta (1998) help to our understanding about these interrelated issues. Maxwell's (1995) account is indicative in this context as it negates the contribution of television in bringing about the historical transition

from the phase of dictatorship to democracy in Spain. In his narrative it was rather the intentional activities of the individuals, civil society and politicians who shape the larger social transformation from dictatorship to democracy in Spain (p: xix-xxi).

The growth of television in William's (1992) understanding is equally determined by economy, state and mobile privatism. On the basis of these determining principles he demonstrates the association between media form and institutional development of the state. The Marxists and neo-Marxists tend to see media and culture in the framework of ideology and superstructure, determined by the economic relations of production and the relations of classes. While the ruling class constructs and circulates the ideas, the media in their view serve either to mask class differences or to hinder class conflict by diverting people's consciousness into various forms of consumption (Berger, 1982).

The scholars of the cultural studies contain another type of controversy about the power of media. Whereas Glasgow University Media Group (1970) put emphasis on mass communication by exposing the systemic class bias of television studies (Stevenson, 2002), there Fisks and Harrison consider the audiences as more powerful than the media as they reject the preferred readings of television news (Skidmore, 1993).

While television in Bangladesh operates as a cultural institution and the political apparatus for the party in power, these multidimensional perspectives help the researcher to understand how media play the crucial role in the political transition or how the politics of alteration remain as a decisive cause in the media transformation of the society. While such association is reciprocal, this literary tradition assists the researcher to examine how the television is used in politics and how does it operate as a cultural institution in Bangladesh.

For the democratisation process, the modernisation thinkers emphasise on the role of media by arguing that media offer a wide variety of voices and views and help

to sustain the political plurality for representative government in a society (Morgan, 1989; Skidmore, 1993). Democratic society requires access to information, as it is vital for critical analysis and political mobilisation. O'Neil's (1998) view is influential in this context as he demonstrates how media imparts the knowledge, which could restrain the centralisation of power and the obfuscation of immoral state operation being the fourth estate of the government.

Such views has been challenged by the scholars including Alpers (2003), Yong and Jesser (1997), Choldin and Friedberg (1989), Bredin (1982), Lent (1982), Gunewardena (1983) who rather investigate how media is dominated by the political actors and serve as the straightforward propaganda agencies of the controlling party. Media in their analysis have been depicted as manipulative and subversive of individual freedom and political choices. By citing the examples of several countries including France, Spain, Portugal as well as the Third World and the communist countries, they have attempted to unveil how both the military and the civilian governments use media to control information and censor television news and even the entertainment shows. While the authoritarian rulers are concerned with the de-mobilising and repressing their subject population, the defining characteristics of the authoritarian/totalitarian model is strict government control of the media with the view to impose the social and political doctrine upon them.

This is also true in a number of democratic countries where the former colonial government broadcasting monopolies were taken over by the independent regimes and used virtually in the same manner. Thus in many Asian, African and the Latin American countries, the broadcastings are used by the state for the political interests, which is answerable to the Ministry of Information and which provide the information and communications in support of the government programmes. Even in some cases, the public broadcasters remain under the direct government control and those who oppose the government in the political sense often become under intolerable political pressure (Index on Censorship, 1984, 1983). While this thesis brings into the focus the role of the state television of Bangladesh, it

demonstrates its paradoxical operation as the political mouthpiece of the government under different political regimes in Bangladesh.

Indeed, the association between the government and mass media has given rise to many basic questions. All governments develop some policies aimed at regulating them, as they understand the political importance of media. The regulation of broadcasting by government is synonymous with censorship, which is the most obvious form of state control. Censorship is a method which includes variety of processes, overt and covert, conscious and unconscious, by which the restrictions are imposed on the collection, display, dissemination, exchange of information, opinions, ideas, imaginative expression and on the life of the independent artists and the intellectuals (Jones, 2001: xi).

Censorship although takes the different forms in different political settings, broadcasting is often threatened by the governments in the developing countries through ownership, regulation and prevention of free expression. The state authorities in these countries rely on a system of censorship by closing the alternative publications, restricting access to electronic communication, centralising the news services and through harassment as well as economic sanctions (Index on Censorship, 1994, 1984, 1977). The revocation of the licenses or supplies, jail terms against journalists to the extremes of tortures and murder, have equally become the common features in many African and Asian countries, including Nigeria, Kenya, Philippines, Sri Lanka, India etc.

By analysing the different issues of Index on Censorship, I have thus found how the freedom of expression and information remain under increasing constraint in these countries. While the censorship of media is justified where the media is deliberately and directly used as the vehicle for repressive state power, this line of argument has been re-examined in this thesis to unveil the degree and form of state control in the media policy of a developing country like Bangladesh.

Media and Nationalism

Some scholars of media studies are more concerned with the relationship between mass communication and nationalism. Anderson (1983) emphasises on the historical role of print technology by considering it as the creator of imagined communities. To demonstrate the cultural expression of nationalism outside the control of established forms of religious authority, he sheds light on print revolution. The history of sixteenth century according to his model combined print capitalism's need to find new markets, the technological advances of the printing press and the expression of languages other than Latin. As these factors contributed in creating new languages of power, according to Anderson print has supplied the cultural resources for national forms of uniformity (p.37-46).

Although identity itself is a complicated phenomenon, several forms of identity including personal as well as political are exhibited by mass media in their images and sounds (Gripsrud, 1999; Angus and Jhally, 1989). By focusing on political culture Rajagopal thus demonstrates how media reshape the context in which politics is conceived, enacted and understood (2001, p.1). Indian Doordarshan in his view played a decisive role in case of popularising the Hindu nationalist ideology by broadcasting Ramayan, a serialised Hindu epic, which ultimately brought the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) into political prominence. Gokulsing's (2004) work is equally influential while he attempted to trace how the two popular soap operas, Ramayan and Mahabharat contributed in altering the secular notion of national identity of India.

These studies facilitate researcher's insight about the role of media, particularly the television, which shapes and reshapes the national character and contemporary pattern of feeling and thought in multiple directions. The theoretical argument of Anderson particularly occupies an important place in the thesis to trace the association of the vernacular television and linguistic based Bangali cultural identity of the middle class in pre-independent Bangladesh.

Globalisation and the Emergence of Satellite Television

Globalisation has become the key term for the analytical account of the satellite television. The term was influenced by McLuhan's notion of global village introduced in his book *Exploration in Communication* (1970). Globalisation for the modernisation thinkers demonstrates a long process, which is closely linked up to capitalism and modernity (Friedman 1994, Giddens, 1990; Robertson, 1992). It is also seen in their view as spatial and temporal change (Giddens, 1990). The doctrine is based on the idea that the world is becoming a single world society through technological, commercial and cultural flow and interdependence.

The notion of globalisation has been extended from the networks of economic and financial flow to cultural globalisation after the emergence of satellite television. The emergence of satellite television constitutes a new mode of horizontal spatial relations through the procedure of intermixing and the hybridisation of culture where the physical distance is no longer a barrier and instantaneous mass communication across the globe is possible (Hoogvelt, 2001; Westwood and Phizacklea, 2000; Sreberny-Mohammadi, Winseck, Mckenna and Barret 1997; Waters, 1995; Pieters, 1995).

The thesis of cultural imperialism appeared as a critical approach towards the thesis of cultural globalisation. The thesis of cultural globalisation has been repudiated because of its justification of the world-wide spread of capitalism and the dominance of America over Europe and the West over the rest. While development and underdevelopment in its view is reinforced by the economic exploitation and cultural aggression, media in this context is used as a tool of domination to create dependency for the developing countries. The well-known dependency scholars like Schiller (1976, 1969) McPhail (1989) have attempted to show how the rise of American as well as Western corporate powers and their ideological expansion via media pose a threat to the Third World countries.

Such approach of the dependency thinkers have been criticised in the recent years since due to language barrier and socio-political empowerment of the growing

middle class of the developing countries, the process of the electronic penetration could not reach at the grass root level as the dependency thinkers predicted (Thompson, 1997). In parallel, the history of 'out-vision' has added a new dimension in the discourse of media globalisation process which offers a more complex picture than the narrative, constructed by the advocate of the media dependency thinkers. Despite such criticism of the imperialism thesis, globalisation is still considered as a complex process by a group of scholars in connection with media consumption and formation of hybrid identity. Giliespie (1995) thus unveils how the young people of Southall, London, negotiate between the local and global cultures, which travel their life.

By exploring the nature of the present era of globalisation, Appadurai asserts that the translated cultural identities are the destined result of the simultaneous globalisation of media communications and the development of trans-national diasporic communities (1996). Electronic media demonstrate novel means and disciplines for the creation of imagined selves and imagined world. By altering the prevailing domain of communication and conduct, electronic media in his view form a new circumstance where both global and modern are apparent as the two aspects of the same coin. Whereas the print media was fundamental for imagining the nation, there the electronic media assume even the more powerful character. They do not work exclusively at the level of the nation. Rather, they play the key role between the work of imagination and the emergence of a post-national political world (1996: 3-4).

Electronic mass mediation and transitional mobilisation in Appadurai's narrative have shattered the monopoly of sovereign nation-state over the scheme of modernisation. The modification of individual perception through electronic mediation and the work of imagination is not merely a cultural phenomenon. It is profoundly associated with politics. While the electronic mediation provide large and complex repertoires of images, narrative and ethnosopes to the viewers throughout the world, the world of commodities and world of news as well as politics are thoroughly integrated with it (Appadurai, 1996:10). The mediascopes

from such a perspective assist the immigrant communities to reinforce their cultural association with the living ethnoscope (Appadurai, 1990: 14).

All these information are useful to understand both the external and internal factors which are responsible for the emergence of satellite television in an information poor country like Bangladesh and its contribution in altering the very notion of national identity of the middle class of the country.

After the fall of the Communist World, the term globalisation came into widespread use and generates a new debate in the academic field. By revealing the more complex form of global media flow, a group of scholars have endeavoured to tie up the intersection between different global regions and local conditions (Stevenson, 2002). Straubhaar's (1997) analysis thus demonstrates how the new technologies of cable and satellite present a new phase of globalisation and a new level of regionalisation. The multiple channels of the satellite television in his understanding have targeted at geo-linguistic group across the national border. By exploring the impact of satellite television in five Asian countries, Page and Crawley (2001) have shown how globalisation is still an uneven process at the regional level. Such approach has been considered with special importance in this thesis to find out how the regional channels along with the global channels put an impact on Bengali language and cultural tradition of Bangladesh. Particularly, the emphasis has been given on the Hindi language channel in this context.

Other Research Materials

The help of both local (as Nirishka, Daily Star) and international journals and newspapers (Index on Censorship, Asia Week, and Public culture) have also been taken for the preparation of this research work.

Conclusion

In order to conduct this piece of work I have thus reviewed the different schools of theories and the various sociological debates to understand how the previous research has been done on middle class, nationalism and television, the key

themes of the proposed research. The review of these relevant literatures is essential to comprehend how these concepts are addressed as a problem in the scholarly literature and how these phenomena would be analysed in the proposed study. While this review of literature establishes a context for the proposed study, in the light of these scholarly traditions it intends to explore the role of television and satellite television in case of imagination and invention of national identity in contemporary Bangladesh.

Chapter Three

Methodology and Data Analysis

Introduction

A methodology refers to the choices we make about cases to study methods of data gathering, forms of data analysis etc. in planning and executing a research study (Silverman 2001: 4). While it defines how a researcher will go about studying any phenomenon, in this chapter I will present the research objectives, research questions, the methods of data collection and analysis to gain an insight about the whole procedure of my research work.

Objective of the Study

As I want to look at the role, television has in constructing the national identity and its possible contributions in influencing the viewers in Dhaka City, my research project will depend on the following objectives:

1. To examine the role of state television in promoting Bangali national identity at its inception.
2. To investigate how the state television constantly redefines nationalism in Bangladesh.
3. To analyse the importance of the cultural artists and news broadcasters of the state television in the construction of national identity.
4. To explore the middle class viewers responses to Bangladesh television (BTV) and Satellite television (STV), regarding the question of national identity.
5. To discover the influence of STV on the questions of national identity in Bangladesh.

Research Questions

To address the problem of nationalism of Bangladesh the researcher seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How was the concept of Bangali nationalism constructed by the state

television in pre-independent Bangladesh?

2. What role does the state television play in defining and redefining the national identity in Bangladesh?
3. What role do the cultural artists and the news broadcasters play in constituting the national identity in Bangladesh by using television?
4. How do the middle class viewers receive the programmes of BTV and STV in association with their national identity?
5. What is the impact of STV on culture and tradition in Bangladesh?

Role of Qualitative Analysis

The relevance of a specific methodology rests upon the particular purposes and area of inquiry. In order to conduct this piece of research, the researcher has adopted the qualitative method because of its nature and the subject matter.

Hence, to interpret the nature of nationalism in Bangladesh, which has assumed the chameleon form including the dichotomisation between the Bangali versus Muslim nationalism as well as Bangali versus Bangladeshi nationalism, the researcher has adopted the qualitative method in this research work. In order to analyse these themes and sub-themes of nationalism and their association with the middle class and television, an in-depth qualitative approach is needed. Since the qualitative approach mandates close attention to historical detail in an effort to construct new understanding of culturally or historically significant phenomenon (Ragin, 1994: 87), I have adopted this method.

In a developing country like Bangladesh where the cultural domains are often determined by the existing political order, television operates as one of the important cultural institutions in case of promoting and shifting national identity among its middle class viewers. By exploring the role of television as, this research aims to discover its association with the political procedure and the nationalism dilemma of the middle class in Dhaka city, I do believe, without a close, in-depth empirical study such difficult task could not be carried out. As Bangali versus Bangladeshi nationalism debate is associated with the history of

the Liberation War of Bangladesh, the Linguistic Movement of Bangladesh of 1952, the political transformation of 1975, as well as military discourse and Islamic resurgence procedure, in researcher's understanding it would be difficult to discover how the audiences make sense of televised message about these phenomena through the quantitative method. The work is more concerned with the meaning of the subject rather than the measurement.

This piece of research is an exploratory and test-out research in nature. Although television appeared in 1964, research in this field has not yet been developed to any considerable extent in Bangladesh. While the emergence of Satellite Television (STV) is a recent phenomenon in Bangladesh, relevant literature and documents are not easily available about the subject in the similar fashion. For such a very practical reason it is essential to present a detailed view of the subject matter to gain an insight about Bangladesh's socio-political and cultural ethos which are different from those of the developed nations and tagged with specific value systems and ideology (Rahman, 1999).

Semi-structured Depth Individual Interview

In my research work, I have employed the semi-structured interview technique as a part of in-depth individual interview (Wengraf, 2001: 5) due to nature of my research topic and research question.

As the research topic is highly political and controversial, and related to the viewer's political choice, nationalist ideology and professional life, it is not possible to study them in a group interview. Individual's confidentiality is strictly maintained here. Although observation includes the face-to-face interaction, the fact of matter is that we cannot observe everything (Patton 1990: 278). We cannot observe how the middle class of Dhaka city identify themselves or how does the television exert an influence on them by broadcasting the programmes on Liberation War or religious tradition. In order to gain insight about these phenomena, the researcher has to ask them the questions. Interview within such a context is a good way of accessing middle class perception and definition of

nationalism in the context of political environment of Bangladesh today. Viewers' perceptions and knowledge I assume would be meaningful in case of exploring how television is connected with nationalism dilemma both as a cultural institution and political instrument in Bangladesh.

The nationalist issue, which has been raised through this piece of research, is very sensitive and directly connected with the political domain of Bangladesh. As I am pursuing a topic of sensitivity and emotional depth (Padgett, 1998: 8), it requires an in-depth analysis. Indeed, one of my objectives was to acquire the lived experiences from the TV artists and officials of those who played an important part in promoting Bangali national identity in Pakistan period and whose activities are influenced by the political climate of the country in post-independent Bangladesh. By scrutinising the experiences of TV artists and officials who evaluate the TV world through their own eyes as I intend to discover the interaction between television and politics, the qualitative interview is invariably the path to take in this regard.

Preparation for Field Study

Before going to the field I did the preliminary readings and prepared the research plan to 'identify the important areas for investigation' (Bell, 2001: 118). Simultaneously, I prepared two sets of questionnaires in order to conduct the interview of the middle class viewers and TV officials. For sending the letters to the middle class viewers to get their consent, I also prepared a letter in consultation with my supervisor.

Field Study in Dhaka City

In order to conduct the fieldwork, the researcher went to Dhaka in the first week of August 2001 and stayed there for six months.

Dhaka is such a city, which tells the tale of the two cities. Having amalgamation of old and new architectural trends, it has been developing swiftly as a capital city of Bangladesh since independence in 1971. It is a well-known historical city of

the South Asia, which had been found as the seat of Mughal vice-roys of Bengal in 1608 (The Dhaka City Guide Map 1996). Dhaka is an illustration of a modern metropolis including the skyscrapers, five-star hotel and modern shopping mall. The city is imagined as the centre of liberty and fraternity where the city people immolated their lives for independence of the country irrespective of caste and creed in 1971. Dhaka is a city of tension, terrorism and violence, which in the recent years has emerged as a nucleus for the growing fundamentalist forces. Attack on minority community, the declaration of blasphemy against the Kadiani Muslim sect and bomb-blast (2001) in the Pahela Baishek programme reveals another aspect of Dhaka City (Janakantha, 3 July 2004). Dhaka thus is a city of paradoxes. It is a city of cohesion and conflict.

After arriving at Dhaka the researcher found the city in a tense and compound political atmosphere. In order to organise the general election of 2001 while Bangladesh was under the rule of Caretaker government, the transfer of the high officials of several organisations then was initiated in the country. Under such transitional circumstances, the researcher decided to initiate her venture rather slowly as she assumed that it would not be wise to communicate with the city people at that moment for her research purpose. But as she aspired to complete the work effectively within her limited time, she started some more preliminary works including the translation of the letters and questionnaires into Bengali, collection of the map and telephone guide of Dhaka City. Moreover, to conduct the research work with speed within the limited time she employed a research assistant who would be able to help her in several ways.

Sampling

As this research is an individual project, the sampling was restricted by the availability and feasibility due to which it was not possible to extend the sampling to national level. Hence, to conduct this piece of work, the researcher decided to include at least thirty middle class TV viewers and ten TV officials and artists in her sample group. With the objective to organise the work in a representative manner, her decision was to divide the residential areas of Dhaka City into ten

research zones and select three persons from those particular ten research areas. While the city map demonstrated the division of Dhaka into 19 zones on the basis of *Thana* (a local administrative area) boundary, by implementing the random sampling method the researcher succeeded in finding out the following ten areas of Dhaka city: (1) Uttara, (2) Mirpur, (3) Mohammadpur, (4) Dhanmondhi, (5) Banani, (6) Tejgaon, (7) Ramna, (8) Motijheel, (9) Lalbag and (10) Shakari Bazar area. Random sampling was apparent as an option in this regard as it helps to ensure that, the sample is representative (May, 2001).

Whereas some of these areas are considered as the residential areas of the middle income group (Mirpur, Mohammadpur, Lalbag) as well as the commercial areas because of the appearance of the government and the business organisation's offices (Motijheel, Tejgaon, Shakari Bazar) there others are known as (Dhanmondi, Banani, Uttara) the posh areas where the most dwellers belong to the upper middle stratum. The evidence of their affluence has been found in the construction of the luxury apartment of these areas, where price varies from 20-50-lakh taka (2-5 million) (Matin, 1999: 26).

Among the two types of respondents of the sample group, the TV officials, artists and broadcasters were the selected persons and the choice of that selection was made deliberately. As I needed the information directly from the TV officials, artists and broadcasters whose numbers were limited, I employed the purposive sampling.

Selecting Site and its Problem

After spending the time for sorting out ten research areas from Dhaka City, the researcher arranged a separate contact visit with sixty individual respondents at the initial stage. As she did not have any other alternative she was convinced that she must 'go where the respondents are' (Padgett, 1998: 51) in order to recruit them into the study. Of course, it was a tedious and expensive task but not without merits.

Contact visit is such as an approach, which allows the interviewer to get familiar with the setting in which the potential participants live or work before the interview starts. It permits the interviewer to find their way to potential participants so that they are better able to keep their interviewing appointments (Seidman, 1997: 41). Due to these advantages of the contact visit, I started visiting the ten research areas with my research assistant for the identification of sixty middle class viewers. Since each of the research areas was vast in structure and divided either in different roads, blocks, or buildings, we faced several types of difficulties in identifying those research sites. In those cases we took the help of city map, passer-by, and those informants who assisted us in understanding the local set-up and in identifying the promising respondents. Indeed, by visiting the research areas physically and collecting the addresses and choosing the particular names or house numbers (through random sampling method) I accomplished in selecting the concerned middle class viewers who are educated and the regular viewers of BTV and STV from those areas.

Negotiation with Middle Class Viewers and Gaining Access

Yet, the procedure of recruitment of middle class viewers was not an easy task as I faced the gatekeepers who controlled my access to them at every level. While at the middle class family level, each person including the head of the family, relative, or the maidservant could be considered as a greater or lesser degree gatekeeper, at every stage of discussion with that group of people, I endeavoured to explain my objectives in a simple manner but with honesty and clarity. In my understanding, it was logical that the gatekeepers needed a reasonable explanation of the goals of my study (Bailey, 1996) in case of decision whether or not my entry would be granted. Gaining access into a middle class family definitely is a complicated procedure since a stranger is hardly welcome in these families. Moreover, the procedure was activated during that period when Dhaka was turned into a tense city due to its vulnerable political condition.

Yet, as I got success in obtaining the permission for the entry in the humble drawing room of the middle class viewers, I developed the idea that my gender

and university teaching identity contributed in seeking the acceptance in the middle class families. I discovered myself in a privileged position by observing how the members of middle class families displayed their regard to my teaching profession and female personality. Despite neither the gender nor the calling of the researcher serves any part in gaining the access to some middle class families in some posh areas of Dhaka City. Particularly, in Dhanmondi area my access had been halted by the guards of the couple of houses who controlled the flow of my interactions with the members of those houses, despite getting my professional identity.

Thus, by enjoying the positive responses and facing the adverse situations, I ultimately succeeded in collecting the name, address and phone number of sixty middle class dwellers from the ten research areas of Dhaka City. The procedure seemed successful as I communicated with the concerned middle class families directly in maximum cases. In parallel, I collected the telephone guidebook and went to Ward Commissioner Office (A Ward is a unit of Dhaka City Corporation) to gather the relevant information when I failed in gaining such initial access.

After the completion of the phase of contact visit, I sent the letters to the sixty residents of the said research areas. Out of those sixty dwellers, I ultimately succeeded in negotiating with the thirty viewers of the Dhaka City over telephone. The strategy of the telephone contact was adopted with the objective to make sure how many respondents would agree to participate and fix a date for face-to-face interview (Walford, 2001).

But telephone contact was not pleasant in all cases for multiple reasons. Due to prevailing political situation and for some personal reasons including the illness and least interest in television etc., a group of people denied directly participating in the interview session. In addition, the phone calls of mine created a great panic for some of the middle class families. A government officer, lived in Mirpur area, was such a frightened person who expressed his concern over telephone by raising the question, 'What is the guarantee that you are telling the truth? If you publish

my opinion in any newspaper or any other media then what would be my condition’?

Indeed, when I was communicating with the city people in such a manner, then Dhaka was turned into a violent city where the condition of the law and order had been deteriorated. Although the Caretaker government took its charge in July, 2001 to hold a free and the fair election, due to massive terrorists’ activities and political killing, the city people feared that the general election schedule may be jeopardised at the last moment. Along with the political agitation, as the muggers and the hijackers were found very much active in capital city during the period, the city people were sensing the danger. Moreover, the professional groups who were serving either in the government or semi-government organisations were also in a doubtful condition due to forced retirement, termination or the sudden transfer from the life time professions to the more obscure services. Due to all these factors tension was then intensifying everywhere in Dhaka city.

Telephone served as an important tool in making the appointment with a group of TV officials, as I required their consent and co-operation in the similar manner. To conduct such phase of research work I did not face any difficulty in getting their phone number and gaining access to their houses or offices due to my husband’s affiliation with BTV. Although none of the TV officials denied sitting with me for an interview session, they remained hesitant to fix up the date for interview due to their professional preoccupation and existing political atmosphere. Due to declaration of the date of the general election, then they remained busy with the production of the new political programmes. Under the circumstances, I made dozens of telephone calls to them before I was eventually able to meet them for interviews.

In-depth Individual Interview: Recording the Data

After the phase of negotiation, I succeeded in sitting with the thirty middle class viewers of Dhaka City by conducting their in-depth interview. Each interview session was with an individual respondent. I spent almost two to three hours with

each of my viewer to discover their insight, perception and idea about the various programmes of BTV and STV and their impact upon them. Among the thirty viewers of Dhaka City, I conducted the interview of fifteen male and fifteen female dwellers, as I was aware about the gender representation of my work. While religion remains as an important phenomenon in this research work, I took the interviews of twenty-four Muslim, four Hindu and two viewers of Christian community. Occupation is identified as another important element in the research project and I collected the views of multi-professional groups including the doctors (4), engineers (2), advocate (1), banker (1), students (5), housewife (1), NGO workers (2), school teacher (3), government officials (5), university teachers (2), businessmen (4) and employee of the foreign agency (1). All of these viewers of Dhaka City belong to the age group between 20 to 60 years whose income level varies from 5,000Tk to 50,000Tk per month.

After gaining the entry into the middle class families, being a researcher I endeavoured to create such an atmosphere in which the viewers would be comfortable to talk freely about their passion and attraction for television. Before each interview, I adopted the strategy to reveal the fact that I would prefer to tape record the interview in order to have an accurate account of what they say. All the tapes I assured that would be kept by the researcher and the materials would be used exclusively to write up her PhD thesis. Since the research project includes a delicate and highly political subject matter, I further stressed the point that, the private information which they shared with me, would not be revealed to others or the tapes would not come back to haunt them (Burgess, 1993). Although none of the viewers raised any objection against the tape recording, I aspired to reveal my position by considering it as one of my moral obligations.

Indeed, I initiated each interview in a form of chit-chat to warm up my respondents. Initially, the interviews were semi-structured and each of my interviews began with the same question: "Can you remember when you first got the chance to watch BTV? Was that in your own house or in other place?" While I was eager in gaining a general understanding of the role of television in case of

constructing and reconstructing of the national identity in Bangladesh, I commenced each interview by addressing the issues like old memories and popular programmes of BTV. Through such a procedure, I allowed each interview to flow as a conversation by encouraging the viewers to talk about their favourite programmes of BTV.

Although I commenced each interview in such a manner to make a congenial environment, gradually I moved on to more complex issues and subjects by raising the questions about the impact of the religious programmes, acceptability of the veil culture, projection of the historical programmes on Freedom Movement and the transparency of BTV news. Definitely, all viewers were not equally articulate or perceptive. Whereas some viewers entered into the conversation freely and frankly from the very beginning, there the other viewers seemed reserved and less vocal. In order to develop an apprehension of those viewers' perspective who seemed unwilling to express their views, I spent much more time to open them up about their passion and insight about the programmes of BTV and STV. Throughout the interview session, I continued to probe for the clarification until I was sure about their elucidation.

Indeed, by deviating the viewers' attention from the programme of entertainment to *Muktiyodho* (Liberation War), I observed the marked shifts in their expression, vocabulary and behaviour pattern. Tanvir had been identified in such a manner who claimed himself as an enlightened person in the interview session and appeared very lively in the discussion from the very beginning. Until the issue of Liberation War was raised to him, he seemed very critical to BTV for its low quality programmes. But after receiving the question of *Muktiyodho* he altered his previous notion and started praising the role of BTV by repeatedly asserting, 'BTV broadcast many programmes on our special days, national days and a good number of discussants and scholars participate in these programmes' (Interview, 4 December 2001). Offering such type of assertive answer although he endeavoured to evaluate the role of BTV from the positive perspective, I discovered how inconsistent he was by observing his facial expression and judging the voice tone.

The whole scenario then helped me in conceiving the idea that, being a government official and the dweller of a government apartment, the person was scared and reluctant in manifesting his genuine opinion. Because of the existing political atmosphere of the country, the person intended to ignore the issue by simplifying the answer. My assumption turned into the truth after the interview session when the person requested me to maintain the anonymity of his name and identity.

The portrayal of the programs on the Liberation Movement on BTV was apparent as an uncomfortable phenomenon in such a direction for some other middle class viewers of Dhaka City. Doctor Mamota Wahab was such an upper middle class viewer with her Bangali Muslim identity who intended to ignore the issue to avoid the relevance of Sheikh Mujib in the history of *Muktiyodho*. Although she identified herself as a sufferer by disclosing the fact that she went to the village in 1971 when Mujib called the nation for a war, she seemed unwilling in disclosing the name of Mujib. As she got annoyed and burst into anger by mentioning that 'I do not want to mention any one's name. I do not want to mention Sheikh Mujib name' (Interview, 14 November), I discovered how the issue of *Muktiyodho* is regarded as an enigmatic phenomenon in contemporary Bangladesh. Because of the interpretation and reinterpretation of the history of the Liberation War it is apparent as the most controversial issue to its middle class, even for those who were the eyewitness of the War.

The neutrality and transparency of the BTV news as I discovered were two other delicate subjects in the contemporary cultural domain of Bangladesh, I picked up the issue for discussion in the interview session. Indeed, most viewers in their interview session were loud in revealing the fact that, BTV news could not be regarded as neutral and transparent. Bokul Sultana, a young Bangladeshi viewer differed with that statement of the majority by unveiling his positive attitude towards the BTV news. Being a regular viewer and an admirer of that public medium, she asserted her positive statement about the BTV news for several time but not without the ambiguities.

While I remained in dilemma about the genuineness of her statement I probed her to be specific by citing the example of the *Hartal* of Al. The issue of *Hartal* was indicative while it helped in revealing viewer's perception about the affiliation between the political structure and television in Bangladesh. Bokul in this regard defended the role of BTV in case of conveying the objective news of *Hartal*. The *Hartal*, which then was observed in the city in Bokul's narrative, was not successful. It was merely a partial *Hartal*. Being a researcher while I was interested to know how that young Bangladeshi viewer conceived the association among the politics, media and transparency of news, I further asked her whether the news of BTV included the term partial regarding the news of the *Hartal*. Although she replied that time negatively, it did not alter her earlier perception about the objectivity of BTV news. Rather she demonstrated her strong passion for BTV by considering its news as correct and authentic, which testified her position as a strong believer in Bangladeshi nationalism. While it was the regime of the BNP government and BTV operated as the voice of the ruling party, being an ardent supporter of the ruling government Bokul rationalised the neutrality of BTV (Interview, 15 October 2001).

Emotion, sensitivity and controversy thus raised in the multiple directions during my interview session with the middle class viewers of the Dhaka City. In order to comprehend viewer's passion and perception in association with the national politics and nationalist ideology of the country, their body languages, facial expressions, and the vocabularies were simultaneously appeared as the subject of my keen observation. Such observation contributed in discovering how the problem of national identity was mingled with the anger, frustration and panic of the middle class of Bangladesh. While the potential of the television is utilised by the middle class government for the interpretation and the reinterpretation of the historical phenomena and the nationalist ethos in Bangladesh, the middle class are found in confusion, contradiction and apprehension who regard the issue with doubt and suspension. The name of Binod Bihari could be illustrated in this regard who revealed her emotional turmoil by bringing into focus how politics determine

and destruct the nationalist discourse in contemporary Bangladesh. Whether the day 16 December or the *Pahela Baishak* would be celebrated in the country in his view is determined by the political philosophy of the ruling government. National identity in his understanding was a political matter and BTV would not have any authority in portraying such aspect (Interview, 03 January 2002).

One of the important objectives of the qualitative research is to learn people's perspective, not to instruct them. In some of my interview sessions although I felt value conflict with the views, which I heard, I encouraged my respondents to say what they felt. Being a researcher, I was aware that, I was there not to change the viewers' perception but to learn what the respondents' view is and why they are that way. Having such an insight, I responded neutrally and took the pain to conserve my opinion to myself when my viewers addressed many political and debatable subjects in their interview session.

Interview of the TV Officials

Since television has influence and it is also a subject to influence, a group of TV officials, artists and broadcasters have also been interviewed through an in-depth interview to understand this double role of television in the context of socio-political conjunction of Bangladesh. While the notion of 'tolerance' and 'freedom of pen' in Bangladesh have not yet been developed, it is arduous for any researcher to procure the views from the TV officials and artists in concrete detail. Only after having a long conversation with the TV officials and artists, I accomplished in collecting materials about their affiliation with the political procedure as well as the influence of politics on television and the middle class community.

All TV officials and artists in their interview session were found articulate, transparent and spontaneous. They express their opinion about their scope, contribution and limitation freely and frankly. Without any hesitation, they disclose how their professional lives and creative activities are often afflicted by the political doctrine and the alteration of the government as well as how they

contribute in the political movement through the production of the cultural programmes in accordance with the aspiration of the people.

But whereas Jamil Chowdhury, Karim, Pasha have been found more courageous and spirited there others seemed cautious about their professional position. By considering television as a cultural medium, Jamil, Kamal and Pasha emphasised on the creativity and potentiality of the TV artists, broadcasters and officials who in their view could resist the government intervention in BTV. BTV could not be used exclusively as a political medium if TV artists become bold and loud. This statement has been negated by the rest of the TV artists and broadcasters who considered BTV absolutely as a government medium and identified themselves as the government employee. Being the government official they focused on their responsibility to serve the government as well as their lack of freedom to work independently.

Second Phase of Field Work

The second phase of my field work was designed with the objective to collect the extensive data about the old viewers who perceived those particular programmes which contributed in promoting Bangali cultural identity and the spirit of Liberation War in pre-independent Bangladesh (1964-1971), the closure of ETV and the rehabilitation of the collaborators (who opposed the Liberation War of 1971) in BTV.

For the recruitment of the old viewers at the first phase, I endeavoured to communicate with those viewers, whose interviews had been taken in 2001. But none of them succeeded in remembering those particular programmes because of betrayal of memory, limited access to TV and the fewer projection of those programmes on Dhaka TV. As an alternative method although I communicated with those aged persons who are personally known to me, the attempt did not work out because of the very same reasons. As I was looking for a particular group of viewers, random sampling was non-effective in this regard.

While the procedure of the selection of the old viewers was apparent as such a rigorous task, until taking the interview of Shammi, the researcher did not know how to recruit them in her studied group. With the objective to gain insight about Tagore's contribution in Bangali nationalism, the researcher arranged an interview session with Professor Shammi of Bengali Department of a government college of Dhaka city. Although the interview was designed to gain knowledge about Tagore and his affiliation with Bangali nationalism, after the commencement of the discussion the researcher discovered Professor Shammi as one of such old viewers who could still remember the 40 years back TV programme. By following the same trajectory when the researcher communicated with Professor Kurshid and Khalek of the University of Dhaka to have a discussion about Tagore, Nazrul and the problem of nationalism in Bangladesh, she identified both of them as the old viewers of Dhaka TV who watched those particulars programmes which in their view inspired them in pre-independent Bangladesh. Although the researcher conducted an interview session with Tasmin, a female news broadcaster, with the objective to comprehend her perception and evaluation about BTV news, at the certain stage of the discussion she herself revealed what role did television play in promoting the Bangali culture when she was a thirteen years old girl. For the revelation of such fact, Tasmin has been regarded as an old viewer by the researcher.

Political Change and the Paradoxical Behaviour Pattern of the TV Officials

The second phase of my fieldwork contributes in unveiling the paradoxical behaviour pattern of the TV officials and the intricate association between the television and the political phenomena of the country.

Through the second phase of the fieldwork while the researcher experienced some unusual incidents, it helped her in comprehending the altered political situation of the country and its impact on BTV arena more acutely. With the objective to gather some more information about BTV programmes and its inner environment, although she communicated with those particular TV officials who co-operated

her spontaneously at the first phase of her research work, this time they disappointed her by revealing their astonishing behaviour pattern. Despite her humble approach, some of them declined to recognise her whereas others endeavoured to avoid such participation with the excuse of their professional preoccupation and limitation. Despite having such unresponsive experiences, being a researcher she got adamant to explore the cause behind such contradicting attitude.

Hence, by keeping the patience within herself she consistently emphasised on telephone communication with the objective to have the negotiation with the TV officials and accordingly endeavoured to present her more tactfully and intelligently each time. Through such a procedure of chase and catch, she ultimately accomplished in exploring the fact that, the subject matter of her research project itself was apparent as a great apprehension for the TV officials in the context of the prevailing political condition of the country. Due to return of BNP in power structure with its Jamat alliance, they are now bound to work in accordance with the direction of the government. Alam was such a TV official who denied sitting with her for several times, as he was concerned of the operation of the cultural activists of JSS (cultural wing of BNP) who are now in commanding position in BTV. Indeed, by adopting the party slogan of BNP, BTV at present characterises itself as a 'Voice of People, Voice of Bangladesh' (BTV Archives, 2003). Although she succeeded in conducting his interview in the first week of September 2003, she observed how puzzled and disturbed he was in his overall appearance who declined to reveal any information about the rehabilitation of the collaborators in BTV.

The significance of the second phase fieldwork lies in the fact, it manifests the repressive action and the blatant persecution of the newly formed government in the form of TV officials firing and other forms of harassment. Under such a condition of the media suppression, along with the serving TV officials, the retired TV officials were also found in apprehensive condition. TV official Rabbani was discovered in such a traumatic condition by the researcher who

served as a Programme Director during the period of AL. Because of that occupational identification, he remained under the constant threat of the fundamentalist and anti-liberation forces who are now in power. Although he agreed to sit with me for an interview session, he was aware of the condition of the interview, which should be conducted in a safe place.

Indeed, under the existing dominion of BNP-Jamat administration overtly form of state control has become conspicuous. A group of dissident writers, university teachers and foreign journalists including Professor Montashir Mamun, Prisilla Raj, Salim Samad had been imprisoned and tortured either for expressing the critical thought or satirising the government. By perceiving such repressive operation of the government, Abeerul, a renowned TV personality expressed his concern by stating, 'I was never scared to reveal these things before. But now I am afraid to admit that we produced the inspiring programmes in the Pakistan period to promote our Bangali culture' (Interview, 25 August 2003).

The most sensitive phenomenon, which I aspired to explore at the second phase of the fieldwork, was the rehabilitation of the collaborator artists in BTV. The people and the group who worked against the Bangali nationalist movement and the Liberation War of Bangladesh as well as openly sided with the Pakistan military force are known as the *Razakars* (collaborators). Among the political organisations, mostly the religious oriented parties including the Muslim League, the Jamati-i-Islami, Nizam-i-Islamic and the Khilafat-i-Rabbani party were actively engaged in opposing the independence of Bangladesh. Besides, a group of religious and political leaders, journalists, cultural artists, including Haffazi-huzur, Peer Mohsen Uddin Dudu Miah, Mowlana Mannan, Khondakar Abdul Hamid, Ashker Ibne Sheikh etc. also worked against the independence of Bangladesh and collaborated with the Pakistani Army in suppressing the Bangali people during War of Liberation of 1971 (Ahmed, 1995: 44). Whereas the political and the religious leaders of that anti-liberation forces formed the Peace Committee in each and every district to serve the interest of the Pakistan government there the journalists and the cultural artists participated in several

radio and television programmes in supporting and propagating the operation of the Pakistan government during the period of nine months Liberation War (Muktiyodho Chatana Bikash Kendra, 1988).

By conducting the interviews of the TV officials while I found it was difficult to gather the information about those collaborator TV artists in detail from them due to existing political condition, I endeavoured to procure the materials from the relevant books and the newspapers. Through such a procedure the researcher accomplished in discovering a list of the artists, dramatists, announcers and presenters who participated in the counter programmes of Dhaka television during the period of the Liberation War with the objective to propagate the confusion, frustration and misinterpretation of the Liberation War among the Bangalies.

Ethical Consideration

In order to conduct this piece of research, a group of TV officials, intellectuals and the middle class viewers of Dhaka city were negotiated, many of whom were the high/ semi government officials, educationists and the member of the minority communities. Due to their professional identification and religious background many of them were found in an uncomfortable state to express their passion freely and openly about the history of *Muktiyodho* or rehabilitation of the collaborators which are considered as the delicate phenomenon in contemporary Bangladesh.

It is worth mentioning that when the interview had been conducted by the researcher, then the political violence had been found in worsening form all over the country and Dhaka turned into a city of crime zone. Before the national election of 2001, the law and order situation was deteriorated with every passing day and the dwellers of Dhaka city feared that, the muscle-men or the professional killers may be used in large scale to have a rigged election. After the questionable election of 2001(which was marked as pre-calculated by the major political parties) when the Bangladeshi nationalist party returned to power with the collaboration of Jamati-Islami and Islamic alliance (militant Islamic and anti-liberation forces in Bangladesh) then the entire country was in absolute chaos and

turmoil. The incidents of mugging and terrorists act were on the rise in the capital city of Bangladesh. In parallel, the people of the minority community had been persecuted; the workers of the opposition parties and the believers in secular politics had been humiliated and jailed.

Under such a critical circumstance when the several government officials including TV-radio producers and artists had also been fired, then the researcher was in the field. Yet, the TV officials as well as the middle class viewers shared many of their political views and sentiments with the researcher, which were not only politically controversial but also risky for their personal and professional life. By considering these aspects as crucial, the researcher got the commitment that the subject identification should be protected in her research project through the confidentiality and anonymity. The information, which had been procured and used in the work, would not be harmful and traceable to them in any possible manner. As I was aware about the professional and the religious identity of my target group, who could be subjected to intolerable political pressure or be depressed or detained for expressing their different political thought and opinion, I promised that their views would be kept confidential in this work.

Role of Documents

For the sociological and critical analysis of the key concepts of my research work including the middle class, nationalism, and television in the context of Bangladesh society, I have collected both the historical and contemporary documents from the multi-disciplines. For the incorporation of some new concepts including the STV, Bangladeshi nationalism I also procured the recently published articles and the political books to understand the phenomena in the context of ongoing nationalist debate of Bangladesh. Although the range of documents varies from diaries to autobiographies, the study depends mainly on old newspapers, recently published articles, relevant books, brochures and also on visual evidences.

Field-note

After returning from each interview, I kept detailed notes, while the tape recorder misses the sight, the impressions and the extra remarks of the respondents said before and after the interview (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992: 107). As my field notes include the physical appearance of the middle class viewers, their pattern of conversation and the narrative of their home environment, it contributes in providing an holistic insight about how the socio-economic condition, cultural values and political philosophy of the middle class is associated with their nationalism dilemma.

Method of Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field-notes and other materials that the researchers accumulate to increase their understanding of them and to enable them to present what they have discovered to others (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992: 122).

After completing the six months field study, I commenced the phase of data analysis by transcribing the interviews of Bengali speaking respondents, whose interviews had been recorded on 32 cassettes. Hence, at the beginning of the phase of transcription, I took each interview in Bengali language and those original transcriptions remained intact and contained the hand-written notes. Later I translated those written materials into English and maintained the notes and selected the fictitious name for each person, locality and house number, except the name of Jamil Chowdhury and Professor Rob. While Jamil Chowdhury is a distinguished figure in the history of the television of Bangladesh, the researcher has used his original name with his consent in this research work. As Professor Rob expressed his interest in revealing his original name, his real name has also been used in this work, regarding the issue of ETV.

After that stage of transcription, I read and re-read the transcripts with the objective to check the data and wrote three pages summary of what I conceived had emerged. Simultaneously, I organised and typed the main themes and ideas of

each interview from those transcripts. The process contributed in separating the data and placed them into the distinct category.

As coding proceeded in this qualitative research, it revealed the fact that the middle class viewers of Dhaka City at present are divided into six categories according to their own conceptualisation of national identity. While the disagreement and divergence are discovered in their opinion, it manifests how confused they are about their own history, culture and tradition. The data, which has been explored by the researcher explicitly, suggests that whereas seven viewers of the target group have highlighted their Bangladeshi identity, there thirteen viewers have demonstrated the pride of their Bangali nationalist spirit. By shedding light on the hybrid identity, four viewers have presented themselves as the believer in Bangali Muslim identity.

Researcher's analysis discovers another form of mixed nationalist ideology among the people of the minority community of the target group who do believe in both Bangali and Bangladeshi identity. Besides, tripartite national identity has been found in the analysis since one viewer has identified herself as a believer in Bangali, Bangladeshi and Muslim national identity. Above all, four viewers have been found incapable in identifying their self-entity in such a procedure, as they are unable to identify themselves in national terms. The opinion of the TV artists and broadcasters on the other hand have been placed into two categories as they explained the association between BTV and the political procedure from the two conflicting points of view.

Through such a categorisation of the views of the respondents, the analysis succeeds in revealing the multiplicity of the national identities of the middle class of Dhaka City by providing a complex example of how these identities are constructed and reconstructed through a public medium like television. Although the projection of country's culture and tradition as well as the reinforcement of national integration are designed as the two major objectives of BTV, my analysis unveils the inconsistency in these objectives while it has not yet been

accomplished in upholding country's culture, tradition and the spirit of the Liberation War in accordance with the expectation of the middle class. In the narrative of both TV officials and the middle class viewers, it is explicit that BTV is incapable in operating as a career of national integration. It has rather intensified the disintegration of the nation by packaging the history of the Liberation War and the streams of culture paradoxically.

Conclusion

This piece of qualitative research through its interpretative analysis demonstrates how the middle class in Dhaka City is divided into two political blocks with their diversified nationalist views in the context of prevailing political culture and their association with the television. By interviewing the multi-professional groups of Dhaka city, the researcher discovers the dilemma, paradoxes and contradictions in the opinion, statement and the behaviour pattern of the middle class regarding the issue of the history of the Liberation War, the contribution of the national heroes, the Declaration of Independence and the rehabilitation of the collaborators. These subjects remain as the most sensitive political issues for the middle class viewers in their interview session.

While the middle class express enigma, anxiety and apprehension in narrating the political history of their country and defining their national identity, the researcher found those political sensitivities as the methodological obstacle, which she dealt in the interview session. Although she found such difficulty in conducting the in-depth interviewing, she became successful in procuring the data from her target group through the process of deep attention and keen observation to comprehend their political sensitivities and the paradoxical interpretations. This thesis therefore contributes in revealing how the self-identification has become a subject of great concern for the middle class of Dhaka city who experience the incongruous and improbable TV programming in different political constituencies of Bangladesh.

Chapter Four

Role of Television and its Cultural Artists in Search of Bangali National Identity (1964-1971)

Introduction

This chapter aims to look at the role of television in promoting the Bangali national identity among the middle class in the Dhaka city during the Pakistan period. The chapter also addresses the issue of the role played by the cultural artists and broadcasters of Dhaka television along with their national political leaders in the framework of nationalist movement of Bangladesh. While the cultural artists and the broadcasters of Dhaka television had been influenced by the phenomenon of the linguistic movement and the command of the nationalist leader Sheikh Mujib, this chapter analyses their role in the context of the Bangali nationalist movement, which was organised against the colonial subjugation of Pakistan.

Media Politics and the Construction of the National identity

To trace the role of the cultural artists and the broadcasters in case of promoting the Bangali national identity among the middle class in Dhaka City during the Pakistan period, the imagined community model of Anderson and the theoretical insight of Wahrman have been adopted in this thesis.

Anderson (1983) regards nationalism as a cultural artefact where the phenomenon of language has been placed in an important position. While for Anderson language remains as the essential element in the construction of cohesive national identity, he demonstrates how language does perform on two rudimentary levels. Language according to his theoretical formulation could not be exclusively interpreted through the expressive ceremonies and symbolism involving flag, anthem or folk costumes. Rather the most important attribute of language is its potentiality for the construction

of the imagined community. Language thus has the emblematic authority on a superficial level for the persistence of the solidarity of a national group. On a deeper level it remains operative while assuming the independent role in forming the imagined communities which are regarded as nations. The nation according to the narrative is imagined rather than imaginary, as it is ideologically constituted. It is imagined because its members never identify most of their fellow associates or even hear of them, but in their conceptualisation they live as the co-members of their communion (p.15). The linguistic literary forms including the epic, national anthems and traditional songs contribute in shaping that particular image of the nation (1983: 18).

For the cultural manifestation of nationalism outside the dominance of indelible model of devotional power, Anderson identified the print capitalism as the key-determining phenomenon. Print capitalism in his understanding contributed in conceptualising a sort of imagined community, which then regarded as nation. It generated the simultaneous experiences among a large number of unidentified and unknown readers who despite their isolation imagined themselves as a self-conscious community. While print capitalism needed the new markets it contributed in forming the monoglot mass reading publics as well as in bringing about the revolutionary thrust in vernacularization (1983: 37-46).

Anderson is particularly influential for this research work as he demonstrates, (a) the transformation of the society from the religious communities to the imagined communities, (b) the cultural manifestation of the nationalism, by focusing on the vernacular as the key element and (c) the contribution of the print media in the formation of an imagined community. While the Liberation movement of Bangladesh has been organised on the principle of the linguistic based cultural nationalism in 1971, the thesis relies on the Andersonian model to comprehend the emergence of the Bangali nation as an imagined community. Not only that this thesis departs from and extends Andersonian argument as it addresses the role of the vernacular television

which was conducted by the Bengali speaking TV artists to visualise the programmes in Bengali vernacular with the objective to promote the distinctive concept of the Bangali nationalism in pre-independent Bangladesh.

Wahrman also occupies an important place in this thesis who challenges the most prevalent historical narrative by emphasising on changing political configuration to understand the conceptualisation of society and the particular image of the middle class. By focusing on the interplay between social reality, politics and the language of class, he demonstrates how the political process opens up the new spaces for the middle class in society (1995: 9).

This thesis relies on this theoretical insight while the condition of the political subjugation under Pakistani rule and the phenomenon of the linguistic movement led Mujib and other political leaders to initiate their Bangali nationalist movement as well as influenced the cultural artists to project and construct that Bangali nationalism through the language and the image of television. By analysing the role of the linguistic movement in the political formation of Bangladesh, as an independent and separate nation state, and the contribution of Mujib in the context of political struggle and resistance movement against Pakistani subjugation, the chapter demonstrates the venture of the cultural activists in formulating the distinctive attributes of Bangali national identity by using the language and image of television, under such political environment. While the chapter analyses the role of the political and the cultural nationalists, it adopts the arguments of both Anderson and Wahrman.

The Concept of Bangali Nationalism

Bangali nationalism at its inception was primarily a linguistic based cultural nationalism, which created the Bangali nation as an imagined political community in 1971. Historically, the doctrine of Bangali nationalism emerges on the basis of the spirit of the linguistic movement of 1952, which generates the new cultural and

political awakening among the Bangali Muslims during the Pakistan period. By falsifying the Two Nation Theory of Pakistan, the Bangali Muslims of East Pakistan then imagined their Bangali identity in the light of the syncretic Bangali culture and Bengali vernacular (Sarkar, 1992: 21). Culture and language have proved to be the corner stone of Bangali nationalism by signifying the awakening of the Bangali nation against the theocratic principle, communalism and colonial exploitation of Pakistan. Bangali nationalism is also regarded as non-communal and secular in character. While it aims to unify the people of Bangladesh on the basis of linguistic homogeneity and cultural coherence it demonstrates its isolation from the religious nationalism of India sub-continent.

Two-Nation Theory of Pakistan and Its Colonial Character

When India was divided on religious ground in 1947 by identifying the Hindus and Muslim as the two nations, Pakistan then emerged on the basis of that Two-Nation Theory. Under the political circumstances the Bangali Muslim of the then East Pakistan testified their distinctive Muslim identity by ignoring the linguistic and cultural affiliation with the neighbouring Hindu *Bhadralok*. While Hindu-Muslim in their narrative remained as mutually exclusive religious communities (Ahmed, 1988: 48), Pakistan had been imagined as a promised land for the Bangali Muslim middle class where they would be virtually free from the dominance of Hindu *Bhadralok* (Misra, 1990: 361-362). But after the creation of Pakistan, soon a sense of deprivation and frustration began to develop among the class while observing her new colonial character and the discriminatory policies persuaded by the Urdu speaking non-Bangali middle class (Maniruzzaman, 1988: 20).

Separated by almost a thousand miles from the economically stronger wing, for East Pakistan independence meant merely a transfer of power from the British to a new colonial centre in West Pakistan. Over the years tensions grew between the two wings due to economic exploitation, cultural humiliation and the political domination of the

Pakistani bureaucracy and military oligarchy, exacerbated by language difference (Jennings, 1990: 50). Although the Islamic fervour was the only cementing factor in Pakistan, its utility proved short-lived while the Bangalies suffered from an inner colonialism in the sense that West Pakistan utilised the income generated by their exports to finance its development (Jaffrelot, 2002: 20). Along with this socio-economic conflict while Bangali Muslims were discriminated on the basis of culture and ethnic background, a new phase of conflict started between the non-Bangali and the Bangali middle class in Pakistan.

Bangali Middle Class and its Imagination of National Identity

Bangali middle class remains as a key concept in the narrative of Bangali nationalist discourse. The concept of Bangali middle class differs markedly from the other concepts of the middle class including the Bangali Muslim or Ashraf because of its imagination of Bangali national identity which demonstrated not merely the awakening of the nation to self-consciousness, rather created the nation in 1971. Bangali national identity is conceived as a deep horizontal comradeship by the Bangali middle class who are loyal to sovereign Bangladesh, proud of their cultural heritage and linguistic treasure as well as ready to die willingly for such a limited imagining. Indeed, millions of Bangali died in 1971 for that imagined Bangali community.

The Bangali middle class has been identified basically as vernacular and regional elite by demonstrating its deviation from the *Ashraf* and the Bangali Muslim middle class who were mostly non-vernacular or the bilingual (Jahan, 1972: 40). The genealogical history of Bangali middle class unveiled that it had evolved from the wealthy rural middle class or the *Jotdar* families who could produce adequate surpluses to educate their children in the colleges and the universities in the towns and cities (Khan, 1987: 469). Due to that bond between the urban and the rural

locality, land and language remain as the basic elements in Bangali middle class's conceptualisation of national identity.

The Bangali middle class takes the excessive pride in its rich linguistic heritage. Its linguistic heritage demonstrates a long history, which was particularly encouraged by the development in Bengali literature under the educational policy of British rule in colonial India. For the Bangali middle class Tagore, Nazrul, Lalon are their cultural capital who played a prominent role in imagining the Bangali national identity. As language empowered the Bangali middle class they observe the 21 February in every year by marching to the *Shaheed Minar* (The monument for the Language martyrs), offering the floral tributes and decorating the streets with alpana. They celebrate the *Pahela Baishak*, with new hopes and aspiration, which affirms their distinctive identity beyond caste and creed (Ibrahim, 1974: 377).

Indeed, from the political, moral and cultural perspective modern nationalism is often considered as the language of blood and belonging. As a political doctrine, Ignatieff (1994: 5-6) thus has argued nationalism is the belief that each of the nations has the right of self-determination and its member should struggle for its nationhood. As a cultural ideal, nationalism justifies that it is the nation, which provides its members with their primary form of belonging. As a moral ideal, nationalism is an ethic of heroic sacrifice, justifies the use of violence or sacrifice of blood as the defence of ones nation against enemies. As nationalism legitimises the sacrifices of blood on behalf of the nation, the martyrs are apparent as a model, which inspires the nation through their stout resistance and patriotism. While blood, martyrdom and heroes thus are the most potent durable aspect of nationalism (Smith, 1991: 77), the memory of the Linguistic Movement and the language martyr remained vital in the construction of Bangali national identity through the symbols and ceremonies associated with *Shaheed Minar*.

Historically, the Bangali middle class imagine themselves as a distinct nation after the Linguistic Movement of 1952 by discovering their belongingness in a syncretistic Bangali culture (Rashid, 1999: 10). The Linguistic Movement was a great landmark in the history of Bangladesh, which started as an expression of the cultural consciousness of Bangali middle class who soon turned into a political entity with its new attitude of non-communal feeling and linguistic spirit (Umar, 2000). Because of such cultural awakening, Bangali culture in their conceptual formulation remains as integrated, non-communal and humanistic (Rashid, 1999: 10-11). The notion of a common Bangali culture has been well defined by the class, which brings into focus how the people of Bangladesh is drawn more by the inner spirit of religion rather than by its outward external rituals (Anisuzzaman, 1999). Instead of contention as peaceful co-existence of different faiths and the harmonious blending of various creed are apparent in local *Kirtan*, *baul*, *bhatiyali*, in their view this tradition of humanist feeling are the characteristic feature of Bangali life and culture (Ahmed, 1994: 14).

The Bangali middle class has developed a different vision of religion, which involves multifaceted textures. The amalgamation of Buddhist, Hindu and local syncretic practices, combined with *Sufi* inspired Islam and *Shia* practices construct the religious world of the Bangali middle class (Ahmed, 1983). As the Bangali middle class conceive the co-existence of Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist and Christian in a same cultural boat whose sacrifice in 1971 is remarkable for their imagined territory of Bangladesh, they urge to include all religious thoughts, cultural feelings, ideology and language of a community of all sects in their entire Bangali culture (Chowdhury, 1992: 41).

While the Linguistic Movement sparked off as a cultural revolution, it inspired the Bangali middle class to trace its root in the discourse of its folk culture. The contribution of the linguist Dr. Mohammad Sahidullah, poet Jasimuddin is remarkable in this context who considered folk as their cultural asset as it is almost the mirror of the Bangali culture. Indeed, from the perspective of a group of political

geographers including, Friedrich Ratzel, the national identity is grounded in the local landscape as it provides a micro-level model of patriotism due to which love of one's native place strengthens his/her national sense of homeland (Kaiser, 2002: 239). The localised identities occupy an important place in the construction of the national identity, as the nation expresses its identities in the cultural landscape of a space or territory (White, 2000). One of the successful nationalist projects from such a perspective is that which interconnects the local and the national scales of identity through the use of local symbolic landscape or folklore.

While a nation defines itself in terms of space or locality which has the definite historical, linguistic or religious background, folklore remains central in the Bangali middle class cultural value as it legitimises the predominance of Bangali culture by narrating the long history of co-habitation of Hindu-Muslim who practices many of the same rituals (as celebrate the harvesting rituals or guided by the *Khonar Bouchon* (weather lore) for the abundant production of paddy) in the same manner (Islam, 1993, 1998; Khan, 1987; Rahman, 1992). Folk is simultaneously essential for the cultural capital of the Bangali middle class as it composes all songs in Bengali vernacular. It is transformed into a cultural asset for the Bangali middle class by reproducing the social thoughts of the local people in a very simplistic manner who seeks to grasp the essence of life. As the generosity of folk lies in its simplicity, piety and belief in oneself of God and equality of all men (Gupta 1983; Debdas, 1997), this structure of belief is valued by the class.

Bangali middle class embraces the philosophy of humanism and intends to tie it with Western secularism which rejects the transcend that religions seek to attain. Despite this, the class has got their own definition of secularism which denies its absolute annulment from the religious discourse (Huq, 1983: 222). The term carries a distinct connotation by pointing out that no individual will receive any special treatment from the state authority because of its affiliation to any particular religion. Religion in this account is accepted purely as a personal and private matter of the citizen, a matter of

his personal conscience and equation between himself and his God (Chowdhury, 1974: 65). As the Bangali middle class develops such a notion of secularism, which allows the religious practices for their citizen, they claim they are free to follow their own religion in their own way with out any interference from the state.

The Linguistic Movement and its Association with Bangali Middle Class

Bengali language evolved as the key unifying element in the nationalist movement of the Bangali middle class (O'Donnell, 1984: 26). The study of Language Movement is inseparably associated with any study of Bangali nationalist movement while it resulted in the gradual transformation of Bangali ferment from a linguistic cultural phenomenon into a much broader economic and political life (Osmany, 1992: 94). In this section I go on to discuss and analyse the role of the Linguistic Movement in being central to the creation of the Bangali nationalism and the contribution of the Bangali middle class in that Bangali nationalist movement.

21 February of 1952 is acknowledged as a red-letter day to the people of Bangladesh who evolved as an independent Bangali nation in 1971 with a new sense of cultural identity (Islam, 1994:99). Being the inhabitants of the then East-Bengal, although the Bangali Muslims achieved their Muslim identity during the period of the creation of Pakistan, Bengali coexisted as the vernacular of the group with their religious identity. The peculiarity of the history of East Bengal lies in the fact that, Bengali remained exclusively as the mother tongue of 90% Muslim of the territory. While the language shape the entire imaginative life of the group and mould the pattern of its thought (Chowdhury, 1984: 133), the language controversy started among the Bangali and non-Bangali Muslim middle class even before the creation of Pakistan. From the beginning of the twentieth century, it had begun to manifest in the form of the intellectual debate when the controversy arose about the nature of medium of instruction of future Pakistan (Rashid, 1987:6).

First Phase of Language Movement

The language controversy assumed the conflicting form in newly born Pakistan when the students of the University of Dhaka formed Tamaddun Majlish, a cultural organisation, in order to demonstrate their campaign in support of Bengali vernacular. By raising the question "Should Pakistan's state language be Urdu or Bengali?" they brought out a pamphlet on 15th September 1947 (Umar, 1997: 438). Indeed, from the very beginning Pakistan administration endeavoured to construct Pakistan on a feverish religious frenzy and provided the strong indication that Urdu individually would be the national language of Pakistan. Under the circumstances, Dharendra Nath Dutta, a member from East Bengal moved an amendment in 1948 in the second session of the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan with the objective to assign the equal status to Bengali alongside with Urdu and English (Islam, 1994, p.44). Statistically speaking, Bengali was the vernacular of 54.6% people of Pakistan whereas merely the 7.2 people of the country spoke Urdu. Pakistan could be marked as a multi-cultural society where Bengali, Urdu, Baluchi, Punjabi etc. remained as the multi-vernaculars in her several provinces (Chowdhury, 1984: 133). Despite this, Dutta's proposal had been negated instantaneously by Liaquat Ali Khan, the then Prime Minister of Pakistan. According to his narrative Pakistan was created due to the demand of a hundred million Muslims of the sub-continent and the language of that hundred million Muslims was nothing but Urdu (Islam, 1994: 44).

Official versus Vernacular nationalism

The term official nationalism demonstrates that kind of nationalism, which responds against the new vernacular nationalism because of the political anxiety of the nationalist separation (Anderson, 1983: 109-110). While the official language is bound up with the state manoeuvre (Bourdieu, 1991), in a multi-lingual society like Pakistan it was apparent as linguistic oppression. It had been proved from the declaration of Jinnah, the founding father of Pakistan who endeavoured to impose Urdu on Bangali Muslim while visiting Dhaka in 1948. His emphatic support for

Urdu was greeted with protests while it indicated nothing but the imposition of the dominant language with force on the shoulder of the East Pakistan (Islam, 1994: 46).

While the West Pakistan government endeavoured to construct the image of Pakistan as a homogeneous nation in the name of Islamic fraternity, the political situation gradually turned into a more complex state. It is in this context when the great Bangali linguist and distinguished exponent of Islamic learning Dr. Shahidullah made a remarkable observation:

It is a reality that we are Hindus and Muslims, but the greater reality is that we are all Bangalies. It is not the question of any ideal. It is a basic fact. Mother nature has in her own hand imprinted such indelible marks of Bangaliness on our face and language that these can't be hidden by outward signs of thread or tuft on head (worn by Hindus) or cap-Lungi-beard (worn by Muslims) (Shahidullah, 1984: 118, quoted in Ahmed 1994: 18).

Through this statement, Dr. Shahidullah addresses that the very core of national identity is bound to specific place and accordingly territory is the concrete expression of the national identity. From such a perspective, he identified the Bangalies as a cultural group who share the similar linguistic and cultural experiences within their definite territorial setting. While the Bangalies derive their linguistic authority and the physical features from the definite territory of Bangladesh, in his view religion can not isolate them from each other at a large scale.

Despite such manifestation of the distinct cultural identification by the intellectuals and sharp reaction of the young students of East Pakistan, West Pakistan aggression on Bengali vernacular and culture continued in multiple directions. Since 1949 an organised hate campaign was launched by the Pakistani Central government in order to cultivate the image of Bengali as the vernacular of Bangali Hindu. While in their

view the Bengali language was inconsistent with the Islamic spirit of the theocratic state of Pakistan, the central administration initiated to reform the language with its alphabet. Under such a condition, the East Bengal government formed the East Bengal Language Committee in 1949 with the intention to simplify the Bengali language, render Islamic character on it and approved Urdu as the state language of the country (Roy, 1974: 42; Islam, 1994: 48).

Final Stage of the Language Movement

Any study of linguistic inequality is inevitably a political study. As far as unequal association persists among different languages, language is perceived as a contested object (Grillo, 1989: 7-17). Bangladesh echoes in a similar fashion as a sense of deprivation and alienation arose among the Bengali speaking Muslim of East Pakistan during the period between 1948 and 1952 by observing that Urdu brought nothing but the economic, political and cultural humiliation for them. Since the period of partition, the Bangali Muslim of East Pakistan gradually discovered their marginal position in the domain of education, business and employment. Under the circumstances, Nazimuddin, being the new Prime Minister of Pakistan initiated the new phase of linguistic controversy in the year of 1952 by reasserting the rank of Urdu as the only state language of Pakistan (Reeaz, 1998: 58).

While disregarding the demands of the students as he coloured them as provincialists and the enemies of Pakistan, the linguistic patriotism of the Bangali Muslim students reached its peak. Consequently, an all-party State Language Committee of Action was formed and the 21st February 1952 was announced the State Language Day. While the government promulgated the prohibitory order on all sorts of demonstration and enforced 144, the Dhaka University students groaned with discontent (Huq, 2000: 20).

Indeed, a group of students of the University of Dhaka including Abdul Matin, Gaziul Huq in their committee meeting expressed the firm determination to violate the 144 (Section 144 of Police Law. According to this law, four or more than four persons are not allowed to gather or walk together at a particular place where it is enforced). Abdus Samad Azad, another student of the Committee proposed to form the group of ten to leave the university premise one by one in order to break the 144 in organised and disciplined way. While his proposal was adopted as a final decision, on 21st February the huge number of students including male and female gathered in the university area in order to demonstrate their demurral. By following the antecedent decision, the first group of ten went out from the student gatherings under the leadership of Habibur Rahman, Hasan Hafizur Rahmam and others. After the first group, Ibrahim Taha, Abdus Samad, Abu Zafar Obidullah led out the group one by one.

A couple of female students also participated in the demonstration that came forward to cross the gate for violating 144. Shafia Khatun, Sufia Ibrahim, Rowshanars Bawchuchu were couple of those students who crossed the gate in the similar fashion. While observing such a good number of students leaving the university premises and assembling on the road, the police initiated to throw the tear gas shells towards the students. Although the male students got arrested who violated 144, the police did not arrest any of the female students (Reeaz, 1998: 39). They were rather permitted to move towards the medical college hostel. Despite police *Lathi* (baton) charge and tear gas while the male students continued their protest, the police finally opened up the fire. Consequently, a number of students were killed and hundred of them were injured (Umar, 2000: 108). While the students laid down their lives for the first time for their beloved mother tongue, it was 21 February on which Bangali nationalism was born with its new linguistic ethos.

Role of the Linguistic Movement in imagining the Bangali national identity

The importance of the discourse of the Linguistic Movement lies on the fact that, the seed of the Bangali nation was planted in that linguistic based cultural revolution. The awakening which was generated through that cultural movement directed the subsequent socio- economic and political environment of the people of East Pakistan and finally culminated in the appearance of the novel independent state of Bangladesh (Umar, 2000: 129).

The Linguistic Movement intensified the nationalist fervour among the Bangali Muslim middle class by demonstrating how language was interconnected with their entire socio-cultural life and various socio-economic objectives. While language was associated with the class and material interest of the Bangali Muslim middle class, it inspired them to imagine themselves as a distinct Bangali nation by shattering the principle of the Two Nation theory of Pakistan. Language assumed an instrumental role in the formation of the Bangali national identity since immediately after the creation of Pakistan; the first attack came on the mother tongue of the Bangali Muslim, which was regarded as one of the exclusive property by the class itself (Matin and Rafique, 1992: 17). Bengali language carried the mark of the class position of the middle category Muslims of East Pakistan. Being a vernacular Bengali transformed into a tangible property for the Bangali Muslim which was transferable from the one generation to the next and connected with the entire class since their mother's womb.

Under such an existing reality when the attack came on that very treasured domain of the Bangali Muslim middle class, they felt isolated and alienated from their Urdu speaking Muslim brothers who were then apparent as a dominant linguistic group and autocratic ruling authority in their political behaviour. As language played the crucial role in differentiating the oppressor from the oppressed in such a manner it was then embraced by the Bangali Muslim middle class as a new symbol of national identity.

Consequently, Muslim feeling declined and for the first time the Bangali Muslim middle class of East Pakistan endeavoured to trace their national identity in their indigenous Bangali cultural tradition (Chakrabarty, 1974: 173).

Indeed, the very existence of the Bangali middle class in Pakistan was directly interrelated with its linguistic issue. The language controversy of East Pakistan could not be regarded merely as a matter of a dialect for the Bangali Muslim middle class. It was neither simply an agitation for a language nor a conflict between the two languages to establish whether Urdu or Bengali would be the state language of Pakistan. Rather it was more than that. It was the question of the survival for the Bangali Muslim middle class as it was affiliated with their economic involvement, employment opportunity as well as civil and political right (Aftab, interview, 27 August 2003).

While language evolved as a decisive factor in the employment opportunity it was hardly possible for the Bengali speaking middle class of East Pakistan to get a better job or run a good business. Due to linguistic impediment as Bangali's efficiency was suspected and their scope was limited they felt the pressure of the iron wheel of the Urdu speaking dominant linguistic community (Chakrabarty, 1974: 113). In the creation of Pakistan although Islam was used as a marker of national identity, after the Linguistic Movement it seemed no more effective to retain the social cohesion between the Bangali and non-Bangali Muslim middle class of the Pakistan (Mukul, 1999).

As language thus contributed in revealing the subjugating nature of the East Pakistan Muslim middle class it assumed a leading role in the Bangali nationalist movement and emancipation. The Bengali language which was once regarded by the Bangali Muslim as a part of Hindu culture and off shoots of Sanskrit then sparked off the new Bangali cultural identity to protect their economic as well as political right. While language inspired the Bengali speaking middle class of East Pakistan to commence

their economic and political combat with the Urdu speaking West Pakistani, they felt a new sense of belongingness being Bangali by demonstrating their absolute deviation from the previous Muslim identity (Sharan, 1974).

The significance of the Linguistic Movement lies in the fact that, it not only raised the aspirations for the economic and political emancipation among the urban Muslim middle class. Rather it also brought about a new cultural awakening among them. The incident of 21 February encouraged the Bangali Muslim to conceive their identification exclusively as Bangali since the blood of the martyrs made them deeply aware that Bengali was their mother tongue and their territory had given their body and mind a distinct shape. While the language evolved as a catalytic agent in demonstrating (Sharan, 1974: 373) their distinct physical and cultural attributes, they consider the tradition and culture of East Bengal as their cultural capital. While the linguistic issue shaped the atmosphere of the new belongingness in such a fashion, they adored folk including *Jari*, *Sari* as the treasure of their own cultural domain. Spring festival and the Bangali New Year's day started being celebrated with a novel enthusiasm, which was not seen ever before (Anisuzzaman, 1995: 20). The celebration of the New Year then became more organised in the several urban areas while the Bangali Muslim middle class then turned to their folk heritage for the identification of their Bangali uniqueness. *Pahela Baishak* became the part of the Bangali culture since it was non-communal and non-religious in nature. It belonged neither to Hindu nor to Muslim or Christian community of the country. Rather, it belonged to all Bangalies who spoke the same language and also cherished the common historical tradition and cultural origin (Daily Star 13 April 2002).

While the Linguistic Movement inspired the Bangali Muslim of East Pakistan to adore their language as one of the most beautiful languages of the world, a galaxy of litterateurs involving Rabindranath Tagore, Nazrul Islam, Shah Mohammad Sagir etc. then emerged as the source of pride for the Bangali Muslim middle class. The sense of pride and self-confidence remain as two key elements in case of imagining the

national identity (Aftab, interview 27 August 2003). As Tagore won the Noble Prize in 1913 and rendered an international rank to the Bengali vernacular (Bose, 1993), the event bears a symbolic importance for the growth of self confidence among the Bangali Muslim middle class who were the proud possessor of that vernacular and literature (Aftab, interview, 27 August 2003). While Nazrul announces the determination to fight against all evils in the world through his literary works, Bangali acquired the rebellious zeal with a new sense of aspiration (Chowdhury, 1999: 80). Bengali literature which was developed over the years with the aid of Bengali vernacular, thus evolved as the source of inspiration in the construction of the distinct Bangali identity after the movement of 1952.

21st February inflamed the novel spirit with novel agitation by fragmenting the religious dogmas and social prejudices. The women along with the male folk then marched in the procession through the streets decorated with *alpana* (Painting) towards the martyrs' memorial, wearing *Saree*, and flowers in their hand (Ibrahim, 1974: 373). The practice of wearing the black badge and practice of going to the monument on barefoot demonstrated the new cultural symbol of protest and mourning (Umar, 1974: 229). While the *Shaheed Minar* (the monument for the language martyrs) became the place of public gathering and commitment, it itself assumed the status of pilgrimage. It became the symbol of secular spirit while the people of all religions and sect were free to go there (Huq, 2002: 28). By constituting such novel symbols and cultural practices, 21st February contributed in identifying the Bengali speaking Muslim of East Pakistan as Bangali who then declined to retain their Muslim identity any more.

The linguistic movement operated as a key force in the development of an integrated Bangali culture including the secular and humanistic components (Ahmed, 2002: 292). Bengali language itself posses the secular character whiles it is spoken by the all sections of people despite religion, caste, and creed (Aftab, interview 27 August 2001). It is the identity of the Bangali Muslim, Bangali Hindu and the Bangali

Christian alike. It acted as the silken cord by binding the people of these multi-religious groups who fought against all sorts of oppression of Pakistan. While the people of East Pakistan through these procedures became united over the question of state language for their cultural, political and economic emancipation, it is the contribution of the Bengali vernacular which itself constructed the Bangali nation in 1971.

Bangali Middle Class as a Vanguard of Bangali Nationalist Movement

The Bangali middle class, who acquired its new sense of belongingness from the incident of the Linguistic Movement, played a unique role in awakening the language-centred Bangali identity among the Bangali Muslims of East Pakistan. By demanding the regional autonomy it raised its voice for the first time in 1954 in order to get a larger share in the benefits of economic progress (Chowdhury, 1984: 135). For the affirmation of self-identification as the middle class needed a new political force and ideology the class adopted the secular content and indigenous cultural ethos from the incident of the Linguistic Movement. While the Linguistic Movement added a non-communal attitude in East Pakistan politics by unifying the Hindu, Muslim, Christian and Buddhist who speak the same Bangali vernacular, a qualitative change then reflected in middle class politics which was then tended to be secular (Aftab, interview 27 August 2003).

This was linked up with the consolidation of the new political forces. The break-up of the old Muslim League and the emergence of the Awami League (AL) signified a new advancement in that procedure, while the organisation ultimately led to the emergence of Bangladesh under the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Historically, the Awami Muslim League was founded in 1949 by the dissident leaders of the former Muslim middle class who fought for the creation of Pakistan in colonial India. After the Linguistic Movement the party dropped the denomination Muslim from its name by reacting against the non-secular religious bias of the non-Bangali

Muslim middle class who ignored the realities of Bangali culture, language and tradition (Ahmed, 1994). The trend, which turned the politics towards the secularism in such a manner, became stronger over the years to fight against the theocratic principle of Pakistan.

Having such a qualitative change in political domain, *Joy Bangla* was chanted by the Bangali middle class as a prime slogan in imagining the definite territory of sovereign Bangladesh. While nationalism is always a struggle for the control of land (Kaiser, 2002: 231), by expressing the sanguine hope for the full independence of the country it constructs a bridge between Bangladesh and Bangali and proclaimed the full authority of the Bangali nation over the particular territory, named Bangladesh, in the process of the construction of its imagined homeland. The slogan thus was used as a stimulant by the Bangali middle class in imagining the victory of Bangladesh. The slogan was also secular in character as it echoed the triumph of Bangladesh instead of glorifying any theological emotion (Huq, 2002: 28). The flag of Bangladesh, which was designed by the Bangali middle class, was equally without any projection of religious symbol like moon or star. It was expressively secular in structure as it was based on the green canvas with a splendid red sun where the map of the Bangladesh was reflected (Anwar, 1998: 116).

Being the commander of the Bangali nationalist movement Mujib himself contributed in shaping the secular trend of politics at the level of Bangali nationhood construction (Sarkar, 1999: 51). Indeed, Mujib was born in a Muslim middle class family who passed his Matriculation in 1942 and went to Calcutta for obtaining his degree from the Islamia College. After the partition, he returned to Dhaka and being a law student of Dhaka University started organising the student demonstration against Urdu, as the official language of Pakistan and in favour of Bengali (Quaderi, 1997: 35, 58). Mujib got arrested in 1948 when a general strike was called under his leadership against the declaration of Urdu as the state language of Pakistan. Although he was imprisoned in 1952, he declared his determination to go for a hunger strike in favour of Bengali

language. While Mujib was thus influenced by the linguistic aggression of Pakistan, all along he was loud in demanding that the Bengali language would be introduced in all departments of the government in his nationalist movement against Pakistan (Kawser, 1999: 17-18).

Bangali nationalism since thus was perceived by Mujib as a resistance against the cultural imperialism of Pakistan, he played up the differences between the Bangalies and the non-Bangalies on the one hand, and the similarities between the Muslim and Hindu Bangalies on the other hand in his nationalist project. Emphasising the secular rather than the communal themes he accordingly sang the praise of Bengal as did *Banda Mataram* under the circumstances of Indian nationalist movement (Novak, 1994: 157). But Mujib's political trajectory demonstrated a marked difference by adopting the Tagorean vision of Golden Bengal where the image of mother was different from that in *Banda Mataram*. Indeed, the image of motherland is often used by the nationalists to reinforce the personal connection between the population and the land, in an effort to weave the two major elements of blood and soil in their nationalist project. While the nation is depicted as a family, motherland image become more prominent to create the sense of belonging through blood, lineage and authentic body of cultural tradition (McCrone, 2000: 123). Although the image of the motherland is projected as Hindu goddesses in *Banda Mataram*, the mother is characterised as secular in the mirror of the Golden Bengal. Being a mother Bengal is unique in the vision of Golden Bengal as she aspires to unite rather than divide (Chowdhury, 2002: 51). In such a manner while she is democratic as well as not partial to any of the communities, it was adopted by Mujib to construct the sense of belongingness among his people.

For aspiring the imaginary Bangali nation towards the political independence, one of the strategies of Mujib was to present their cultural characteristics with a staunch sense of solidarity. He in fact played up the superiority of Bangali culture through Tagore and Nazrul in parallel to Iqbal, a great poet of Pakistan who had been the

inspiration for an independent Muslim state for the Bangali Muslim middle class in colonial India. To promote Bangali nationalism Mujib's Awami League made every effort to celebrate Tagore's birthday when the poet was banned from the government controlled radio and television in the Aybuian regime. Mujib himself hummed his verses in public and private (Salik, 1997: 15). While Mujib was capable to understand the agitating spirit of the Bangali middle class, Nazrul became the second literary sword in his campaign to inflame Bangali nationalism. Nazrulian visions of secular Bengal- the vision that were inherent in the evocation of language, land and blood (Awol, 1999) remained as an important theme in his nationalist project. His rebel poem and electrifying marching songs then had been successfully used by Mujib's party as a voice against Pakistan grievance and subjugation (Novak, 1994: 158).

By consolidating the concept of nationality, Mujib intended to distinguish his nation from its Pakistani opponent. While new Bangladesh needed to be created, Mujib relied on myth. To demonstrate the growing gulf of differences between two separate wings of Pakistan he intervened into its colonial structure by selecting the myth of Golden Bengal. Being a nationalist, he employed the myth for mobilising and directing the energies of the people to meet the challenge of nation formation. Myths although are stories which are not essentially true, remain powerful in nation construction because of their symbolic effect (Smith, 1991: 73). Mujib used the power of the myth of Golden Bengal through its constant repetition to give voice to the sub-altern Bangali for whom then the golden past became the source of continued inspiration, dignity, and pride. Mujib constructed a new narrative by propagating the issue that "*Sonar Bangla Soshan Keno?*" (Why the Golden Bengal is a graveyard)? Zainul Abeeden, a Bangali painter then developed a scroll of twenty feet long providing the title '*Nabanna*' (Harvest) where he documented the golden memory and the existing dispersion (Jahangir, 2002: 99).

Indeed, Mujib borrowed the term nationalism as a strategy to revolt against the colonial exploitation of Pakistan. Being a nationalist demagogue as his primary task

was to eliminate the colonial presence, through the construction of such political speech he identified the colonial power directly with the exploited class who plundered Bengal and revealed the marginalised condition of the Bangalies to mobilise them with national dignity to overcome such colonial discourse (Jahangir, 2002: 42). Hence, by unveiling the fact that Bangalies are not a historically impoverished people, he endeavoured to define what a nation is and what it means to the Bangali people. He found the answer in their cultural artefact and linguistic wealth. While the myth of Golden Bengal allowed the Bangalies to rationalise their distinct existence in such a way, it became a wonder and emulation for them. For self-affirmation the Bangalies then were determined to go back to the immemorial past to gather strength and develop social cohesion against Pakistani oppression and enslavement (Jahangir, 2002: 102).

By stirring the Bangalies in such a way, Mujib was admired as *Bangabondhu* (The Friend of Bengal) by his people who were then started imagining themselves as Bangali nation. Mujib was idolised in such a way because of his better understanding of the hopes, dreams and distress of the common people (Mascarenhas, 1986: 3). He gradually emerged as a utopian prophet of the imagined Bangladesh who paved the way for the separatist feeling under the six-point movement in 1966 (Khan, 1996: 73-75) and renaming the province of East Pakistan as Bangladesh in 1970 (Anisuzzaman, 1995: 77). At that stage of nation formation the slogan of *Joy Bangla* (Victory to Bangla) and *Amar desh/ tomar desh/ Bangladesh/ Bangladesh* (Your home and mine is Bangladesh) were coined (Anisuzzaman, 1995: 21). As the movement gathered storm by challenging the foundation of Pakistan Mujib finally called the nation for Liberation War by declaring that “*Eberar Sangram Muktir Sanggram, Eberar Sanggram Sadhinotar Sanggram*” (The fight this time is for our liberty, for our independence)” on 7 March, 1971 (Malek, 2001: 161).

Cultural Foundation of the Liberation Movement

The national Liberation Movement of Bangladesh, the thesis finds thus was organised on the principle of Bangali nationalism, which commenced with the aspiration to preserve the rank of Bengali vernacular and the distinct attributes of the integrated Bangali culture. Due to that cultural foundation of the Liberation War, the cultural artists and the broadcasters of the state television played a historical role by fostering the distinctiveness of Bangali national identity along with the national political leaders during the Pakistan period. This section now focuses on this domain to demonstrate how they articulate the uniqueness of Bangali culture to galvanise the Bangali nationalist political action through the cultural production of the vernacular television in Pakistan. Instead of using the term TV officials the researcher has adopted the term cultural artists and intellectuals in this chapter by analysing their more independent and creative role in pre-independent Bangladesh.

Historical Development of State Television in Bangladesh

The historical discourse of the state television of Bangladesh reveals that, the television service was inaugurated in East Pakistan (TV Guide, 1980-82: 3) in 1964 as a pilot project under the auspices of a Television Promoters Company in collaboration with Nikkon Electric Company (NEC) of Japan. While it was one of the major decisions of the governing military elite of Pakistan to launch the television service in the country, the authority signed an agreement with the NEC of Japan. After adopting such decision, the Eastern wing of the country entered the TV world, when the television station was officially introduced by President Ayub Khan at Dhaka in 1964, on 25 December (BTV profile, 1989: 15). It was then called Dhaka Television Centre.

Recruitment of Bangali TV artists

In the historical narrative of the TV artists of Bangladesh, it is clear that television secured its autonomy under the NEC Company for the first seven months. Instead of

the administration of Pakistan, while the television was launched at the first phase by the NEC Company it remained outside the authority of the Ministry of Information and served without any administrative interference during the period. For the first seven months, Dhaka television was run by the authority of the NEC Company which then initiated the recruitment of the TV artists according to its own requirement and consideration. While the television was vernacular in nature and novel in character, the NEC Company needed both the competent officials as well as the Bengali speaking cultural artists to conduct that new medium (Abeerul, interview, 25 August 2003; Alam, interview, 7 October 2001).

Among the pioneer TV artists and producers, the recruitment of Jamil Chowdhury, Kalim Sharaffee and Mustafa Monowar, had been done by the NEC Company through the procedure of personal communication. While one of the brothers of Jamil Chowdhury was serving as a high official in the NEC Company, by making use of that channel the Company recruited Jamil Chowdhury to conduct the technical aspect of the television. Jamil Chowdhury, a physicist then was serving as a part-time lecturer at the University of Dhaka. Kalim Sharafee, a promising Tagore singer of the country had also been recruited by the brother of Jamil Chowdhury, who knew Sharaffi personally. Mustafa Manowar, a lecturer at the Dhaka Art College, then joined the Dhaka TV by accepting the offer of Jamil Chowdhury. All the pioneer TV artists thus had been recruited through personal channel, not by the administration of the central government (Abeerul, interview, 25 August 2003; Salim, interview, 19 August 2003).

Indeed, only few people during the period were available in the country who had minimum knowledge about the operation of that contemporary medium. While the medium itself needed the competent officials to conduct the technical aspect of the television, being a physicist Jamil Chowdhury had been recruited in that section. Due to vernacular character of the medium, the NEC Company recruited Kalim Sharafee as a known cultural artist of the province for the production of the Bangali cultural

programmes of television. Being a creative cartoonist as Manowar was known to Jamil Chowdhury, he was also recruited by him to enrich the production section of the Dhaka TV (Abeerul, Salim, interview 2003). Jamil Chowdhury, Kalim Sharaffee and Mustafa Manowar, three key persons who played the significant role in promoting the Bangali national identity in the subsequent period through the cultural production of the vernacular television thus had been recruited by the NEC Company either for their technical efficiency or cultural prominence at the early stage.

Political Role of the Dhaka TV

Although the Dhaka television was inaugurated as a pilot project and the recruitment of its cultural artists had been done by the NEC Company in an independent way, this section characterises it as a political medium which was used to promote the legitimacy of Ayub Khan in East Pakistan. The politics of the legitimacy of Ayub Khan the thesis finds remained as a vital factor behind the inauguration of the state television in Pakistan.

By adopting the doctrine of Basic Democracy of Harold Lasky, (Alam, Interview, 7 October 2001) Ayub Khan, the then ruling authority of Pakistan, endeavoured to transfer his administration from the military bureaucratic system to civil bureaucratic form. Only a selected number of people including the university teacher, students, organisers of the clubs, then were identified as the basic democrats under his democratic principle. Instead of plebiscite while Ayub was concerned for his formulation of basic democracy, he endeavoured to impress the middle class voters who were the opinion figure and the key pillar of the political order. With the objective to influence that particular group of basic democrats, Ayubian administration introduced television as the most wonderful medium in the contemporary age (Chowdhury, interview, 1 September 2001). While Ayub aspired to make them happy and pleased for his own political strategy, the screen of television had been used by his authority as the spectacle of democracy.

Indeed, by scrutinising the interviews of TV officials/artists and the relevant literatures, the thesis reveals that it was Ayub Khan who introduced television during the period of Presidential election where he himself was a candidate. Being the head of the administration he then had been harshly criticised by Fatema Zinnah, one of his main opponents, who endeavoured to manifest how the ruling bureaucrats were doing injustice to the Eastern wing of the country. Under the circumstances as the governing elite intended to refute opposition's allegation, it introduced the television in the Eastern wing for the construction of Ayub's impartial image (Salam, 1997: 122).

As television was inaugurated in a calculated direction to enhance the political image of Ayubian administration, after seven month's authority of the Promoters Company it remained in the hand of few bureaucrats for an extensive period (Alam, interview, 07 October 2001). The idea of bureaucracy is mostly associated with the work of Max Weber (1947) who marks it as an impersonal, rational and efficient routine (1947). A bureaucratic organisation with its emphasis on a rational and effective approach affirms its technical superiority over any other form of association. This sort of conceptualisation has been challenged by a group of modern scholars who portray bureaucracy as a powerful and repressive state institution, as well as one form of social control, which is associated with the political authority (Sarangi and Slembrouck, 1996: 3).

The history of the state television of Pakistan reveals the authority of bureaucracy over television as a medium of political indoctrination. All pioneer TV artists in their historical account make it explicit that television was centred in the corridors of bureaucracy in the long history of Pakistan (Alam, interview, 7 October 2001). Dhaka TV network was under the exclusive control of the Ministry of Information and did not have any freedom to broadcast the news from its own station. It was only allowed to broadcast the news of Radio Pakistan (Chowdhury, interview, 1 September 2001).

Middle Class as TV Officials

Being the most centralised system of storytelling, although television contributed to the contemporary political domain in East Pakistan, in parallel it succeeded in cultivating the underlying Bangali cultural values and ideologies. Indeed, by launching the television in East Pakistan Ayub paved the way for the confrontation between the two streams of social thought of the middle class community. In a developing country like Pakistan where politics was always in a confrontational stage, there the conflict was inevitable between the civil servants and the cultural activists who then were associated with the Dhaka TV station. Indeed, whereas the Urdu speaking civil servant assumed the status of the government official who aspired to conduct the television exclusively as a government medium, there the cultural activists were the Bengali speaking urban middle class who conceived television as a vernacular medium with the objective to portray their distinctive concept of cultural identity on its screen. As the fate of television and its future role in East Pakistan was dependent upon their activities, there always remained a tension between these two sections of middle class community.

The television service in Pakistan was funded by the government and staffed by some civil bureaucrats. The civil bureaucrats (popularly known as CSP officer) became the cornerstone of administration and contributed enormously to the emergence of an administrative state in Pakistan. The group represented itself as a small elite cadre, which monopolised all positions of policy making and strategic importance in the Pakistan officialdom (Hakim, 1993: 4). While the television appeared as a primary medium of political information, the civil bureaucrats played the influential role in TV world. Since a CSP officer used to serve as the information secretary in the Ministry of Information, the nature of the programmes of television used to depend on the personal choice and decision of the information secretary (Alam, Interview, 07 October 2001).

Although the Urdu speaking Punjabi civil bureaucrats remained in dominant position in controlling the television as a government medium, the Bengali speaking TV arts contributed in utilising its potentiality as a cultural medium. Indeed, by taking the interview of the Bengali speaking TV artists, the researcher observes how a parallel middle class had already emerged in the society who were then in search of their true national identity. Despite the authority of the Urdu speaking civil bureaucrats of Pakistan, the Bengali speaking TV artists strove to portray the distinguishing characteristics of their Bangali culture on the screen of television. The scholars and the cultural activists like Jamil Chowdhury, Munir Chowdhury, Kalim Suraffee, Mostafa Manower, then joined the Dhaka TV Station either as its officials or as performers. This group of TV personalities in their interview session made it conspicuous that, Bengali language, literature and tradition acted as the essential components to make up their uniform outlook. But what was the cardinal factor that inspired them in such a manner? Jamil Chowdhury himself answered the question by stating,

I was not involved with any political party of the country and I did not have any political background. But I was a student in the department of Physics of the University of Dhaka in 1952. On 21st February in 1952, I saw the dead body of my classmate who was shot dead. That incident not only touched my heart profoundly but also turned my life in a different shape. The event of 21st February inspired me to wake my conscience (Interview, 01 September 2001).

Not only that, while at the evening of 21st February, he got the information of the killing of more students and injury of hundreds, he found himself absolutely in a different way as his way of thinking and feeling about his own culture, language and tradition underwent a profound change. After the political event of 21st as he became aware of the status his own culture and language, he revealed, 'Being the TV artists

whatever we did, we did it due to our commitment to our language, culture and tradition. Our operation could not be regarded as an accidental event. Rather those initiatives were the consequences of a continuous process' (Interview, 1 September 2001).

The Linguistic Movement evolved equally as an inspiring phenomenon for Mustafa Manowar who was a student of class seven in the year 1952. While the linguistic issue stirred him fervently, he drew a cartoon by focusing the occurrence, which was used as a poster in Narawanjong, a suburban zone in Dhaka City and gathered fame. While he had been jailed for ridiculing the authority, that experience consolidated his passion for his own vernacular and culture. The event also made him aware that, a person could not leave his/her own cultural domain by getting the direction from the above. Since a person develops in and through his/her cultural environment, it is not possible for him/her to adopt any imposed culture (Abeerul, interview 25 August 2003). While Manowar was thus profoundly influenced by the phenomenon of the Linguistic Movement, he also contributed in stimulating the political movement of the early times by producing the programmes on Bangali political culture.

The Bengali speaking TV artists thus made it explicit that they were obsessed with their newly awakened cultural consciousness, after the Linguistic Movement of 1952. Having such an aroused sensation while it was not possible for them to adopt the dominant Urdu culture; they aspired for the visual projection of their self-identification on their vernacular television (Abeerul, interview, 25 August 2003). The aforementioned statement of the TV artists conspicuously demonstrates that, although TV appeared after the twelve years of the Linguistic Movement (1952-1964), it persists as a central phenomenon in case of inspiring the TV artists in search of their distinct national identity.

The Linguistic Movement played the crucial role in the formation of their unique Bangali character by isolating them from the dominant Urdu speaking non-Bangali

elite of Pakistan. Although the Linguistic Movement has been recognised by other scholars including Umar, Islam, Mukul, etc, what is essential to recognise is how the Language Movement and its political offshoot created a body of intellectuals who took this into the formation of TV culture. This thesis therefore is an attempt to demonstrate the Linguistic Movement as a creative phenomenon by associating it with the formation of the new awareness, new insight and new leadership within the cultural sphere of television in pre-independent Bangladesh.

Jamil Chowdhury, the leading cultural figure of television of pre-independent Bangladesh has been regarded as the most effective and dedicated person in the thesis. Among the Bengali speaking TV artists, he initiated the search for the image of their distinguishing Bangali cultural character. While operating within the atmosphere of the cultural aggression of Pakistan, he strove to promote Bengali cultural uniqueness by using the potentiality of the vernacular television. Jamil Chowdhury the thesis reveals is a creative intellectual with very individual personality and social thought. He possesses his own views, values and attributes, which represents him as an independent scholar. Professionally, he was a physicist and a believer in science and reason. Culturally, he was enlightened with the Tagorian vision, which contributed in developing his definite insight of his own Bangali cultural uniqueness. While Chowdhury has read and assimilated much of the teachings of Tagore, he discovers Tagore as the poet of Bangladesh. By constructing a particular narrative, he demonstrates Tagore cannot be separated from Bangladesh. The blue sky, greenness of the earth and the magnificence of the seasonal change of Bangladesh, persisted as the rudimentary substance in his writing. Tagore's Chhinnapatra for Chowdhury is an illustration, which manifests that Tagore belongs more to Bangladesh than the West Bengal (Interview, 1 September 2001).

Education plays the vital role in shaping Chowdhury's individual insight and personality. The knowledge, which he obtained from his school, college and university, contributed in making him as an assertive, confident and determined

person. Despite having the science-background his education and knowledge was not fragmented in nature. He studied Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics not exclusively in his student life. Rather he acquired the scholarship in literature, history and philosophy simultaneously. While he had been socialised in such an academic atmosphere where philosophy was no longer separated from science, it helped him to build up his holistic approach towards life and society. A group of idealist teachers of Chittagong College had encouraged him to become more dynamic and optimistic in his appearance (Interview, 1 September 2001). While he studied and taught in both Dhaka University and Santinikatan, he had been influenced equally by the atmosphere of these two institutions.

Jamil Chowdhury reveals his non-partisan position in association with any political doctrine. Instead of politics, Bengali vernacular and culture rather remain as twin pillars in his social thought. In the interview session, he was quite transparent in unveiling that he was absolutely committed to his motherland, Bengali vernacular and culture, not to any political party, or ism. While he had been passionately impressed by the linguistic phenomenon, he enthusiastically taught Physics in Bengali vernacular and supervised many theses of Physics in the same vernacular, although it was one of the difficult tasks during that time (Interview, 1 September 2001).

TV Artists and Intellectuals as Cultural Nationalist

Jamil Chowdhury is an illustration of a self-styled group of the cultural dignitaries who contribute in the nationalist movement either by proposing the concept of the nation or selecting and interpreting the fundamental elements of the national heritage through their writing, art, music or the sculpture (Facos and Hirsh, 2003: 1). Whereas the political nationalists organise the mass movement for the establishment of an autonomous state there the cultural nationalists conceive national identity primarily as a matter of consciousness which rests on internalising a particular way of life as a result of unique national history and geography (Hutchinson, 1987: 12-17).

From 1947 to 1971 since the linguistic based syncretic Bangali culture confronted with the distant and dominant culture of Pakistan, the political and cultural movements in the region went hand in hand, drawing sustenance from and reinforcing each other (Chowdhury, 1999: 15) The flame of freedom, which was lit by the martyrs of the Linguistic Movement, served as a beacon to the TV artists during their struggle against bureaucratic throttles. The personality and ideology of this section of people had been shaped basically by the academic and cultural atmosphere of the University of Dhaka. Both Jamil Chowdhury and Munir Chowdhury served at the University of Dhaka by assuming the post of the lecturer. Kalim Sharaffee was an eminent Tagore singer who was closely associated with Shantinikaton. Mustafa Manowar was one of the brilliant scholars of the Art College of the University of Dhaka (now has become as a faculty of Fine Art), who for the first time popularised puppetry in East Pakistan by adding a new dimension in it. His work demonstrates his interest basically lies in set design, dance drama and cartoon animation. Being a son of the famous Bangali Muslim poet Golam Mustafa, he acquired a positive insight towards Bengali vernacular and culture from his home environment (Abeerul, interview 25 August 2003).

A new group including Fakrul Alam, Sydul Anam, Nasiruddin Yusuf who joined the Dhaka TV under the leadership of Mustafa Manowar during the period of mass upheaval of 1969- 1970, were also basically the cultural activists. Particularly, a good number of cultural activists of *Chayanat* and *Udichi*, two leading cultural organisations of East Pakistan then were absorbed in Dhaka TV (Alam, Interview 7 October 2001). While the nature of their appointment in TV was contractual, these groups of cultural activists were neither scared of their job nor had the fascination to continue the work in TV world. They were thus the free and independent creative artists who could not be categorised merely as official in the bureaucratic sense of the term.

Since, thus the Bengali speaking cultural activists and intellectuals were absorbed in Dhaka TV, it contributed in the nationalist movement of the people of Bangladesh through its linguistic authority, cultural production and the dissemination of the news and information.

Role of TV Artists in Patronization of Bangali Cultural uniqueness

Indeed, despite receiving the status of one of the state languages of Pakistan in the constitution of 1956, the assault on the Bengali vernacular and culture continued in the multiple directions. While the vernacular of the Bangali Muslim demonstrates its association with the vernacular of Bangali Hindu, the Aybuian government then initiated the reformation of Bengali vernacular with the amalgamation of the Islamic culture (Rahman, 2001: 58). In his book, 'Friends not Masters' Ayub himself revealed his racial and cultural prejudices towards the Bangali Muslim by mentioning that Bangali Muslims were ethnically inferior and accordingly unable to rule the country (Haider, 1982: 98).

Within such an environment of cultural aggression and racial discrimination, the Dhaka TV started its own journey. While observing the Ayubian administration's onslaught on Bengali vernacular, culture and history in name of reform and Islamisation, the Bengali speaking TV artists commenced their operation with the determination to promote their newly formulated Bangali cultural identity by using the potentiality of the vernacular television (Abeerul, interview, 25 August 2003). One of the primary objectives of Dhaka TV was to raise the voice of the sub-altern Bangali community alongside the central voice (Siddique, 1999: 7). With such an objective the Bengali speaking TV artists then initiated to inaugurate Bengali in all spheres of TV production and administration. To assert the rank of the Bengali vernacular in official document and financial paper, Jamil Chowdhury introduced the writing of TV cheque for the first time in Bengali script by breaking the existing banking rule of Pakistan (Interview, 1 September 2001). Munir Chowdhury

simultaneously contributed in formulating alternative Bengali words with the aim to employ more local words in all branches of TV production. Many technical words including 'on air', 'rehearsal on', then had been replaced by the newly constructed Bengali words (Chowdhury, 1989: 4-5).

Indeed, Jamil Chowdhury and his companions strove to promote the Bangali cultural distinctiveness from the first day of the commencement of Dhaka TV station. While they were passionate to foster the distinguishing characteristics of their Bangali culture, the first vernacular television of East Pakistan started its programme through the announcement of Murdock Cohen's Bangali voice (Chowdhury, 1989: 7). The Bangali viewers felt thrilled by hearing their mother tongue from that 'magic box' when Murdock Cohen announced that, "Good afternoon, welcome in the Inaugural Ceremony of Pilot TV, Dhaka, Poush 10, 1371 (25th December 1964)" (Sengupta, 1990: 35).

Political Consequences and their Impact on Dhaka Television (1965-1969)

At the initial stage of the establishment of Dhaka TV, the central government was not concerned of its operation as a cultural institution. While the news was the chief source of information and effective means of propaganda, since the inception of Dhaka TV, it was mainly captive in the hands of the dominant authority. But the situation changed drastically after the Indo-Pak war of 1965 over the Kashmir issue, when all Indian programs including Tagore had been banned from radio and television of Pakistan out of the anxiety of the cultural dominance of India. Particularly, by observing the growing nationalist feeling among Bangali and their cultural enthusiasm for Tagore, the dominant West Pakistanis suffered from xenophobia since the period of the war. Indeed, in 1962 the Bangali cultural activists celebrated the birth centenary of Tagore more enthusiastically with their newly awakened passion. By discovering the portrayal of pastoral culture and natural beauty

of Bengal in Tagoreian narrative, the Bangali started adoring him as their own cultural capital (Alam, interview, 07 October 2001).

Out of the apprehension of the cultural dominance of India, the dominant authority then discovered the fact that the Bangalies in the East were the majority and might become united with Bangalies in the West while both possess the common cultural background. Tagore in this regard had been considered as the icon of the unification (Khorshid, interview 2003) that was apparent as the symbol of undivided Bangali culture. While suffering from both external and internal political anxieties, Tagore had been portrayed exclusively as Hindu poet by the governing authority that could not be regarded as the part of the Muslim Pakistan. Due to protest of some Bangali intellectuals although some songs of Tagore were broadcast from Dhaka TV and radio until 1966, the poet was absolutely banned in the media since 1967 (Trivedi, 1998: 271).

Because of Mujib's political strategy that employed the myth of Golden Bengal to inspire the people of East Pakistan to overcome their subordinate position, Tagore also remained as taboo in the electronic media for an extensive period (1967-1971). While Tagore's poetic element pictured the Bengali village as a place blessed with divine grace and beauty, a peaceful home for the tender Bangali heart (Charkabarty, 1999: 179) the song of My Golden Bengal persists as core mythical components in imagining the Bangali national identity. The song was then used to render by Jahidur Rahmin, a well-known Tagore singer in all public meeting of Sheikh Mujib (1966-71). Indeed, in 1966 in the Council Session of AL Mujib nominated the song as the national anthem for the independent and sovereign Bangladesh (Kawser, 1999: 18). Being the vanguard of the Bangali nationalist movement while Mujib popularised the song among his mass people, Tagore evolved as the icon of the separatist movement of East Pakistan and accordingly regarded inconsistent with the philosophical foundation of Pakistan (Mamun, interview, 8 December 2003).

Indeed, the period from 1958 to 1969 was a period of cultural humiliation and political persecution where the main victim was Sheikh Mujib. For organising the movement against the socio-economic inequality of the two wings of Pakistan and launching the Six-Point Movement Mujib had already been jailed (Malek, 2001: 66). But when the conspiratorial Agartala Case was hatched against Mujib with two dozens Bangali members of defence service, then the course of events turned into a different shape. While the open trail in Civil Tribunal exposed the contradictions and other faults in evidence, prepared by Pakistani Intelligence staff (both military and civil), the public agitation rose to pitch. Consequently Mujib got released from the Dhaka Cantonment Jail and the political activity gathered momentum from the year of 1969 (Haider, 1983: 31).

In the context of such political environment, Mujib denominated the province of East Pakistan as Bangladesh by depicting it exclusively as the geographical cradle of the Bangali nation, where it truly belongs, and where it can survive. The image of Bangladesh as the homeland of the Bangali thus was politically constructed by Mujib in 1970 to legitimise his political claim for the sovereign and independent Bangladesh. In parallel, he coined the slogan *Joy Bangla* by collecting the theme from the poet Nazrul Islam, in expressing his sanguine hope for the victory of Bangladesh and to evoke the spirit of his people to meet the challenges of the political formation of Bangladesh as a separate nation state (Kawser, 1999: 18). As Dhaka TV was appeared in 1964, all these political consequences exerted influence on its programs and activities.

Dhaka TV and its inspirational programme (1964-71)

By taking the in-depth interviews of the TV artists who were involved with the medium since 1964, the researcher discovers that, through the projection of quality programme they accomplished in cultivating their own Bangali cultural distinctiveness during the period of 1964-70. As one of the state strategies of the

dominant linguistic group was to strangle the Bangali cultural ethos in all possible manners, then there was no direct trajectory, which could be adopted by the Bengali speaking TV artists to promote their Bangali cultural identity. Under the circumstances, they projected the programs symbolically and metaphorically with the aim to cherish the Bangali cultural distinctiveness during the years between 1964 and 1969. The nature of the portrayal of the TV programs during that period could not be termed as defiant due to which the then ruling government did not initiate any direct action against those programmes (Alam, interview, 20 December 2003). But after the mass movement of 1969, when the political agitation reached its highest stage then the Dhaka TV under the leadership of Jamil Chowdhury, with the collaboration of his stalwarts including Manowar, Zaman, Munirul produced many of the agitating and inspiring programs in case of galvanising the Bangali nationalist movement (Alam, interview, 20 December 2003). This has been analysed and discussed in detailed in the following sections.

Visual Projection of Bengali Literature and Culture

From the day of inception of Dhaka TV, Bengali speaking TV artists endeavoured to promote their Bengali vernacular, culture and literature through their various programmes. On the day of inaugural ceremony they projected the name of the television 'Pakistan Television Corporation' on TV screen in Bengali vernacular including its traditional *Punthi* style and format. In case of broadcasting the sound for the first time in Dhaka TV, they simultaneously demonstrated their passion for their own culture. The song of '*Dhane Dhannaya Pushpa Vhara Amardir Ai Vasun Dhara*' (our world is full of paddy and flower), written by D.L Roy then was considered as a banned song in East Pakistan. The Ayubian administration banned the song with the logic that, it did not belong to Pakistan but to India. Historically, as India was divided and Pakistan emerged due to political rivalry and economic competition of the both Hindu and Muslim middle class (Karim, 1999: 92); the fear of the Indian dominance largely influenced the psyche of the middle class elite of Pakistan. While the song

was composed during that period when Bengal was the part of undivided India, it was marked as taboo in Pakistan by conceiving the cultural domineering image of India (Abeerul, interview, 25 August 2003).

Despite the official prohibition, Manowar nominated the song as a signature tune of Dhaka TV because of its both cultural and patriotic aspects. The song was considered by him as one of the rich compositions because of its unique orchestration. It creates such a harmony, which in his view touch the heart of the all people when it is sung as a chorus song (Abeerul, interview, 25 August 2003; Alam, interview, 20 December 2003). As a patriotic song it is equally remarkable which narrates the natural beauty of Bengal by revealing the story of the endless love of mother and the fraternity of the brother. As the song was banned, Manowar picked up only its tune and broadcast it regularly at the opening session of the television. The Urdu speaking Punjabis failed to understand that cleverly deed, since they were not acquainted with the song. As the tune was melodious, the administration did not try to prevent it (Abeerul, interview, 25 August 2003).

With the objective to promote the Bangali culture and literature, the Bangali TV artists were always enthusiastic in selecting the subject from Bangali poet, dramatist and novelist. *Aktala Dotala* was the first TV drama of that period which was written by Munir Chowdhury (Ram, interview 21 September 2003). It was a family drama, based on the social and emotional issues. Jasimuddin's poem, who was known as the *Palli Kabi* (folk poet), was regarded as the pertinent subject for the cultivation of the rustic life on the vernacular television. *Hiramon* was a folk programme where then was an attempt to bring Bengali literature and folk into focus (Fatema, interview, 20 November 2001).

Programme on Linguistic Movement

For the Bangali cultural artists it was not possible to broadcast any programme directly on *Shaheed Dibas* (Language Martyr Day), although the event remained as inspirational in their life. The prevailing restriction demonstrated that with the reference of the *Shaheed* Day, no programmes were allowed to broadcast from the Dhaka TV (Salim, interview, 19 August 2003). While such a barrier was then conspicuous within the environment of Dhaka TV, the Bangali producer endeavoured to hold up the importance of the Linguistic Movement in a metaphorical approach. Without mentioning the term '*Shaheed Dibas*' they thereby broadcast a programme where an *Okhor Brikha* or word tree was shown with several Bengali alphabets such as 'oh', 'Aa' (Salim, interview 19 August 2003). By adopting such type of skilful devices, Manowar produced educational programmes by amalgamating the linguistic issue with it.

While the word '*Chai, Chai*' (We want) was procured by him from the posters of the wall of the University of Dhaka, he highlighted the word '*Chai*' in his programme by deleting the major demands of the poster to avoid its political image. By interpreting the word '*Chai*' as a kind of learning, which the students get from their university environment, Manowar switched over into the subject of Linguistic Movement. By narrating the value of vernacular in education, the programme revealed the fact that the student of East Pakistan had sacrificed their blood for their mother tongue. Mother tongue the programme highlighted should be the medium of instruction while it is the medium of expression of their feeling and thought. By expressing the relevance of mother tongue in such a fashion, at the last phase of the programme he visually projected the *Shaheed Minar* and the procession of the students (Abeerul, interview, 25 August 2003).

For the projection of such type of programme on the linguistic issue either in a symbolical fashion or with the aid of the strong argument, Dhaka TV artists did not face that much confrontation with the central authority from the year 1965 to 1969

(Alam, interview, 20 December 2003). But after the mass upheaval of 1969, when a programme was telecast directly from the *Shaheed Minar*, then the producer Shafiq Rahman was fired for visualising the anti-Pakistani slogans which had been chanted there (Alam, interview, 20 December 2003).

Before the independence of Bangladesh although the term '*Shaheed Dibas*' and the song '*Amar Bhair Rakte Rangano Ekushy February, Ami Ke Bhulita Pari*' (How can I forget the 21st February, sprayed with the blood of my brothers) were under the serious restriction, Dhaka TV broadcast an exceptional programme on 21 February in the year 1970. Manowar attempted to demonstrate the discourse of thousand years of Bengali songs and poems through that programme. While the programme was presented under the heading of Bengali Department, University of Dhaka, the linguistic issue remained implied in the programme. Being the presenter of the programme Professor Rafiqul Islam successfully presented the name of the Language Martyr including Rafique, Salam, Barkat for the first time in the vernacular television of East Pakistan. The songs including '*Amar Sonar Bangla*' '*Amar Bhair Rakte Rangano*' '*Dhane Dhannya Pushpa Vhara*' which was then regarded as the integral part of the Bangali cultural identity had also been broadcast in the programmes (Khorshid, interview, 3 October 2003).

Visual Projection of Tagore

Dhaka TV contributed in cultivating the Bangali cultural distinctiveness through Tagore when the ruling authority initiated several steps with the objective to shatter the Bangali cultural uniqueness. From the commencement of Dhaka TV the Bengali Speaking TV artists intended to portray Tagore on their vernacular television by broadcasting the programmes on his song, drama and dance drama. The cultural artists of *Chhayanat*, a leading cultural organisation, presented a programme on Tagore on 26 December 1964, only after the one day of the inaugural ceremony of Dhaka TV (Shammi, interview, 12 December 2003). Indeed, the eminent singer

Sanjida Khatun, Kalim Sharafi, and Jamil Chowdhury then were the member of it advisory committee (Alam, 2003). *Gitoban* and *Gitanjali* were two weekly programmes in Dhaka TV where both the promising and the prominent singers used to render various Tagore songs including the romantic, seasonal and patriotic (Alam, interview, 2003).

Dhaka TV endeavoured to revive Tagore during that period when the Urdu speaking dominant elite enforced a ban on Tagore with the vision to prevent the infiltration of Indian culture through him (Salim, interview, 19 August 2003). By challenging such restrictive attempt of the government, the TV artists intended to project Tagore since they regarded him as the world known poet in Bengali vernacular whose works were composed mainly in East Bengal. For the manifestation of the Bengali language and culture through his literary works, they accordingly endeavoured to project Tagore in a deceitful manner by perceiving the cultural humiliation and the linguistic aggression of Urdu (Alam, interview, 20 December 2003; Abeerul, interview, 25 August 2003). Hence, when the oral constrain was apparent on Tagore after the war of 1965, the Bengali speaking TV artists strove to project the programmes on Tagore in a skilful and masterly manner. In the name of the spiritual song, Kalim Sharafee, thus sang a rebellious Tagore song '*Badhon Joto Shakta Habi Tatoyee Badhon Tutba Go*' (As the chain would be tighter it would be torn more) and accordingly deceived the authority. While the Urdu speaking dominant elite did not possess any insight of the Bengali songs, the nature of those songs was hardly identified by them (Salim, interview, 19 August 2003).

Consequently, '*Sharttsk Jonam Amar Jonmachhi Ai Deshe*' (It is my pride that I was born in this country)" '*Azi Bangladesher Reedyee Hotye*' (From the heart of Bangladesh Today)', '*Ami Vay Karbo Na, Vay Karbo Na*' (I will not be afraid), '*Jodi Tor Dak Shuni Kauo Na Ashyee*' (If nobody comes when you call them") (Shamim, interview, 12 2003), these sort of patriotic and inspiring songs had been broadcast from the Dhaka TV, when the verbal prohibition was enforced on Tagore.

By converting the Tagorian short stories into dramas and dance drama, Dhaka TV also attempted to project the nature and season of East Bengal on its landscape. While many of his dance dramas are the compilation of the seasonal songs including the '*Poush* (winter) song', '*Bashanta* (spring) song', '*Barsha* (Monsoon) song', Dhaka TV officials were enthusiastic to work on such project of Tagor (Alam, interview, 20 December 2003). By selecting some of those dance dramas, including '*Chandralika*' (Alam, interview 20 December 2003), '*Chitrangoda*' '*Shama*' there was an attempt for the symbolic projection of the seasonal festival and ritual of East Bengal with the Bangali attire and style including *Saree*, *Tip or Bindi* (put red spot on forehead) which were then considered as a contrasting culture of Muslim Pakistan (Shammi, interview, 12 September 2003).

Despite such accomplishment, before 1970, it was not possible for the Dhaka TV artists to broadcast the song 'My Golden Bengal' or '*Tomar Pataka Tumi Jaryee Dow*'- (To whom you give your flag). Indeed, from 1967-70, Tagore was absolutely prohibited in Dhaka TV and Radio Pakistan. That news of prohibition was published on 23 and 24 June, in 1967 in several local dailies in Pakistan (Trivedi, 1998: 271).

Projection of Nazrul on Dhaka TV

Under the project of Islamization of the dominant authority, Nazrul was invented as a Muslim poet and that image of the poet was apparent in the text book as well as print and electronic media. By denying the rebel spirit and secular character of Nazrul, the then ruling government (Alam; Abeerul; Khorshid; Shammi, interview 2003) portrayed him in a dichotomised fashion. Being a Muslim poet, in their view Nazrul could be accepted in theocratic Pakistan but after the proper revisions. The Hindu elements in Nazrul were expunged and the novel words were substituted. According to the formulation, a line of Nazrul '*Daroan gai gan/ Shono oi Rama hadi*' (The sentry sings/ he sings of Rama) then assumed the form of *Daroan gai gan/ Keho nai Khoda bai* (The sentry sings/ There none but *khoda*) (Ibrahim 1974, p.373). Indeed,

the Urdu speaking non-Bangali authority was afraid of Nazrul along with Tagore, while he was regarded as the Rebel poet in Bengali literature, who was enthusiastic in synthesising the culture of the Hindu and Muslim. He was the composer of *Vajon*, *Samasangeet* (the songs which adore the deities of Hindu Religion) as well as *Hamd*, *Nath* and other Islamic songs (Khorshid, interview, 3 October 2003). By portraying the essence of the syncretic Bangali culture he employed the terms '*Vagabond*', '*Khoda*' as well as '*Kali*', '*Masjid*' simultaneously in his literary works (Khorshad, interview, 3 October; Shammi, interview, 12 September 2003).

While the Ayubian administration endeavoured to construct his Muslim figure against his rebel and secular spirit, Dhaka TV was directed to broadcast essentially his Islamic songs including *Hamd*, *Nath* particularly in Ramadan. Within such an environment while no direct approach was available for the Bengali speaking TV artists to project the poet with his rebel image, they were keen to accomplish their deed in an indirect way. The poem '*Bidrohi*' (The Rebel) accordingly assumed the title of *Bidrohi Joniki* (Rebelious firefly) in a form of dance drama program. The program was presented in such a manner where a little girl recited several poems and suddenly declared "I will be quiet on that day when there would be no more exploitation" in the last sequence of the programme. Indeed, the central theme of the programme was demonstrated through a dream of a little girl who aspired to construct an egalitarian society in future. While the subject of the programme was narrated in such a logical manner, no clarification was required from the Dhaka TV officials (Abeerul, interview, 25 August 2003).

For the projection of the indigenous culture of Bengal some of his patriotic songs had also been projected by the Dhaka TV officials. Even poet's rebellious songs including as '*Karar Oi Lohi Kopat*' (The iron door of the Jail), '*Shikal Pora Chhall*' (Our Chain, our chain), '*Durgam Giri Kanter Moro*' (Mountain, desert, ocean form impassable barrier) had been broadcast on some particular occasions like the birthday of the poet (Abeerul, interview, 25 August 2003).

Role of the Patriotic Songs

During the period of Indo Pak War, plenty of patriotic songs including '*Aamareo Deshare Matiro Gandhyo*' (In the smell of the soil of my country), '*Palash Daka Kokil Daka*' (Where the Palash blooms and the cuckoo calls), were composed by Mohammad Maniruzzaman, Aziur Rahman and others. Although those songs were composed in the context of 1965 war, later, instead of the context, the essence of the song became important and acted as the inspiring song in the time of the Liberation War. While those songs revealed the landscape of Bangladesh including the paddy field, green mosses, mango forest, they became the integral part of Bangali culture (Alam, interview, 07 October 2001).

Flash of the news of cyclone of 12th November

While the place and territory are two important components of national identity, which contains the ideas of the cultural landscape, Dhaka TV played the challenging role when the devastating cyclone struck the mid-coastal area of Bangladesh on 12th November 1970. Although the cyclone was ever worst in the centuries, Yahahiya, the new ruling government of Pakistan seemed indifferent to the plight of the cyclone victim who deliberately avoided his visit to the spot. Two days after cyclone hit when the President Yahahiya Khan returned to Dhaka from his brief visit of China and stayed there for a day, no relief operation was conducted either by the Pakistani Air or Naval forces to the disaster area. Rather without visiting the victim people as the President departed for Islamabad, his government was condemned by the Bangali nationalist leaders for gross negligence and utter indifference to aiding the cyclone victims (O'Donnell 1984:84). Under such a delicate national condition, Dhaka TV emerged with its novel character. While immediately receiving the news of Bhola (The Southern Part of the country), Dhaka TV sent its one team with a silent camera in the spot without seeking any permission from the top authority. Manowar with his associates including, Monir, Jaman and Humayun adopted such a quick decision as

knew that whatever they intended to do, they should do it immediately before someone got any hints of it.

While the programme section then was in the hand of the Bangali producers who were working unitedly, it became easier for them to make their venture successful. Hence, after receiving the shots of the lots of dead body, Dhaka TV flashed those pictures so promptly that, the authority could not get any scope to prevent their venture (Abeerul, interview, 25 August 2003). A documentary film named 'Black Night' based on the facts of the dreadful cyclone was also telecast by the Dhaka TV, which turned the country into a sea of processions and protests during that period.

With the objective to make that document, Manowar himself went to the spot with a new team and observed an anomalous calmness where all seemed lifeless and motionless. While suddenly they heard the sound of a new cry they went to that particular place and discovered a weeping mother in front of the dead body of her infant. The mother remained in a constant crying with the delirious talk "After getting down under so much deep water, you did not die, you were alive. But today you have died in knee deep water. I don't have any sort of clothing, how will I bury you now?" The TV artists took the shot and recorded those sentences of the weeping mother (Abeerul, interview, 25 August 2003).

Although the people of the spot were in a traumatic condition, the TV artist decided to visit the place again on *Eid* Day. While it was the greatest religious festival of the Muslim, the TV artists assumed, those affected people would definitely shed their tears on that very particular day. Their assumption turned into a reality as after performing the *Namaj* (Muslim prayer), when people started embracing each other, they burst into tears. Each of the persons then started crying either in home or out. TV artists visualised all these sequences in their documentary including the image of the broken mosque and the floating tool. The echo of the *Azan* had also been embedded

in the documentary with the voice that “They are now in the eternal sleep. They will never wake again” (Abeerul, interview, 25 August 2003).

Despite taking such challenging initiative, the TV artists had not been rebuked by the central authority since the then president Yahya Khan himself visited the victim area after the two weeks of the cyclone. While the date of the general election then was announced on 7 December, the government itself endeavoured to negate the criticism of the Bangali nationalist leaders for masking the news of the cyclone (Alam interview 2003).

While the TV artists visualised the mass disaster of the mass people of East Pakistan in such a manner, the vernacular television then emerged as the symbol of people television. The devastating cyclone of 1970 in Jamil Chowdhury's opinion not only had demonstrated the vulnerable condition of Pakistan but also led to the dawning of the realisation that the problem of the Bangali would not be solved by the Pakistani government. While their destiny did not lay any more with the Pakistan, they imagined its existence in the sovereign territory of Bangladesh (Interview, 1 September 2001). The strength of the imagined Bangali community was reflected in the national election of 1970 where the AL won the landslide victory but the political parties of Pakistan did not accomplish in winning even a single seat in the Eastern Wing (Siddique, 1999: 8).

Revolutionary Role of Dhaka TV

Indeed, since the period of mass uprising of 1969 Dhaka TV started broadcasting the pro-movement programmes in various dimensions. TV with its vernacular following a cast of intellectuals and broadcasters, who were dedicated to bring to light the plight of the people, was especially significant at this moment in time in generating a strong and separate kind of Bangali identity, which formed and constructed a shape of community reaching out and caring for the victims of the disaster. While the Bengali

speaking cultural artists had been thoroughly influenced by the political storms of the decade of seventy, then they initiated to produce the programmes for the metaphoric demonstration of the inflammable spirit of the imagined Bangali community. Manowar thus produced a programme in the light of the substance of 'Runner' of poet Sukanta where a boy with a torn flag was visualised who were endeavouring to cross the villages, huts and the roads. But as someone was triggering off the gun towards the Runner, he got fallen for several times. Yet, he stood up at every time and kept moving forward. Within such a visual projection, the Runner was portrayed as a freedom fighter by the TV producers who in their view would carry the flag of Bangladesh one-day. No gun would be able to prevent the Runner and his spirit (Abeerul, interview, 25 August 2003).

By projecting such type of pro-movement programmes during the period between 1969 and 1970, Dhaka TV constructed its pro- people character. All these initiatives, activities, feelings and emotions as helped to create a coherent Bangali community, in March 1970, a request was broadcast from the Dhaka TV to attend the public meetings, organised by AL at 4:35 pm on 3rd March. The climax of Martial Law disobedience was conspicuous when on 3rd March TV news directly broadcast that, Sheikh Mujib had asked 75 million Bangali people to refrain from paying the taxes, from cooperating with and from obeying the government rules until their demands were not met and their rightful place given. The news also added that on 7th March Mujib would address the nation and makes his final decision as to the future of the duly elected representatives of the 75 million Bangali (Nine O'clock TV news on 3rd March 1971, broadcast from Dhaka TV by Iqbal Bahar Chodhury (Khan, 1996: 79).

While Mujib called his people to boycott the government of Pakistan in all possible manners and asked them to run their administration independently on his historic 7th March address, Dhaka TV artists and the broadcasters started their total non co-operation with the Pakistan government since that month. In Mujib's fiery speech, it was explicit that, in the event of radio and television if the news of the Bangali

remains non-apparent, the Bangalies who were serving in those agencies should refuse to co-operate with the administration (Rahman, 1996:38).

Role of Dhaka TV on the 23rd March

Inspired by the thundering voice of Mujib, Jamil Chowdhury with his associates became enthusiastic for the projection and construction of that coherent Bangali national identity on their vernacular television (Interview 2001). As the resultant feature of their effort, Dhaka TV became the Voice of Bangladesh on 23 March 1971. 23 March has been marked as a unique day in the historical account of the television of Bangladesh. The day which was officially known as Pakistan Day, in parallel assumed the status of that very special day when the new Bangladesh flag was designed by Bangali students and formally flown in Paltan Maidan at Dhaka city. While the flag had already been hoisted in the sky of the imagined territory of Bangladesh, under the leadership of Jamil Chowdhury the Bangali cultural artists reached on the consensus that, the flag of Pakistan would not be displayed on that particular day on Dhaka TV. Dhaka TV used to shut its transmission with the display of the national flag of Pakistan according to its prevailing regulation. But it operated in an exceptional fashion on that singular day by broadcasting the exhilarating and invigorating programmes without any intermission until the midnight of 23rd March. While the special programme was broadcast until the midnight, the flag of Pakistan was shown not before 12.30 PM, on 24th March (Abeerul, interview, 25 August 2001).

On that very momentous day, by creating symbols and arousing the emotion, Dhaka TV acted as a social tie by incorporating the associates of Bangali community in one cultural boat through its various programmes. Different types of stimulating and patriotic songs including 'Our struggle will continue', 'Hundred men, *Corer* men', 'I feel pride that I was born in this country' were broadcast frequently with new rhythm and spirit. For the projection of the indomitable courage and valour of the millions of

Bangali in a distinctive manner, Manowar constructed a novel sequence by utilising the potential of his camera. Consequently, a novel image was reflected with the song of 'Our struggle will continue, people struggle will continue', where one man turned into hundred men, hundred men turned into thousand men and thousand men turned into the crore men (Abeerul; interview, 25 August 2003; Alam, interview, 07 October 2001).

The programmes on 23rd March were going on in such a fashion due to the vision of the TV artists that, Dhaka TV is for the people and of the people (Abeerul, interview, 25 August 2003). While the TV artists were concerned about their deed and its consequences, they planned to quit immediately after the close of the transmission. Masuma Khan, being a female announcer then was with the group of the TV artists. Although all of her male colleagues requested her to quit TV office as early as possible since they assumed she might not be able to flee like them, Masuma declined to quit alone. She thereby stayed with all of her colleagues until the transmission was shut down. Hence, when the transmission was finally off at the mid-night, the group fled through the back door of the TV building. Jamil Chowdhury finally fled to Calcutta and Manowar was escaped in some where else (Abeerul, interview, 25 August 2003). Indeed, in the midnight of 25th March Pakistani Army cracked down on the sleeping Dhaka City with tanks and machine guns and established its absolute authority on radio and television (Malek, 2001:53). Under the circumstances, Mujib declared the independence on 26 March and called the people of Bangladesh to resist the army of occupation until the final victory was achieved (Bangladesh Basic Facts, 1998: 10).

Opinion of the old viewers

This section intends to demonstrate the effect of the programme of the vernacular television, which was then received by the Bengali speaking middle class viewers of the Dhaka City. This group of viewers had been marked as old viewers who explicitly

revealed how Dhaka TV contributed in both cultivating and preserving their Bangali cultural distinctiveness through its various programmes. Khalek, an academician and the senior most viewer of the group thus emphasised on Bangali collective consciousness which in his view was fostered by the drama like Sirajuddullah or the inspiring song 'Our struggle, people struggle will continue'. By combining their dreams and aspiration, particularly the programmes of 23 March in his view helped them in isolating their imagined Bangali identity fundamentally from the entity of Pakistan. As he could still remember the inspiring songs of the day, he revealed, 'On 23rd March we felt really good. The day although was known as Pakistan National day, Dhaka TV did not play the Pakistani flag. Rather it broadcast the song of poet Sikander Abu Jafar's-our struggle/people struggle will continue, which inspired us with new ethos and aspiration' (Interview, 24 November 2003).

Shammi, who served as a college teacher during the period of Pakistan, has been identified as another old viewer in the thesis. She expressed her passion by emphasising on the patriotic and Tagore songs, broadcast by the television on 23rd March. Particularly, a patriotic song of Tagore '*Azi Bangladeshir hridoy hotay*' (From the heart of Bangladesh), sung by Fahmida Khatun, had exerted so much influence on her that she could still remember the song (Interview, 12 September 2003).

In view of Khurshid, an educationist, Dhaka TV operated through a nexus with the stormy political decade of East Pakistan. He unveiled his experiences by narrating how the political environment of Dhaka reached at climax, by receiving the news of killing of Dr. Doha of Rajshahi University. In his own statement, 'Both Dhaka TV and Radio broadcast the news that, Dr. Doha, a professor of the University of Rajshahi has been dead under a certain circumstances'. The news although flashed in brief Khurshid stressed, that was enough in transforming Dhaka into a burning city. After receiving the news he observed how the entire Dhaka City assumed a new form. 'Although then Dhaka was under curfew, the city people became desperate to break

it. The people became so vehement that they put fire on the army jeep and Mowlana Bhasani started his procession towards Cantonment' (Interview, 03 October 2003).

Indeed, the years of 1968-69 were the period of political agitation with the frightful roar and angry demonstration of the people of the East Pakistan when couple of Bangali students, teachers had been killed and Mujib got arrested and accused on false charges under the Agartala Conspiracy Case. That political episode further strengthened the Bangali nationalist movement, as it had been resulted from the authoritarian and the repressive approach of the Pakistani leaders who were unwilling to share the political power with the Bangali political elites (Jaffrelot, 2002: 20). Through such repressive measures while the Pakistani government created the context for the nationalist radicalism, the cultural activists and the broadcasters had also been influenced by that political episode. Hence, in 1969 when the political conflict was at stake, Dhaka TV acted in a more direct way by disseminating the news for inspiring the political movement of the Bangali nation (Alam, interview, 07 October 2001).

Tasmin, the junior viewer of the group was thirteen years old during that turmoil period of Pakistan reign. She discovered the spirited character of Dhaka television in constructing the idea of Bangali comradeship within the political context of the six point movement and the mass upheaval of 1969, when in her view the primary phases of the Liberation Movement had been already started. She is one of such a viewer who regularly watched the program of Tagore songs of Sanjida Khatun, Fahmida Khatun and Kaderia Kibria on their vernacular television. During the period of mass uprising she heard the Tagorian song '*Bhadon jato skakta habee*' (As our chain would be tight, it would be torn more) and Nazrul's inspiring song '*Karar Ohi Lahha Kapat*' (The iron door of the jail) in the program of Dhaka TV (Interview, 12 December 2003).

Tasmin has been marked as such a viewer who herself had been influenced by those programmes of Dhaka TV, which it portrayed during the period of cyclone, particularly on 12th November 1970. By watching the disaster of cyclone on television, her family was so much influenced that they decided to send the money for the affected people of Bhola, instead of taking the new clothes for Eid Day (Interview, 12 December 2001).

Conclusion

The chapter highlights the centrality of the role of TV intellectuals and the broadcasters, in being in the forefront, who forged a strong visual and emotional informed shape of community. Through information, education and the dissemination of news as well as the projection of a strong Bangali political culture, these cultural artists strove to aid their Liberation Movement. Indeed, by subverting Pakistan's ban on Tagore's songs, and emphasising the resistance to Urdu as well as highlighting the political momentum for independence, they provided a focal point for the crystallisation of the nationalist movement against the Pakistani control. Throughout the Pakistan period, thus they not only sought to elevate the status of their own vernacular and culture. Rather they themselves created a new episode in the nationalist history of Bangladesh by securing the full control over television in March 1971 and galvanising the political movement against Pakistan.

Chapter Five

Political Transition, Nationalism Controversy and State Television in Bangladesh (1971-2003)

Introduction

This chapter aims to switch over the subject matter from the Bangali nationalism to Bangladeshi nationalism with the objective to demonstrate how the military bureaucrats in Bangladesh have used the state television or Bangladesh Television (BTV) for the legitimization of their individual interpretation of history and novel doctrine of Bangladeshi nationalism. Although Bangladesh emerged based on Bangali nationalism by shattering the Muslim nationalism of Pakistan, in post-75 period the military discourse contributed in inventing the Bangladeshi nationalism, which makes Islam as the operative force of the society and the organising principle of politics. Because of this invention of Bangladeshi nationalism while country's culture, heritage and history has been interpreted in the light of the discourse of militarism and religiosity, a new conflict started between the linguistic versus religious as well as secular versus non-secular national identity in Bangladesh. This chapter brings into focus this current crisis of national identity in association with the state television and different political environments of Bangladesh.

Although Page and Crawley (2001: 26) underline that, the state-controlled electronic media perform the central role in South- Asia in shaping the national identity by reinterpreting the histories of the colonial and pre-colonial periods, projecting the heroes of their freedom movement and broadcasting the national literature, the chapter negates the statement by demonstrating the paradoxical role of the state television of Bangladesh. Indeed, Page and Crawly have attempted to bring into focus how India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, each of these nation states of South Asia tend to define themselves in contradistinction to their neighbouring countries either by

emphasising their secular or religious nationalism or the linguistic and cultural heritage. From such a perspective, as nationalism is emphasised differences with neighbours the state control electronic media in their view operate as an integrative force in shaping their national identities in all these countries (Page and Crawley, 2001:26).

By analysing the role of the state television of Bangladesh the findings of my thesis contradicts with this statement. This thesis rather finds its divisive character which is used by the central government to interpret the cultural and political identity of Bangladesh and her cultural affiliation with the neighbouring countries in a contradictory way. On the basis of my explored data, this chapter therefore brings into focus (a) how the national identities are constructed and reconstructed by the state television in the different political constituencies of Bangladesh and (b) how it intensifies the disintegration among the middle class viewers in Dhaka city by narrating the history of Liberation War, the streams of culture and the contribution of the national heroes in a anomalous ways in Bangladesh.

Character of Bangladesh Television (BTV)

In character and governance, BTV is a public institution and its primary source of funding is public. BTV is often considered as a carrier of national integration by the government of Bangladesh for the production of cultural programmes on history, tradition and heritage of the country (TV Guide, 1980-82: 3). In the opening ceremony of BTV Archives, thus Nazmul Alam Siddique, the Information Secretary (acting) of the present government of Bangladesh stated,

For the last forty years, BTV has broadcast a lot of important programmes. These programmes have projected and preserved the history of the country, society and the contemporary phenomena which now have become the part of history. We can not forget our past. Through the

foundation of Archives, BTV will make a bridge with the past and present which would be regarded as one of the social responsibilities of BTV (BTV Archives, 31 August 2003).

Researcher's evidence demonstrates the incompatibility of the statement with the existing reality. Since independence, the government of Bangladesh has the exclusive right over the television service, and it has been functioning as a department under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. The government through Annual Development Project (ADP) primarily funds BTV as well as a yearly grant (Salam, 1997: 140). Being a state run medium it has been placed under the direct control of National Broadcasting Authority (NBA) since 1986 (Rob, 2003: 112). Being a part of NBA it is responsible to the cabinet and accountable to the parliament for its broadcasting activities. Due to such inherent centralising character, the role and regulation of BTV modifies according to the alteration of the governments and their political ideologies.

BTV in the Era of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (1972-75)

After nine months Liberation War when Bangladesh achieved her national independence from Pakistan on 16 December 1971, then the Pakistan Television transferred into Bangladesh Television on 17 December in the same year. The first civilian government of Sheikh Mujib took the immediate decision to take over the Pakistan Television Corporation on 13 September 1972 through the promulgation of the President's Order No.115. During the period, Mujib adopted democracy, socialism, secularism and nationalism as the fundamental state principles in the first constitution of Bangladesh (Ahmed, 1995). After the historic birth of Bangladesh when thus the new state ideals were enacted in the constitution, and a great enthusiasm was observed among the people with new hopes and aspirations as they had created a new nation state, sovereign Bangladesh, the TV officials then also found themselves within a new cultural environment.

Rabbani (joined TV in 1969 and wrote the Cue-sheet for the first time in Bengali in the Pakistan period), who was then a young producer thus revealed the role of BTV in reflecting the emotional, cultural and ideological aspirations of the new nation and its belongingness as an imagined Bangali community. For the manifestation of the cultural and the political identity of the new nation, then they were encouraged to disseminate the spirit of the Liberation War and produce programmes in the light of the linguistic based secular culture (Rabbani, interview, 15 October 2001). Thus, he reveals,

After independence our objective was to broadcast the history of our rich culture, heritage, tradition and the philosophy of Bangali nationalism as well as the spirit of Liberation War. At the same time, we were then eager to project the hopes and aspiration of the people of the newborn country (Rabbani, interview, 15 October 2001).

Indeed, at the dawn of independence, Bangali nation was regarded as a homogeneous cultural community, whose members were united by the linguistic spirit, common historical memories and cultural heritage. By declining the ideology of the theocratic state of Pakistan, since blood, war and victory emerged as the new symbol of Bangali resistance, immediately after the independence BTV initiated the telecasting of various types of discussion programmes, talk shows and documentaries to unveil the historical emergence of the Bangali nation with its pride, dignity and heroism. Many patriotic songs were simultaneously being played and poems were being recited in BTV programmes in the regime to uphold the determination, optimism and the brave resistance of that independent nation. '*Joy Bangla, Banglar Joy*' (Victory of Bangla, triumph of Bangla), 'Listen! Millions of Voices, from the voice of one Mujib', 'At the cost of Sea of Blood', were the patriotic songs of that time (Sobur, interview 2001). Dwijendralal's Swadeshi song *Dhane Dhannaya Pushpa Vhara* assumed the status as 'signature tune' of BTV in the same reign (Rabbani, interview, 2001).

With the objective to celebrate the Victory Week, which commenced from 15 to 22 December in 1972, BTV broadcast several spirited and inspiring programmes with the facts and figures of the Liberation War. The '*Smriti Amlan*' (Everlasting Memory) was such an interview programme with the cross section of people who expressed their passion in the programme. A documentary film named 'Nine Months to freedom' was also televised by BTV to uphold the patriotic zeal and the nationalistic spirit of the Bangali nation (Bangladesh Observer, 16 December 1972).

War memory and commemoration remain central in the modern nationalist discourse since the nation identities are sustained by remembering the history and heritage (Gillis, 1994: 5). While commemoration is constructed by the political and the cultural processes, the government of Mujib in that early years of Bangali nationalist discourse employed BTV as a cultural medium for remembering the supreme sacrifice of the millions of unarmed people and the unknown martyrs with great reverence through its feature films. 'Stop Genocide', was such a feature film which was regularly telecast at the time to portray how Bangladesh became as a crushed and frightened zone in March, 1971 and how the Pakistan army killed the innocent people, molested the women, slaughtered the intellectuals and initiated the terrible bloodbath in the entire country during the nine months war. In that nationalist discourse of Mujib regime, Bangali was simultaneously projected as a heroic nation in BTV programme who fought, died and won the victory through its stout resistance, great valour and intense patriotism. Through several live programmes, the valiant and wounded freedom fighters then were presented to the nation where the stories of the fearless struggle of the Bangali freedom fighter was unveiled, who faced the enemy with indomitable courage and valour. 'Congratulation to Freedom Fighter' was such a programme, conducted by the poet Sufia Kamal in 1972 (Bangladesh Observer 16 December 1972).

While the War of Liberation demonstrated that Bangladesh is able to rise above religious bigotry and the differences of caste and creed, equality and fraternity then were apparent as the new cultural theme on the landscape of BTV. The homogeneity of the different religious community who lived in harmony and fought collectively against Pakistani oppression is highlighted through the patriotic song like 'The Hindu of Bangla, The Muslim of Bangla, The Christian of Bangla, The Buddhist of Bangla, We are all Bangalies'. By broadcasting the programmes in *Pahela Baishak* in the name of *Eso Hay Baishak* and playing the song '*Abar Jamba mela battala hattala*' (Again the village fair will start) (Bangladesh Observer, TV programme, 14 April 1973), the shared values of the Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, and Christians then was vividly presented who speak in Bengali vernacular and celebrate the several folk festivals collectively.

Secularism in Mujib reign was understood more in the sense of neutrality among the religions rather than a total separation of the religious institution and the state (Anisuzzaman, 1999: 1-10). The connotation of secularism had been expressed in Article 12 of the Constitution of 1972 of Bangladesh in the following vocabulary: 'The principle of secularism shall be realised by the elimination of (a) communalism in all its form (b) granting by the state of political status in favour of any religion (c) abuse of religion for political purpose and (d) any discrimination against or persecution of, persons practising a particular religion' (Anisuzzaman, 1999: 1-10).

While secularism was incorporated as one of the fundamental principles in the state policy of Bangladesh, Mujib initiated several measures in accordance with the government approach. The choices of a national anthem 'My Golden Bengal' composed by Tagore and of a national flag, devoid of Islamic symbolism were the major demonstration of the secular leanings of the AL government. Secularism in Mujib administration functionally involved the customary, communal and pliable aspect of Islam over the divine and establishment based version favoured by potential theocratic state and by fundamentalist within the country (Kabeer, 1989: 15).

Since the state in Mujib regime endeavoured to embed secularism in national life in such a fashion, BTV contributed in upholding the spirit in its programme transmission. The regular recitations from Quran, Gita, Bible, Tripitaka at the same time from the television was an illustration of such approach (Anisuzzaman, 1999: 4). A sort of 'distribution of justice' (Maniruzzaman, 1994: 10) was maintained by marking Bangladesh as a country with multiple religions. The recitation from the Quran was broadcast at the opening on everyday of the week. These recitations were followed immediately by the recitations from the Hindu, Buddhist and Christian scriptures four times, twice and once respectively in every week (Maniruzzaman, 1994: 10). Special programmes had also been telecast during the time on Eid Festivals, *Shabe-Kadar*, *Eid -I-Miladun- Nabi*, *Durga Puja*, *Buddha Purnima*, Christmas etc.

With the emergence of Bangladesh, Bengali had been declared as official language and the Mujib government seemed enthusiastic in introducing it in all spheres of social life (Sen, 1986: 290). With the objective to introduce Bengali in all spheres of the national life BTV then was used as an educational medium by the government. By broadcasting several programmes like '*Bangla Bhasha: Correct spelling of Bengali words*' (Bangladesh Observer, TV programme, 7 May 1972), '*Bangla Bhasha Procholon Paribhasha*' (Introduction of Bengali Language and the Technical Words) (Bangladesh Observer, TV programme April 15, 1975) BTV played an important part to inspire the people to take pride in their own vernacular and honour it as a vehicle of thought in all spheres of life.

While Bengali language and Bangali nationalism was fore grounded after the war against Pakistan, politically the question of the collaborators came up very starkly. The Mujib government accordingly adopted certain measures relating to the trail of war criminals through the Collaborators Act which was promulgated in 1972 (Hasina, 1997: 9). Under such government initiative, Nilima Ibrahim Committee was formed

in the regime on 13.5.1972 for the identification of the collaborator artists who participated in the counter programme in Pakistan period. The artists and the programmes were identified by the Committee with the recommendation for the prohibition of those artists from the activities of the television in independent Bangladesh. After a critical securitization the artists who were marked as the collaborator artists by the committee included the name of Nazmul Huda (for the programme Mama Bhaigna), Obidul Hoque Sarkar (TV news bulletin and Radio programmes), Fateh Lohani, Shahnaz Rahmatullah, Shabnab Mustari, Ashkar Ibne Shilesh, Abul Kharir etc (Muktiyodho Chatana Bikash Kendra, 1988: 175).

Within such a novel socio-political and cultural atmosphere of Mujib reign, BTV emerged as a cultural institution for the construction of the imaginary Bangladesh through the dissemination of the knowledge of the four state principles, projection of the cultural ethos of Bangali nationalism and the expression of the ideals of the Liberation War. By producing programmes on the colossal sacrifice of the people, celebrated heroes, and the syncretic Bangali culture, BTV at the early years of independence endeavoured to visualise the historical struggle of the Bangali nation with its new sense of Bangali identity, rooted in Bengali language and literature to demonstrate its national commitment in upholding the territorial integrity and sovereignty. In the nationalist discourse of Mujib regime BTV thus was imbued with a cultural vocation to nourish the spirit of Liberation War and the linguistic based secular culture in order to galvanise the newly born nation (Rabbani, interview, 15 October 2001). But all these ideals and the cultural artefacts had been shattered by the military government in the subsequent period and remained almost non-apparent on BTV screen as it then operated as the aegis of governing military bureaucrats. The next section will focus on the process of this alteration of national identity through the military discourse in Bangladesh.

Military Coup, Bangladeshi Nationalism and the Role of BTV

The political history of Bangladesh manifests the intervention of military bureaucrats in the power structure who dominated her political arena for an extensive period (1975-1990) through the process of militarization of administration (Hakim, 1993: 1). The emergence of the Bangladeshi nationalism through a number of constitutional measures was the resultant feature of the militarism propounded by Ziaur Rahman (1975-1981). For the interpretation of the military ascendancy and the novel nationalist project, while a cultural institution was needed, television evolved as a political mouthpiece for the military government of Ziaur Rahman.

From the perspective of the modernisation theory although both military and media are regarded as the agency of the modernisation and development, this thesis unveils the different reality in the context of Bangladesh. Military according to modernisation theory is one of the more modernised and the authoritative agency of the government with regard to discipline, efficiency and order, which fills up the vacuum created by the civilian government to strengthen the political system as a whole. In such a process of nation-building media occupies an important place as a catalytic agent which could be used in large scale for the educational and informative purposes of development (Masoom, 2000).

Such view has been negated by a group of scholars including Finer (1962), Crouch (1985) who rather argues that the inclination of the military to intervene in politics is affected by nothing but its corporate interest. While the military is zealous in protecting its corporate interest and privileges, it acted as the motivating factor behind the most of the coups, which took place in Latin America, Africa and Asia. For controlling the information and disseminating the values and ideology, media from such a perspective occupies an important position in power politics as the propaganda machine of the military dictators (Lent, 1982; Bredin, 1982).

This view has been supported by the field data of this research work, which demonstrates the control of television by military bureaucrats in the political construction of a new nationalist project, named Bangladeshi nationalism to accomplish its political and material objectives. While the Bangladeshi nationalism is a novel terminology, this section now analyses the term from the perspective of the TV officials to demonstrate how the philosophy of Bangladeshi culture has been reflected through the screen of BTV to its middle class viewers.

By interviewing the BTV officials, the researcher discovers their conceptual ambiguity about this novel nationalist project, which involves multiple connotations. Jamil Chowdhury, the first Director General of Bangladesh Television of post independent Bangladesh declines to conceptualise the term Bangladeshi nationalism. Without Bengali vernacular and culture in his understanding, no other element would be regarded as the marker of his national identity (Interview, 1st September 2001). Rabbani who was in the charge of General Manager of BTV for three years has interpreted the term in association with the culture of the distortion of the historical fact. By addressing the issue of the paradoxical operation of BTV in case of broadcasting the programmes in Linguistic Movement or Independence Day, he unveiled how 'the objection was raised from the top authority against the words Bangla and Bangali after the political change of 1975' (Interview, 15 October 2001). Indeed, these are the words, which reveal the origin and the nature of the Bangali nationalist movement, based on the Linguistic Movement of 1952, and the Liberation War, which was grounded against the Pakistani oppression and subjugation. While these words express the revolutionary and the spirited nature of nationalism, prohibition was restricted on those words in post-75 Bangladesh when there was an attempt to disassociate the War of Liberation from the colonial subjugation of Pakistan to nine months military war and emphasis was given more on religion instead of language.

Bangladeshi nationalism has also been regarded as a political concept by Alam who narrates the term in the context of the 'political dichotomization of the society'. The problem of the concepts of Bangali and Bangladeshi nationalism in Alam's language (who assumed the post of the director of programme in BTV) lies 'within the political culture of Bangladesh'. Whereas 'religion remains as rudimentary in the political project of the Bangladeshi nationalism', there 'the Bangali nationalists trace the root of the nation in the syncretic Bangali culture' (Interview, 7th October 2001).

In the light of the opinions of the TV officials, I would like to argue that, Bangladeshi nationalism is an invented nationalism, which is associated with the discourse of militarism and the resurgence of the religious fundamentalism.

Ideological Basis of Bangladeshi Nationalism

In support of my argument, I will now present the ideological principle of Bangladeshi nationalism in this section. After the six months of the overturn of Mujib government, when *Bangla Academy* organised a weeklong seminar on observance of 21 February, Khondakar Abdul Hamid, a journalist for the first time presented a paper with a recommendation for the displacement of Bangali nationalism with the doctrine of Bangladeshi nationalism. His paper provided the theoretical basis for Bangladeshi nationalism by addressing the issue that, the Bangali citizens of Bangladesh should be called Bangladeshi in order to signify their distinct independent existence. Bangali nationalism as involves the speakers from the outsiders, his formulation requires the repudiation of the age-old culture with the objective to refrain from the ambiguity of the boundary problem (Anisuzzaman, 1995: 24).

By constructing a particular narrative of the Bangladeshi nationalism, Hamid included five key points in the paper. By identifying the Bangali nationalism as 'multi-state nationalis', he endeavoured to demonstrate its conceptual ambiguity and

enigma. While ‘several million Bangalies live outside the territory of Bangladesh,’ in his view “the term could not be adopted as the source of identity for her population’ (1994:33). ‘Neither the term Pan-Bangalism nor Supra-nationalism’, he claimed ‘could be found in the mode of social thought of the people of Bangladesh’ (1994:33). Bangali nationalism he reveals ‘is not only historically unrealistic but politically a mistaken term too’ (Hamid, 1994: 33). While the doctrine is with out any philosophical essence, he defined the term as ‘misnomer’. Having such a conceptual insight Hamid coined the term Bangladeshi nationalism by regarding it as an appropriate marker of the collective identity of his nation, which demonstrates its glorious history, legacy and distinct entity (1994: 34).

A distinctive place of the people of Bangladesh he suggested rest upon the innumerable features and attributes which divorce them from the other speakers of the Bengali vernacular and the followers of Islam of the other areas. The concept of Bangladeshi nationalism as grew out in such a manner, despite the commonalities in manners and customs, he attempted to reveal how the people of Bangladesh, West Bengal and other Bengali-speaking areas possess the distinctive as well as the contradictory features in their culture and national identity. In this regard he particularly shed light on the differences between the two parts of Bengal by isolating them on the principle of ‘blood, intellect, religion, philosophy, tradition, food, clothing and the way of life etc.’ (Hamid, 1994: 33-34).

Although Hamid offered a theoretical alternative to Bangali nationalism, his analysis has been regarded as contentious. One of the critical aspects of his narrative is that, neither the War of Liberation nor the political and cultural struggle of twenty-four years of Pakistan was apparent in his paper. Rather he initiated the distortion of historical fact by amalgamating the Language Movement of 1952 with the discourse of Bangladeshi nationalism (Rafique, 2000: 189). ‘The Language Movement of 1952’ in his own language ‘was exclusively the movement of the Bangladeshi people. For

Bengali language, for Bangladeshi nation, Salam, Rafique dedicated their lives in that movement' (1994:35).

Indeed, the role of Hamid in the Liberation War has been a subject of considerable speculation. By procuring the literatures of the collaborators and the anti-liberation forces, the researcher discovers the name of Abdul Hamid in the collaborators list who conducted a program, named '*Brahmin Khama Karo*' (Forgive me Brahmin) in Radio Pakistan by ridiculing the freedom fighters as well as India and the then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi for supporting the Liberation War of Bangladesh. By opposing the Liberation War of Bangladesh, he went abroad in support of the Pakistan government as one of her representatives. After the independence when that known journalist got arrested under the Collaboration Act of 1972, then the event was reported in the front page of the local daily '*Purbadesh*' (Muktiyodho Chatana Bikash Kendra, 1988: 162).

While the ideological foundation of the Bangladeshi nationalism was expounded by such a controversial person like Hamid, who was neither a believer in Bangali nationalism nor in entity of independent Bangladesh, it could be argued that the status of Hamid has been shifted from being a collaborator to being a propounder of Bangladeshi nationalism. While the text of such a collaborator remained as a major political text for Zia in his imagining of this kind of nationalism, it reveals Zia's move towards the pro-Pakistani military government. Although Bangladesh has become an independent state by breaking the Two-Nation Theory on the basis of linguistic-based secular Bangali nationalism, by avoiding such historical episode Hamid inserted the element of territory, religion and the anti syncretic Bangali cultural spirit in his project.

Being a collaborator while he philosophically belonged to Pakistan, as a counter project he imagined Bangladesh absolutely as a homeland of the Muslim of Bangladesh, to weaken the basis of the ideology of Bangali nationalism by

demonstrating its cultural link with the West Bengal of India. Despite having the status of the freedom fighter as Zia adopted such a project of the collaborator to fulfil his own political objectives, religion and territory have been highlighted as the two primordial elements in his project, to mask its affiliation with the collaborators.

Political Background of the Bangladeshi Nationalism

In order to understand the contours of the current debate on Bangladeshi nationalism it is essential to bring into focus its political background. Mahabub Anam, the Editor of the Bangladesh Times has contributed in revealing the background of the doctrine in an article published in 1993. The concept of Bangladeshi nationalism Anam affirmed was developed in connection with the insight of his father Abul Mansor Ahmed, who was a great champion of the Lahore Resolution of 1940. At a session in Lahore on March 22, 1940, a resolution which was moved by a Bangali Muslim League leader Fazlul Huq, and the decision, which then adopted is known as Lahore Resolution. Indeed, the Muslim leaders at the conference made it conspicuous that, there should be a political entity consisting of two territories within the Muslim majorities. One accordingly they marked was the North-West whereas the other was determined as the North-East, both would be autonomous and independent (Chitkara 1997:36).

The birth of Bangladesh in Ahmed's understanding was the resultant features of the spirit of the Lahore Resolution while the notion of Pakistan was non-apparent in the Resolution. Ahmed had been particularly influential for Hamid as he identified culture as the outcome of religion and in conceiving the distinctions among the inhabitants of East Pakistan, West Pakistan and the other parts of India including West Bengal (Ahmed, 1988: 48). While Zia having a military identity was looking for an alternative interpretation of nationalism, he asked Anam for the invention of a new trajectory with the objective to isolate the people of Bangladesh from those in West Bengal. Anam who considered the adoption of '*Amar Sonar Bangla*' the

national anthem of Bangladesh was a mistake, then suggested the General to read his father's works on Bangladesh, in order to gain some direction towards the achievement of his objective. That conversation in Anam's view played the crucial role as after the discussion Hamid was directed to formulate the philosophical groundwork for a nationalism of a novel kind (Bangladesh Times, 30 May 1993). As Zia was enthusiastic in altering the expression of Bangali nationalism, within a very short period of Hamid's presentation the constitution demonstrated the change by incorporating the idea of Bangladeshi nationalism (Ittefaq, 4 March 1976).

Invention of Tradition: Theoretical Framework

While, the term Bangladeshi nationalism was thus politically invented by Ziaur Rahman, the researcher intends to interpret it in the light of Hobsbawm's theoretical framework of the invention of tradition.

Tradition, although are often regarded as old, Hobsbawm asserts in fact novel in origin and sometimes invented. The term 'invented tradition' in his view involves both tradition actually invented, constructed and formally instituted as well as those emerging in a less easily traceable manner within a brief and dateable period. Invented tradition demonstrates a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules or of a ritual or symbolic nature. The objective of such practices includes nothing but the inculcation of certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies the continuity with the past. Invented tradition are responsive to novel situations in such a fashion, which take the form of reference to old situations, or which establish their own past by quasi-obligatory repetition (Hobsbawm, 1983: 2). The object and characteristic of traditions, including the invented ones, Hobsbawm suggests is invariance. The past, real or invented, are often imposed as the fixed practices through the process of repetition. By divorcing the 'custom' (which dominates so-called traditional society) from the invented tradition he insisted on its repeated form which is basically discovered and celebrated by the

nationalists. Cultural tradition in this sense is typically constructed as one with invariance (1983: 2).

Where the tradition is deliberately invented, there the nationalists operate with the ancient materials in order to construct the invented traditions for a quite novel purpose. For all invented traditions, the nationalists as a legitimate of action and the cement of social cohesion exercise history. The novel tradition in some cases could be readily grafted on old ones. But at the same time these could be devised in a novel structure too by borrowing from the well-supplied warehouse of official ritual, symbolism and moral exhortation-religion, princely pomp, folklore and free masonry. Existing customary traditional practices involving the folksong, physical contents, marksmanship are modified, ritualised and institutionalised for the novel national purposes (1983: 1-14).

Bangladeshi Nationalism as an Invented Nationalism

In the light of the aforementioned theoretical framework, Bangladeshi nationalism the thesis finds could be best understood as an invented nationalism. In support of the argument the researcher intends to demonstrate the contradictions and, inconsistency of Bangladeshi nationalism in this section by critically examining the articles of thirty-seven Bangladeshi scholars including Zia and his fellow men.

The nationalist passion of the freedom fighter Zia has been documented in an article of the local daily of Bangladesh who himself underlined the importance of Bangali nationalism immediately after the emergence of Bangladesh. The article was published even before the Constituent Assembly of Bangladesh could appoint the Drafting Committee to frame the Constitution (Anisuzzaman, 1995: 25). Bangali nationalism Zia affirmed in the article grew 'in the heart of the Bangalies on that very particular day when Jinnah declined the rank of the Bengali vernacular as the state language of Pakistan at Dhaka in 1948' (Dainik Bangla 26 March 1972). While the

Linguistic Movement was the first demonstration against the cultural humiliation and the racial discrimination of West Pakistan, Zia observed how the Urdu speaking Punjabi bureaucrats endeavoured to annihilation of the natural fabric of Bangali culture (Dainik Bangla 26 March 1972).

Only after the four years of independence, Zia contradicted his earlier view of nationalism by inventing the doctrine of Bangladeshi nationalism. What made Zia look for an alternative to Bangali Nationalism four years after? The Bangladeshi scholars have developed their own account by arguing that Zia filled the emotional hunger of the people by conferring on them the title of Bangladeshis and giving the Constitution an Islamic tinge. They take the view that Bangali nationalism is an obsolescent concept. After the creation of Bangladesh in their understanding, the people had mentally reverted to their separateness. They were not just Bangalies but the Muslim Bangalies (Mascarenhas 1986:132). Under the changed surrounding while the people of Bangladesh experienced a new dilemma regarding their linguistic identity which could not differentiate them from the Bangalies of the West Bengal, where the Hindus are majority in number, they initiated their search for a new kind of identity (Masoom 2000:173).

But to what extent this statement is reliable? Did the people of Bangladesh demonstrate any indication against their linguistic based secular Bangali nationalism in pre-75 Bangladesh? The researcher finds these issues are non-apparent in the scholarship of Bangladeshi nationalism. The evolution of Bangladeshi nationalism although the scholarship endeavours to demonstrate is the continuing history of a freedom loving people to achieve their self-identification (Osmany, 1992: 1), the researcher discovers quite a different history. This novel form of nationalism has been developed neither through a political movement nor a historical struggle where people participation played any role in quest of their collective identity. It was rather Zia who played the pivotal role in inventing the term through the alteration of the

constitutional procedure with the aspiration to fulfil his political and material objectives.

Although Zia contributed in inventing the term Bangladeshi nationalism, he did not accomplish in offering its conceptual clarification. When a definition of Bangladeshi nationalism was required from him, he himself puzzled over the concept as in his view it was non-apparent in the dictionary (Masoom, 2000: 175). Zia seemed right in this regard while his several speeches demonstrate how confused he was in case of identifying the objectives of the Bangladeshi nationalism. It would be more clear from another instance when Abdullah Al-Mamun, a renowned TV artist raised the same question to the president, he then replied “You are intellectual people, you will explain it” (Alam, interview, 17 October 2001).

Along with these statements, the basic conceptual problem, which is explicit in the several speeches of Zia, is that, he attempted to regard his nationalist doctrine as an age-old nationalism. The philosophy of Bangladeshi nationalism in Zia's view is ever awakened in the heart of the people of Bangladesh. The term goes to the immemorial past, as it is the product of the history of the people of Bangladesh including their physical and cultural environment as well as their hopes and aspirations (1994: 20). ‘The philosophy of the Bangladeshi nationalism’ in his own words ‘is the source of the inspiration of all patriots of all ages. This philosophy operated as the driving forces behind all initiatives an inspiration’ (1994: 20). The attempt to associate the doctrine of Bangladeshi nationalism with the name of the independence of Bangladesh was another inclination explicitly found in his formulation (Bangladesh Observer 27 December 1980). Both the trends have been considered, as a-historical in the thesis while the concept was non-apparent in the historical discourse of Bangladesh before 1976.

Contemporary dispute about the nature of Bangladeshi nationalism lies in the fact that it sheds light exclusively on the territorial aspect by declining the cultural past of the

people of Bangladesh. The approach the thesis finds is complex in nature, as several questions have been raised in this regard. While the territorial boundary for Zia makes up the core of the Bangladeshi nationalism, he used to demonstrate the map of Bangladesh in his public meeting for the symbolic reflection of his nationalist project. The location of Bangladesh in his narrative was important and strategic for the manifestation of her distinct entity in the South Asia (Masoom, 2000: 174). Indeed, it was Zia who used to say frequently “We are all Bangladeshis. This is our soil. This is our water. This is our air. These are our plants. We will grow more rice and wheat. We are all Bangladeshi now” (Quoted in Franda, 1982:12). ‘The politics of the soil of Bangladesh’ he thus asserted ‘must be based on Bangladeshi nationalism. Those who are in politics must have love for the land’ (Bangladeah Observer 24 December 1980).

Although Zia and his associates consider the approach as something positive, it reveals the most controversial issues in the political domain of Bangladesh. By considering the Bangladeshi nationalism as an integrative force in the light of the territorial boundary Zia emphasised, ‘The country requires the united participation and the involvement of all sections of people. We have to pursue politics for uniting the people and not to divide the nation. In the past, the nation was divided and so could not make progress’ (Bangladesh Observer, 26 December 1980). In the name of national integration and social cohesion, thus his nationalist project paved the way for the involvement of those groups of people in its framework who were neither the believer in the spirit of the Linguistic Movement nor in the Liberation War, but had been regarded as Bangladeshi because of their inhabitant status of that particular territory.

In the construction of Bangladeshi nationalism that group people who were pro-Pakistani thus had been integrated and asserted themselves as Bangladeshi through birth and land. That was a move away from the politics of anti-imperialism to a very simple one of birth and land. That was also a deviation from the history of the bloody

birth of the nation to an accommodation with Pakistan and Islam. Indeed, for Mujib nationalism was a product of anti-colonialism and a protest movement against the colonial rule. Whereas from nationalism Mujib gleaned exploitation and identified it with the exploited classes, there by disassociating the War of Liberation from the colonial struggle to territorial integrity (Jahangir, 2002), Zia rehabilitated the collaborators on the basis of their birth status. A group of pro-Pakistani people including Shah Aziz, Zulmat Ali Khan etc. who were the members of the Pakistani delegation to the UN General Assembly towards the end of 1971 to defend Pakistani action in Bangladesh, thus had been amply awarded in the regime. Shah Aziz assumed the post of the Prime Minister under Zia government and Zulmut Ali khan became a leader of BNP, the political party founded by Zia himself. Mashiur Rahman, who was himself charged with collaboration by Sheikh Mujib, was also inducted in his cabinet (Franda, 1982; Kabir, 2002).

Golam Azam, whose role remains highly controversial in the Liberation War, also returned to Bangladesh in Zia regime in 1978 and started living in the country since then. Being the Amir (chief) of the Jamat-i-Islami party in Pakistan he opposed the Liberation War in 1971 and left for Pakistan before Bangladesh became free. During the Pakistan period when several bodies were formed in name of Razaka, Al Badar to support the Pakistani army, Golam Azam was given the special responsibility of organising the Razakars. After the independence, in Mujib regime the citizenship of Golam Azam was cancelled through a gazette notification on April 18, 1973 for his crime against humanity (Hasina, 1997: 28). Having lost his citizenship in Bangladesh he then went around the world urging the Muslim states not to recognise Bangladesh and raised campaign for the re-unification of Pakistan (Kabir, 2002: 160). While Zia allowed the pre-Bangladesh Islamic parties to resurface in Bangladesh politics through the repeal of the Collaborator Act it also opened the door for Golam Azam's return to Bangladesh by claiming his Bangladeshi status in term of birth right.

Indeed, it was Zia the thesis discovers who not only legitimised the rehabilitation of the collaborators under his new nationalist project. Rather he also made Islam as the direct ally of his politics with the strategy to obtain the support of the Muslim League and other Islamic political parties as he was looking for an alternative power politics (Ahmed, 1995: 45). Through the constitutional amendment he accordingly invented his novel political philosophy by ensuring the Islamists that, it would rest upon absolute faith and trust in the almighty Allah for the restoration of democracy, nationalism, as well as ensuring of economic and social justice (Franda, 1982: 224). Bangladeshi nationalism Zia took the view was developed in association with the conceptualisation and reproduction of Islam in a pre-dominantly Muslim society like Bangladesh. Islam as in his conceptualisation is inherent in the framework of Bangladesh society; he amended the Constitution by further affirming “The state shall endeavour to consolidate, preserve and strengthen the fraternal relations among Muslim countries based on Islamic solidarity” (Bangladesh Times, 23 April 1977 quoted in Jahangir, 2002: 69-70). Having such an insight, he harped ceaselessly on popular Muslim tradition to demonstrate the authentic Islamic character as the marker of collective identity of the people of Bangladesh.

Several measures were adopted in this regard to demonstrate the new wave of Islamic resurgence in Bangladesh. The process of Islamisation was facilitated through the construction of the new mosques and beautification of the old ones. The mosques and other institutions assumed the new character while their service remained confined not only within the religious practices. Rather they performed simultaneously the socio-cultural activities with the objective to transform the existing society into an Islamic one. The Islamic organisations involving the Bangladesh Masjid Mission, Islam *Procher Samity*, The Quranic School Society assisted the Islamisation process either through the mosque based socio-religious programmes or devoting their activities to the character building of the school children by providing facilities to cultivate human qualities in them (Mohsin, 1986: 35). The institution of the Zakat (poor tax) Fund headed by the President of Bangladesh demonstrated another

measure of Zia administration towards the Islamisation process. The announcement for the introduction of Arabic from Class I in the school equally testified the determination of the Bangladeshi government for the extension of the Islamic learning in the country (Mohsin, 1986: 38).

The resurgence of Islamic political forces and the reinforcement of fundamentalism are in fact two distinct phenomena, associated directly with the Bangladeshi nationalist project of Ziaur Rahman. Although the Mujib government enforced a ban on religion based political parties in 1972 due to their controversial role in the Bangali nationalist struggle and the Liberation War, they received a fresh lease of life through the repeal of the article 38 of the Bangladesh Constitution within the discourse of militarism and religiosity (Kabir, 2002: 160). While Zia was enthusiastic in transforming Bangladesh into an Islamic polity, he built up a close working association with the major Islamic countries including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Libya etc. As Zia synthesised Islam with the modern political state of Bangladesh, she then joined the large club of Muslim states and multiple Islamic organisations and NGOs had been set up in the country. While the mushrooming of Islamic school had been patronised under the trajectory of Bangladeshi nationalism, the number of Madrassas (Islamic School) increased from 1830 to 2386 and the number of their students from 29, 1191 to 44, 1200 between the period 1976 and 78 (Kabeer, 1989: 28). For the construction of the Islamic ideological structure Zia government passed the Islamic University Bill in the Parliament for the first time in Bangladesh history (Bangladesh Observer, 11 December 1980).

By facilitating such extensive procedure of Islamisation, Zia endeavoured to make Bangladesh Muslim. While Islam has been assumed the determining principle of the collective identity of the people of Bangladesh since 1975, she is no longer considered as the country for the Bangalies. Rather she has been identified as the homeland of Muslim Bengal under the novel project of Bangladeshi nationalism (Rafique 2000: 190). Although such religious upheaval was designed through the

constitutional amendment by mingling individual's personal identity with the religious identity, the Bangladeshi nationalists consider it as the expression of the primordial loyalties of the Islam loving Bangladeshi Muslim. Islam in their view is more pervasive and anti-secular spirit is more explicit in contemporary Bangladesh, since the influence of Islam is natural in predominantly Muslim Bangladesh. While the religious spirit is considered as primordial, it is apparent as the populist political force under the Bangladeshi nationalist project by articulating people's cultural and national identity with it (Musa, 1994: 12). Although such amalgamation is regarded as basic and fundamental, it has already been documented in the section how such nationalist spirit was invented within the discourse of militarism.

Indeed, the construction of Bangladeshi nationalism remained one of the important phenomena in the political procedure of Zia for the legitimisation of his regime. The primary task of any military government is to have a major acceptance from the civilian society and impose dominance on it. The military elites who capture the power with their organisational might do not possess the legitimate ground at its initial phase (Masoom, 2000: 10). While from the very beginning Zia suffered from the crisis of the legitimacy, he needed the new political associates, new political strategy and ideology to strengthen his position and broaden his support by seeking alliances with the civilian political groups.

Hence, remaining in power Zia himself initiated the invention of his new nationalist project and took three prime measures to shape it as a political and ideological doctrine. By establishing the wide-ranging contacts with the rightist forces of the country, repealing the Collaborator Order and removing the constitutional restriction for the formation of religion based political parties in the country, Zia paved the way for the construction of the political basis of the Bangladeshi nationalism. As these religious political parties got revived under the patronisation of Zia reign, at the later stage they constituted a solid political base for Zia's rise in Bangladeshi politics. For the ideological construction of Bangladeshi nationalist project, he made it

interdisciplinary and took the support of a group of intellectuals including journalists, historians and the social thinkers. Finally for the implementation of his new nationalist project, being a military authority he employed his absolute power and amended the constitutional provision according to his own aspiration. While the Bangladeshi nationalist project was thus politically constructed by Zia without any association or consensus of the mass people, for its legitimisation both the territorial and religious element were injected in it in the name of primordial framework to testify it as an age-old nationalism.

Bangladeshi Middle class as an Invented Community

The process of the invention of the Bangladeshi nationalism the thesis finds is also closely associated with the Bangladeshi middle class, another novel entity, which was virtually non-apparent in the social history of Bangladesh before the political change of 1975. The basic problem in writing about the Bangladeshi middle class is the lack of definitions and analytical framework.

While the term is ill defined and inexact, the thesis finds it could be best understood as an invented community. The class has been invented in the particular political circumstances with its new political character, language and philosophy. While the Bangali middle class is the up-shots of a prolonged historical procedure there the invention of the Bangladeshi middle class is based around three causal entities: military-bureaucracy, private entrepreneurship and reinterpretation of history. Bangladeshi middle class demonstrates its absolute segregation from the Bangali middle class in its nationalist approach, political preference, socio-cultural orientation and consumption pattern. The invention of the Bangladeshi middle class was primarily related to the political condition of the military bureaucrats. The invention of the class is complicated in nature as the class was created after the own image of the military authority. The military community reveals its deeper conceptual interest in the creation of this middle class in order to provide a new theoretical alternative to

the existing political and nationalist approaches. The class was apparent at the very same moment when the country went under the rule of the military authoritarianism.

The Bangladeshi middle class is conceived as a new status group, which wants to enhance its affluence, by the expansion of market and profitable private enterprise. The emergence of the class has been facilitated by the policy of patrimonialism, followed first by the military government of Ziaur Rahman and then Hussain Mohammed Ershad, who aspired to use public resources and patronage to build up an indigenous capitalist class in co-existence with a large public sector (Sobhan, 1993: 35). While the class did not form either through the industrial development or the productive activities, neither the zeal of entrepreneurship nor the old ethics of hard work and honesty could be found within its class character. Instead of the image of the thriving middle class rather the class is synonymous with a 'Nouveau Riche' whose extravagant life-style is built on aid, borrowed money, embezzlement etc. (Sen, 1994: 74).

The smooth flow of the petro-dollars from Saudi Arabia and Middle East countries also played a crucial role in the invention of this new middle class. In the wake of scrapping secularism as one of the state principles after the political consequences of 1975, the door has been opened for many professionals and workers to work abroad. Due to their association with the Middle East countries, foreign money acted as a catalytic agent in their upward social mobility and portraying their acquired Islamic cultural orientation (Roy, 1994).

Bangladeshi nationalism is marked as a key element in the process of the identification of Bangladeshi middle class. For the Bangladeshi middle class it is the religio-territorial distinctiveness, which is the true determinant of their national identity being the inhabitant of Bangladesh. Bangladesh in its view is an independent country with total land of 55,588 sq. miles and they are loyal to the soil of that land. While the Bangladeshi middle class conceives itself as a nation on the basis of

geographical unity, it is intended to isolate itself from the people of West Bengal of India both culturally and politically (Samad, 1994: 126-127).

The group also denies identifying itself as Bangali middle class by acknowledging the principle of linguistic spirit. Equating Bangali nationalism with Hindu religion is a fixed cognitive routine in Bangladeshi scholarship and policy (Hakim, 1994: 318-319). The view of the Bangladeshi middle class is no way different from that scholarship which intends to demonstrate its exclusiveness from the Hindu Bhadrlok of West Bengal of India in all possible manners. Political alienation in its conceptualisation has led to the cultural alienation due to which they have adored the new identification (Musa, 1994: 12). Bangali nationalism its narrative reveals was strategically and temporarily adopted as a political device during the Pakistan period simply to fight against the Pakistani aggression.

Within the structure of Independent Bangladesh while the linguistic spirit has lost its utility, Bangali terminology could not be used anymore in defining the collective identity of the people of Bangladesh (Musa, 1994: 18). Rather they are Bangladeshi. They do believe in the one self of God and perform *Namaj*, *Roza* and *Hajj* which explicitly divorce them from the polytheist Hindu Bhadrlok. The language of Bangladesh in their view even contrast with the language of West Bengal by involving plenty of Arabic, Persian and Urdu words like *Khoda Hafeez*, *Kosh Amded*, *Eid Mubarak* etc. The influence of Islam thus is visible in the language of predominantly Muslim Bangladesh (Kyum, 1994: 279).

In the historical account of Bangladeshi middle class there was no period in Bengal where the Hindu and Muslim used to live side by side peacefully despite having the linguistic homogeneity (Siddiqui, 1994: 243.). Mutual antipathy and antagonism have coloured the relation between Muslim and Hindu in Bengal for hundred years (Mahbubullah, 1994: 147). Having such a historical narrative the class attempts to trace its root in twelfth century Islam to demonstrate its existence as the descendant

of Muslim blood (Masud, 2001). Whereas the essence of its culture lies in its religion it starts its work in public place by saying Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahmin, (Rahman 1994: 339) although it is a normal practice for any Muslim in Bangladesh. While the Bangali middle class endeavours to make a distinction between the public and private religious life, there the Bangladeshi middle class do not believe in such kind of segregation. As the Bangladeshi middle class is more religious minded today, which is, claimed by the class itself, Friday is the only full non-working day in contemporary Bangladesh (Murshid, 2002).

Bangladeshi middle class is an elusive middle class which is unwilling to get a comprehensive view of the history of the Liberation War of Bangladesh (Field data 2001). The history of the Liberation War for them is a matter of old issue due to which they seem reluctant in the subject of rehabilitation of the collaborators or their ascendancy in the power politics. They have their own historical narrative where Ziaur Rahman has emerged as a new national hero being the declarer of independence and the builder of the new nation. Zia has been regarded as a modern personality who in their view has created new villages, institutions as well as intended to reform bureaucracy and military community (Franda, 1982).

As their historical narrative is absolutely different from the narrative of the Bangali middle class they deny accepting Mujib either as Bangabondhu or the architect of Bangladesh. In their observation Mujib did not declare the independence of Bangladesh on 7th March 1971. His speech was based merely on the six-point movement for autonomy, nothing more than that (Huda, 1994: 62). Rather it was Zia, the key man who contributed in the War of Liberation by declaring the independence of Bangladesh being a provisional president and a commander in chief of the Bangladesh Liberation Army on 26th/27 March in 1971(Rahman, 1996: 47-55).

Bangladeshi middle class is also loud against Bangali secular nationalism as it dilutes the religio-territorially defined collective identity of Bangladesh. The doctrine of secularism in its view embraces atheism, which has been derived in Bangladesh not from the classical Western worldliness but from the Nehruvian notion of secularism of India (Maniruzzaman, 1988: 49). Proclaiming that the nationalism of Bangladesh is weakened by the policies of secularism and Indian aggression, the class considers Islam as the sole guarantee for persistence of their independent Bangladeshi identity (Gafur, 1994). The Bangladeshi middle class thus suffers from xenophobia. Because of the dispute on the sharing of the water of the two great river systems (the Ganges and the Brahmaputra) and gas export issue the Bangladeshi middle class experiences the domineering attitude of Delhi (Kabir, 2002: 157). The Indian demands for the use of Chittagong port, transit facilities as well as its economic and cultural aggression in its vision have been designed to make Bangladesh vulnerable. By considering the Hindu Indian hegemony as a threat for Bangladesh (Karim, 1994: 257), the Bangladeshi middle class starts to whip up their religious feeling.

Although the group is anti-Indian in their attitude and philosophy, the thesis finds its pattern of consumption and the style of life are often influenced by the Indian culture and commodities (Dilruba, interview 3 September 2001; Kashfi, interview 23 December 2001). The group feels special and confident by wearing various types of Indian garments including *Salwor-Kameez*, *Saree*, *Punjabee* (Star Magazine, January 2, 1998) and using lots of Indian goods in its daily life. The explosion of cable connection and satellite television, which first emerged in Bangladesh in 1992, has provided a new insight of consumer culture to the Dhaka middle class. The Indian channels are very much in tune with the culture of the new middle class which enjoys its mundane life and abundance with medieval mental construction. Its members the thesis discovers are keen to demonstrate their conceptual isolation from the rural people on the principle of their distinct life style and taste of culture (Marufa, interview 8 January 2002; Fauzia, interview, 14 November 2001).

The appreciation of band concert is indicative under such a context, which could be considered as the distinct public culture of the Bangladeshi middle class. Instead of folk band music is more adorable to the new middle class which now provides amusement not only for the young generation of Bangladesh. Rather it is the affluent Bangladeshi middle class which does not mind to buy the expensive tickets to enjoy the golden evening of band music either in Hotel Sheraton or Alliance Francise Café (Star Magazine, 12 January 1998).

By embracing all these paradoxes Bangladeshi middle class could be defined as an anomalous group which prefers to use Musalmani Bangla in its conversation as well as speak good English and understand Hindi. It seems enthusiastic in introducing the veil culture as a symbol of distinctive Islamic gesture by regarding Islam as a progressive religion although at the same time it asks for too much consumption.

Material Objectives of the Military Bureaucrats and Bangladeshi Middle Class

The Bangladeshi middle class both in the institutionalised form and in the ideological value structure thus is linked to post-1975 military governments who collectively wished to accomplish their political and material objectives under the changing political circumstances of the country. Although the Bangladeshi middle class intends to justify the changes in polity and political economy of post-75 Bangladesh in name of economic rationalism, modernism, and nationalism (Masoom, 2000), the thesis finds rather their different aspirations. . By examining the complex alliances between the Bangladeshi middle class and political change of 1975 the thesis finds it was the military authority which itself designed the change while it was needed for the achievement of their material target.

Indeed, the invention of the Bangladeshi middle class and Bangladeshi nationalism were the resultant features of the confrontation of the two groups of middle class of independent Bangladesh who had the civilian as well as the military identity in

parallel. After the independence the real political struggle started within the middle class community when Mujib's nationalist government dismissed a sizeable military as an unnecessary immoderation (Ziring, 1994: 97). Mutual suspicion began to develop within the two sections when the civilian government reduced the budget and the largesse of the military community. Its portion of the budget was merely one eighth in Mujib regime whereas it jumped to 30 % under Ziaur Rahman and even became more excessive under H.M. Ershad (Kabeer, 1989: 11).

Mujib's earlier antagonism with the army officials especially Ayub Khan and Yahiya Khan in fact made him anxious of military mechanism. While the old sense of fear haunted Mujib in independent Bangladesh he endeavoured to control its power and made it comparatively ineffective. The association of the two groups of middle class got worse when the civilian government took the final decision to form the *Jatiya Rakhi Bahini* or National Security Force in the country (Ziring, 1994: 97). While the body was well armed and trained to contend terror with terror (Ziring, 1994: 97), it emerged as a threat for the army officials of the country. The army of Bangladesh from the very beginning was split into two groups who participated in the Liberation War of 1971 and those who had been in West Pakistan but later joined the Bangladesh army. For contributing in the Liberation War when two years extra seniority and accelerated promotions had been given to those who fought in 1971, it caused discontent within the larger repatriated section of the Bangali army officials (Maniruzzaman, 1994: 79). All these initiatives of Mujib government as went against the group interest of the Bangali army officials, the group itself initiated the political change in 1975 to defend its own existence.

Being a middle class authority with military identity as Zia knew that money is the universal cry for the middle class (Wahrman, 1995: 35) and Hedonism is the most appealing social doctrine to draw its attention, he designed to build up a state with the men of wealth to provide a new narrative in connection with his advent in power. "Money is no problem"(Kabir,1998:50) the statement was fabricated by Zia as a new

political vocabulary for the satisfaction of the penny conscious and materialistic Bangali middle class. The strategy of making the affluent class contributed to a large extent in mirroring him as a modern man who was committed to the enhancement of private capital (Kabeer, 1989: 11). Zia needed the image desperately while under his patronisation the state resources were being channelled to a narrow segment of the middle class when the masses of the country were living in abject poverty. Being an army man while Zia was cautious about his operation he started visiting the villages of Bangladesh frequently with the aim to reveal himself as a friend of the poorer. In forming the novel persona as a comrade of the masses, Zia commenced a number of canal digging experiments where he with his safari-suited colleagues participated in well-publicised earth cutting project (Sobhan, 1993: 36).

Bangladeshi Nationalism Bangladeshi Middle Class and Divided Nation

While the Bangladeshi middle class has developed in a reciprocal relationship with the military bureaucrats, it occupies an ambiguous position in Bangladesh society, with its new class character, nationalist project and political language. In case of defining the Bangladeshi nationalism although the class identifies social cohesion as the key element the thesis finds rather its divisive character. Being a political authority with military identity Zia himself contributed in the dichotomization of the Bangali nation by inventing the doctrine of Bangladeshi nationalism in the name of majoritarian religion, territorial sovereignty and national development.

The middle class in independent Bangladesh seem conceptually and symbolically divided since post-75 period when the approach was contrived by the authority of Ziaur Rahman to enforce the military supremacy on civil society. A new form of political practice which evolved from that authoritarianism attempted to construct such an environment where the ever rising political character of the military authority would be ensured. Interpretation of the novel pattern of civil military association then tended to stress either on the image of the military authority as the guardian of

national security or the failure of the civil political power who has been depicted as corrupt, rapacious and unsuccessful (Jahangir, 2002: 8).

By initiating such a dichotomization between the civilian and military community, Zia repeatedly insisted on the difficulties of the political process, which he dreamt to make for the politicians (Kabir, 1998: 50). He nearly succeeded in doing so as he endeavoured to enervate the political parties under his new political strategy of culture of political opportunism. It became explicit in the formation of his Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) which was an amalgamation of various descriptive groups involving a number of ambitious retired army officer, power loving bureaucrats, fortune seeking businessmen and petty politician whose political experience had been the subject of considerable speculation (Ahmed, 1994:104). While he drove away the rightists, leftists, pro-Islamic and the anti-Indian forces from their multiple political platforms in order to compete with AI, the hitherto major political party of Bangali middle class, the dichotomization of Bangali nation started to take place within its political domain.

Constitutional amendment remain central in the fragmentation of Bangali nation through which Zia exerted to crush the spirit of Liberation War as well as revive the anti-liberation forces and the Islamists simultaneously. Despite participating in the Liberation War Zia gathered that group of people around him who opposed the liberation war tooth and nail as the nexus was needed for his alternative power base (Anisuzzaman, 1999: 4). Not only that, he also initiated the cleavage within the Bangali nation by redefining the character of Liberation War of 1971. Conflict takes place within the middle class domain as his regime demonstrated the alteration of the Constitution from “a historic struggle for national liberation to a historic war for national independence” (Westergaard, 1985 quoted in Jahangir, 2002: 70). The historical discourse of the Bangali middle has created a particular narrative of the Liberation War, which could not be regarded merely as a military war. The war in

their conceptualisation was unique as it was broke out for the economic, political and cultural emancipation of the Bangali nation as a whole (Ahmed, 1995: 60).

Indeed, during the period of mass uprising both the terminologies *Muktiyodho* (The War of Liberation) and *Shadhinatayodho* (the War of Independence) were widely used. But the issue turned into a controversy while Zia employed the milder words 'War for National Independence' in the constitutional document of the country (Ahmed, 1995:59). Although the dichotomization was conceptual at the primary level it contributed in the incoherence of the nation at a much deeper level. The change was indicative by providing an alternative political understanding of the Liberation War by portraying the splendid image of the military forces and minimising the contribution of the Bangali nationalist leaders. New interpretation of history thus was apparent by challenging the heroic deed of the Bangali nationalist demagogues for their physical absence in the battlefield against Pakistan (Rahman, 1996).

Instead, the army officials appeared with true patriotism who fought against the occupation force and conducted the war. Zia himself assumed the character of a new national hero in that renewed version of history which stressed how his voice was thundered from Chittagong to inspire all Bangladeshis to join hands in a War of Independence (Bangladesh Observer, 16 December 1976). In parallel, the name of Mujib disappeared from that new episode of history who was never been acknowledged as *Bangabondhu* or the architect of the nation by the regime. Zia personally declined to reveal Mujib's name in officialdom or public affair (Franda, 1982: 30).

His regime in fact endeavoured to construct a more complicated image of Mujib by accusing his party for adopting the alien political ideology (Bangladesh Observer, December 24, 1980). By equating AL politics with foreignism Zia revealed the importance of Bangladeshi nationalism in a novel fashion with novel political

rhythm. While foreignism could not be suitable for Bangladesh politics, Bangladeshi nationalism is the only alternative for the preservation of the national unity and for the protection of nation's freedom. Accordingly, the perspective aspired to trace the root of social cohesion in Bangladeshi nationalism by regarding it synonymous with national independence (Bangladesh Observer, 27 December 1980). In Zia's conceptualisation while Bangladeshi nationalism is the key to uplift, he repeatedly mentioned its distinctive character by urging, "Now the time has come to build our nation, our country. We must rely on our strengths- no foreignism" (Quoted in Franda, 1982: 296). 'The colonial exploitation and foreign subjugation through centuries had taught us that no foreign ideals and ism could solve our problem' (Bangladesh Observer, December 29, 1980).

The problem, which is indicative in such a formulation, is that although Zia was loud against the foreign invasion in name of foreignism, he was absolutely silent about Pakistani oppression and genocide. Despite his frequent concern for foreign invasion he never attempted to define who those foreign invaders were, how did they exploit or what was the result of that oppression. Rather in the name of national unity and social solidarity, he urged all sections of people including the freedom fighters and the collaborators and the anti-liberation forces to work together under the spirit of Bangladeshi nationalism (Bangladesh Observer, December 24 1980). As the attempt was anomalous the division become more explicit within the middle class community with its own and contrasting narrative of history.

The division of the Bangali nation assumed the institutionalised form when the terms Bangali nationalism and secularism both were deleted from the constitution in 1977. The turn has been viewed as an attempt for the modification of the society from its secular Bengal paragon to Muslim Bengal on the principle of religion and religious culture (Rafique, 2000: 190). Although Zia endeavoured to ensure that no discrimination against any citizen would be observed on the ground of religion or caste under his Bangladeshi nationalist project (Rahman, 1994), he did not provide

any explanation how that complex inter-linkages would be maintained. How a Hindu or Buddhist will find the reflection of their distinct religio-cultural existence within the structural framework of Muslim tradition was completely missing in his formulation. Neither had he attempted to interpret how the non-Muslims will unite their feeling with the Bangladeshis who will assert their firm determination by saying 'Insallah', or projecting themselves in Islamic etiquette in all possible manners. By focusing on religion of majority, Zia in fact defined Muslim as one unit against the non-Muslims. While speaking to Hindus/Christian although he used to ask them to spread the message of Bangladeshi nationalism, there was no intimation how precisely they might fit into that message (Franda, 1982: 300).

Declining the linguistic and cultural homogeneity as he intended to re-construct social harmony into theism and aspired to identify the social organisation based on faith (Jahangir 2002: 69), the presence of the non-Muslims not only been overlooked rather the whole middle class become disintegrated. Neither the Christian nor the Hindu middle classes of Dhaka City the thesis finds have considered themselves as Bangladeshi. It was not possible even since the majoritarian domination has caused the rise of the minoritarian separation. The religious minorities have clustered together in a Hindu-Bauddha-Christan *Ookya Parishad* (Council for Hindu-Buddhist-Christian Unity) being a distinct entity from the Muslim community (Anisuzzaman, 1999: 7). Nation formation under Bangladeshi nationalism thus was problematic in nature while the people of multi-religions find it difficult to unite them conceptually and symbolically under any single religion in Bangladesh.

Bangladeshi nationalist project virtually denies the significance of socio-territorial imprint on the people of the country and the key role of the indigenous culture in the nation formation. Although the notion of the territorial identity is fundamental in Zia's doctrine of nationalism, it is quite ambiguous. The people who are collectively living within the common boundary of Bangladesh and sharing a linguistic and cultural heritage for long time could not get any preference in his nationalist

framework. Against the folk and indigenous tradition through which the integrated culture of the entire rural community of Bangladesh is reflected, Zia underlined constantly on Muslim cultural tradition. Simultaneously, his dichotomization policy of modern-archaic also contributed in undermining the value of folk as a cultural asset of Bangladesh (Nuruzzaman, interview, 1 October 2001).

Despite Zia's initiative and enthusiasm for the construction of novel Bangladeshi culture, the term remains still as a mystery for the middle class in Bangladesh. Instead of defining the term with its distinctive features and connotations as he brought into focus the distinctive life style of Hindu and Muslim, new debate started within the middle class community about the relevance of Tagore and Nazrul in Bangladesh society. A group of Bangladeshis including the Islamists raised their voice against the national anthem which has been written by Tagore, a non-Muslim poet and the flag of Bangladesh which does not carry any mark of Islamic symbol (Franda, 1982: 225). Although Zia did not proceed towards any more extreme direction he paved the way for new disputes about the cultural orientation of the nation by reinventing the religious images of these two great litterateurs. Nation's disintegration thus is found through a step by step procedure under Zia's patronisation in the name of the Bangladeshi nationalism, religious dogmatism and ethos of modernism.

BTV and the invention of Bangladeshi Culture

While the political system and the media system were tightly intertwined in the military discourse of Bangladesh, as a state regulated medium BTV reflected and perpetuated both the political and nationalist ideologies of Ziaur Rahman.

While Zia endeavoured to invent the new political mythology against the mainstream political culture, the name of Sheikh Mujib and the significance of the historic days including 7 March, January 10 then were ostracised from the programmes of BTV

(Rabbani interview, 15 October 2001). While the term Liberation Movement was replaced by the word War of Independence and the right wing collaborators had been amply awarded in the regime, the use of the prime terminologies of the Liberation War including *Sonar Bangla*, *Joy Bangla*, genocide, *Razakars* (collaborators) were exclusively forbidden in BTV's production. The TV officials Nasir, Rabbani in their interview session reveal that, while in Zia's understanding those words were detrimental for his nationalist project, the patriotic songs like 'We fight to save flower', 'We'll cross this shore-less ocean of waves', 'Victory of Bangla, triumph of Bangla' which had been broadcast from the Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra (Radio Station of Independent Bangla), were equally considered as prohibited phenomena by BTV (Interview, 2001).

While the programme of the television was shaped by the political vision of the military bureaucrats, in 1976, when Amiruzzaman assumed the post of the Director General of BTV, it demonstrated its paradoxical role without playing the whole National Anthem in its closing session. Only the tune of the National Anthem then had been played by BTV (Sengupta, 1990: 1). Under the project of the Bangladeshi nationalism 'BTV was not allowed to produce any programme on 14 December in memory of the martyr intellectuals (which is known as the *Shaheed* Intellectual Days) in the same regime' (Rabbani interview 15 October 2000). Due to ruling government's distinct perspective towards Bangali culture which was equated with Hinduism, a tendency then grew up in BTV 'to exclude the pure Bengali words as Jol (water) or the Bengali proverb like '*Bara Mashe Thera Parbana*' (13 festivals in the twelve months) from its various programmes' (Rabbani, interview 15 October 2001).

The cultural production of television as had been influenced by the doctrine of Bangladeshi nationalism in such a direction, then 'the female artists of BTV were not permitted to put *tip* (spot) on their forehead' (Sardar, interview, 2nd December 2001). Rather the question which had been raised for several times during the period from the high up was, "Why do you frequently use Rabindra Sangeet in most of the dramas

of BTV?” (Gani, Interview, 24 January 2002). Indeed, the Bangladeshi nationalists interpret Rabindranath from a novel perspective who in their understanding has failed to portray the Muslim culture in his literary works. While neither the description of the beaming of moon of *Eid* day nor the significance of the abstinence of Ramadan is documented by Tagore, in their eyes he could not be adored by the Bangladeshi Muslims (Rabbani, interview 3rd November 2003).

For the creation of the Bangladeshi ideology, BTV at the first phase thus was used by the military elite to distract the middle class viewers from the reality of history and alienated them from the domain of the Bangali culture. At the second phase its cultural power was employed for the interpretation and symbolic projection of its distinct Bangladeshi culture. For the construction of the Bangladeshi culture, Zia himself picked up two patriotic songs as '*Prathom Bangladesh*' (First Bangladesh) and '*Akbar Jayata Day Na*' (Please, give me a chance to go to my village) of Shannaz Rahmatullah, the renowned singer of the country, instead of *Joy Bangla* and other patriotic songs of the Liberation War of 1971. While BTV operated as a cultural medium in that political surrounding, it used to broadcast both songs in its all-national programmes (Gani, interview, 24 January 2002). With the objective to demonstrate Bangladesh as a modern country in the context of the privatisation trajectory of Zia, Bangladesh switched from the black and white to colour television in 1980 as the first country of the sub-Continent (BTV Archives 2003). BTV then imported the animated cartoon and colourful exotic programmes including 'Solid Gold', 'Six Million Dollar Man' as well as regularly telecast the matches of the Asian Youth Football Tournament (TV Guide, 1980-182:3).

Being state-controlled machinery, BTV was extensively used by the administration of Zia with the objective to popularise his 19 points programme. Zia declared his 19 points programmes in the process of nation building development which covered the areas like agriculture, education, canal digging etc. In the name of rural development programme the issue of canal digging, the programmes of self-reliance and the

project of *Ulshi-Jodhunathpur* then had been regularly visualised on BTV's screen. While the messages of the self-reliance scheme including the doubling food production, illiteracy removal and population control was communicated through those programmes, BTV contributed in developing the patriotic and hard working image of Zia in the process of state building (Niriksha, 1980:30). BTV equally played the vital role by focusing Zia as a champion of democracy and the inaugurator of multi-party political system particularly through its news and the discussion programmes (Rabbani, interview, 15 October 2003). By broadcasting several programmes on 7 November as a national Revolution and solidarity Day (Bangladesh Observer 1976, 07 November), BTV initiated in creating the myth of the ascendancy of Zia as the safeguard of the nation. For Zia, BTV became a medium of political indoctrination by disseminating his nationalist insight and pursue the militarism, de-secularisation and liberation of economy.

Bangladeshi Nationalism and De-secularisation of Television

The strategy of restoration of Islam as had been adopted by Zia for the interpretation of his novel nationalist doctrine, an official attempt was made to render a more Islamic character in the state television of Bangladesh. With the objective to make Bangladesh Muslim through the procedure of culturalisation, BTV inaugurated (in 1977) the children religious programmes since Zia regime. Those programmes were designed to teach the recitation of the holy Quran with correct pronunciation. A specialised cell in that regard was launched in BTV with the ambition to prepare the programmes for teaching Arabic and Holy Quran on regular basis. For the visual projection of the Islamic Ummah, BTV telecast a number of religious programmes including Hajj celebration and the Holy Quran Recitation Competition, directly via satellite during the period (TV Guide, 1980-82: 1). Whereas no religious citation was made at the closing of the television programmes during the Mujib regime, there the programmes were closed exclusively with the readings from Quran under the Bangladeshi nationalist government. The quotations from the Quran and *Hadith*

(traditions of the Prophet) were frequently broadcast in between the different programmes in the same period (Maniruzzaman, 1994: 14).

BTV has proved its pro-Islamic bias both in the subsequent periods including the regime of both Ershad (1982-1991) and Khaleda Zia (1991-1996). If Zia's Bangladeshi Nationalist Party (BNP) was taking credit for having brought back Islam to Bangladesh, Ershad took a major step by declaring Islam as a State Religion through the Eight Amendment of the Constitution (Ahmed, 1995: 351). As Islam was apparent as a decisive force in his regime, his reign became inspirational for the Islamic fundamentalists to grow independently. In parallel, it worried nine million Hindu minorities who suffered not only from discrimination but equally became the target of persecution. The problem the thesis finds was caused not merely by greed or prejudice but by a general crisis of national identity. While Bangladeshi nationalism was invented with the fusion of Islam, it operated as the source of conflict and cause of division between the Muslim and Non-Muslim in the country (Hyman, 1983: 4).

In the prolonged nine years rule of Ershad, BTV operated as the military governments preferred medium for disseminating its values and popularising his vision of '*Nutan Bangla*' (New Bangla) (Alam, interview, 07th October 2001). While then theology mingled with the political sphere in a more direct manner, being a state regulated national medium BTV demonstrated couple of basic changes in its approach and regulation. For the visual projection of the Islamic culture, then a new dress code was enforced for the female announcers and newsreaders, which required the use of veil during the month of Ramadan and on other religious occasions (Tasmin, interview, 22 October 2003). The initiative was justified by the authority 'in the name of introducing the decent style of dress for the preservation of the sanctity of Ramadan' (Gani, interview, 24 January 2002). While the dress code was mandatory to mirror the Islamic tradition, no female newsreader was free to present herself without having the veil. The news broadcaster Sadia Chowdhury in such regard used to remain abstains from the news reading during the month of Ramadan (Ram, interview, 21

September 2003). In the process of cultivation of the cultural essence of Islam, the female newsreaders were presented in the role model of the carriers of the tradition under the Bangladeshi nationalist project.

While the symbolic projection of the religious traditions became essential in the procedure of Islamisation, the viewers of BTV hear Azan (call to prayer) with its Bengali translation, and view the photograph of Mecca regularly on TV screen since Ershad regime (Alam, interview 7th October; Bhuyan, interview, 16 January 2002). 'During the period of Ershad' thus Alam revealed, 'we got an order from the high up of the government that, the Azan should be telecast on the screen of BTV. As television is under the control of the Information Ministry by getting the circular from the high up it started broadcasting the Azan since the period' (Interview, 7 October 2001).

While television does not involve any separate power in Bangladesh but takes a place within the power structure, it contributes in embedding Islam in its programme transmission. In the trajectory of the alteration of the national identity, the thesis discovers the role of BTV by investigating how the knowledge of Islam has been packaged through its various religious programmes. This section intends to shed light on those programmes with their aims, ambitions and narrative. BTV the thesis finds commence its transmission with the message of Quran including the Bengali translation for about 10 minutes in its everyday programme. The insertion of Azan (call for prayer) including *Achhar* (Afternoon prayer), *Magraf and Eshar* (both are evening prayers) are equally apparent in its daily session with their Bengali connotation. Religious songs and prayers which are termed as Hamd and Nath are broadcast in the similar fashion in its daily programmes with the objective to portray the image of Bangladesh exclusively as a Muslim dominant country (Karim, TV official, interview, 03 February 2002).

Islam as a cultural and political phenomenon is interpreted in multiple directions in the various programmes of BTV including '*Dharma O Jibon*', *Udzibban* and other magazine programmes. Indeed, BTV spends 30-40 minutes in each week for the programme of *Dharma O Jibon* with the objective to demonstrate Islam as a mode of thought and the way of life. *Udziban* is a quarterly program, which has been marked as a 'question-answer' type in nature (Syda, TV official, Interview, 30 October 2001). While the viewers are encouraged to send questions on all aspects of Islam, the presenter of the programme intends to offer insight on its both spiritual and corporal aspects. The religious magazine programme, which is usually broadcast in every month attempts to present Islam as a viewpoint (Fathema, TV official, interview, 20 November 2001). Islam is interpreted in the context of a wide range of controversial issues through such type of discussion programmes. The importance of the Islamic values in the present state of degradation and despair, and the issue like brotherhood, tolerance, right of women in divorce, property as well as the significance of Purdha are telecast in such type of interpretative programme (Lailee, viewer, interview, 29 October 2001).

The knowledge of Islam is disseminated through BTV on some more special holiday programmes including the Night of *Shabe-ba-rat*, *Shabe-Kadar*, *Moharram*, *Eid-I-Miladun-Nabi* and *Eid-Days* (Fathema, TV official, Interview, 20 November 2001). With the cultural and symbolic images of Islam including Milad, Monajat (prayer), and Islamic garb, these programmes are generally telecast on prime time. By telecasting the Islamic documentary films which are often imported from the Muslim countries (Syda, TV official, interview, 30 October 2001) BTV initiates in reinforcing the idea of Islamic Ummah and solidarity among the Muslims of Bangladesh.

BTV broadcasts a package of special programmes during the month of Ramadan (usually 30 days) including Quran Tilawat (recitation), Preaching of Prophet, worshipping songs as well as several discussion programmes. 'These sort of religious programmes are conventionally broadcast in the evening session of BTV by bringing

into focus the issue of fasting and its impact on society' (Sardar, interview 2 December 2001). BTV offers interpretation of Ramadan from the Islamic and socio-economic point of view through such type of package programmes. Two key points are basically highlighted in such programmes by revealing the fact that Ramadan is a month of abstinence from acts contrary to the sublime teaching of Islam. Fasting transforms a believer into a practising Muslim. The strong faith in the creator and the constant fear of accountability turns the faithful into a bonafide Muslim. BTV explicates the expression of Ramadan as a month of piety and self-purification through such type of package programmes too. Fasting does not include only the meaning of abstention. Those who cheat in weight or manipulate the market price, the programmes assert will gain nothing from fasting in the light of teaching of Prophet (SMs) (Imran, viewer, interview, 5 January, 2002; Omar, viewer, interview, 12 September 2001).

The review of such wide volume of religious programmes demonstrates how Islam has been packaged with its spirit, doctrine and tradition through the various programmes of BTV with the objective to strengthen the Islamic character of the national identity of Bangladesh. The Mowlana, Moulavi, Islamic scholars and a number of political figures regularly participate in this type of Programmes of BTV. Although the simultaneous recital from the revered text of multiple religions is still continuing on BTV, a large gap is visible in time allotment and in case of number of programmes. Whereas the schedule for readings from Quran has been increased three times (from 5 minutes to 15 minutes), there the duration of broadcasting from each other religious scriptures is confined still within five minutes only (Maniruzzaman, 1994: 14). While BTV operates exclusively for the cultivation of Islamic culture with the aim to assert that one majority religious group defines a nation in the country, it draws the boundary between the Muslim and the non-Muslim. Indeed, it broadcast neither any weekly nor the monthly religious programmes for any other religious minority communities of the country. Officially, five special programmes are broadcast on the occasion of *Durga Puja*, *Janmastomi*, Christmas, Easter as well as

Buddha *Purnima* for the people of the other religious communities. These sorts of programme are usually last either for 25 or at best 50 minutes (Karim, TV official, Interview, 03 February 2002).

Media Policy and Freedom of BTV in Bangladesh

Due to such paradoxical operation of BTV, its function is quite transparent in the dichotomisation procedure of the nation as an auxiliary tool of the power structure. Although the modernisation thinkers (Morgan, 1989; Skidmore, 1990; O'Neils, 1998) argue that television plays an important role in the construction of democracy through the free flow of the political information to check the arbitrary exercise of the government, this view is open to question in Bangladesh. Television here rather plays the contrasting role in the maintenance of the political order as it is used as heavy handed efforts to structure the selective flows of information to the mass. While it is directly used as a vehicle of the state power, its censorship is justified under all forms of government (Jahangir, 1997: 10; Anam, 2002: 269).

Indeed, this thesis contributes in revealing the fact that, despite the nature of the state which varies from autocracy to democracy and secularism to theocracy, BTV is open to all sort of government pressure in Bangladesh being a state owned national medium. Although all governments theoretically admit their commitment in free media policy with the objective to gain political accomplishment, practically they adopt the opposite strategy. Because of such political manoeuvre BTV is under increasing constraint and used almost unabashedly by all governments since independence. By controlling its content and enforcing restrictions on artists' participation, the government often enforces censorship on BTV through the procedure of identification of the blacklisted performers. 'By receiving either the oral or written official order, the authority of BTV puts threats and demoralises many of its cultural artists and producers in this regard' (Alam, TV official, interview, 20 December 2003).

The devise of the black enlistment was launched for the first time in Ayubian regime (Begum, 1993: 77) when the eminent singers including Sanjida Khatun, Late Jahidur Rahman, Barin Mojumder had been marked as the banned artists for BTV who were either the professional Tagore singers or Hindu in religion (Shammi, interview, 12 December 2003). After independence when the Mujib government in December 1974 imposed the spell of emergency, BTV like other mass media became under the absolute authority of that civil government. By re-shuffling the cabinet in July 1974, the then Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman himself assumed the portfolio of information and broadcasting with the objective to control the dissident voices (Lent, 1978: 23). Under the military discourse of Ziaur Rahman, Sarkar Kabiruddin and Sirajul Majid Mamun, two distinguished newsreaders of BTV were subjected to rigorous political pressure while they had been marked as the offending broadcasters (Begum, 1993: 75).

When a mass upsurge was sparked off against the authoritarian military regime of Ershad, then the Bangladesh *Sangbad Pathok Samiti* (Newsreader Association of Bangladesh) contributed in galvanising the movement. A rapid action was initiated against the rebellious newsreaders who in government's vocabulary were associated with the unconstitutional opposition movement. Consequently, BTV reprimanded Sirajul Majeed Mamun (the President of Association), Ramendra Majumdar (Vice President), Sadia Chowdhury (Vice President) and Shamim Ahmed (General Secretary of the Association) through the mechanism of black enlistment (Begum, 1993: 75). Because of the Non-co-operation Movement of the popular actors and actress of BTV, its authority in the same reign prohibited the broadcasting of the two popular serials '*Sangsaptak*' and '*Purbadin Purba Ratri*' as well as enforced censorship on the disloyal artists including Ferdowsi Mojumder, Mamunur Rashid, Hasan Imam and others (Begum, 1993: 77-78).

The role of BTV in Khaleda Zia's regime was no way different from the previous period as bureaucracy, red tape and direct political control inhibited its creative spirit. Although Khaleda's BNP assumed the power structure by popularising the idea of multi-party democracy, free market economy and privatisation, no change was fundamentally apparent in the media policy. After the topple of dictatorial order in 1990, indeed, a movement gained strength to free radio-television from government control and turn it into a self-governing institution (Moslem, 1993: 8). Practically little progress had been made in this regard while the concept of free media policy in the understanding of that Bangladeshi government remained inconsistent with their party politics (Bhorer Kagoj, 14 May 1995). BTV was rather used as a myth-maker instrument for the portrayal of the image of Zia exclusively as the declarer of independence and the conductor of the nation.

While the Bangladeshi government of Khaleda Zia reinforced the communal politics in a new direction by paving the way for Golam Azam's permanent return to the country, BTV reacted harshly against the eminent artist Hasan Imam and Kalim Sharafee, a prominent Tagore singer because of their direct involvement with anti-Golam Azam movement. The news of the formation of People's Court (whose purpose was to punish the War Criminals and to hang Golam Azam) was entirely non-apparent on BTV news, although the then Information Minister Nazmul Huda endeavoured to defend the attempt from his partisan perspective. People's Court as in his vision was unlawful concept; it could not be a subject of the news section of BTV (Begum, 1993: 78).

Awami League government returned to power after prolonged twenty-one years with its doctrine of Bangali nationalism and secular philosophy under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina in 1996. After assuming the power, the principle objective of AL government was to explore the truth of history and restore the spirit and ideals of the Liberation Movement. While one of the election commitments of Hasina government was to assign autonomy to Television and radio in Bangladesh, her government

initiated in producing some interesting programmes like '*Sabinayee Jantee Chai*' (May I ask you, please!), '*Azkar Sangsad*' (Today's Parliament), '*Janatar Adalat*' (People's Court) in BTV which were based on political debates and academic controversies. Sheikh Hasina was the first Prime Minister of Bangladesh who participated in a live programme, named '*Sabinayee Jantee Chai*', where an interviewer put questions directly to her about the government's performance, failure and commitment (Bhorer Kagoj 23 October 1996).

Despite Hasina government's reaffirmed commitment to allow adequate freedom to BTV and Bangladesh Betar (Radio) to present programmes in an objective and non-partisan manner, free media or functional autonomy was not apparent in accurate sense. Indeed, a group of media critiques and Bangladeshi middle class viewers perceive BTV's role as paradoxical in Hasina regime for the exaggeration and over emphasis on the history of Liberation War and Sheikh Mujib (Kashfi: Hanufa, interview 2001). Although the privately run second channel ETV was launched on 10 May 2000 under the patronisation of Sheikh Hasina, in their view 'that was not adequate for freedom of media in Bangladesh' (Kashfi; Hanufa, interview, 2001).

In order to render full autonomy to Bangladesh Betar and Bangladesh Television, although her government brought the issue in the parliament in the form of bill as Bangladesh Radio Authority Act 2001 and Bangladesh Television Authority Act 2001 and passed the bill consequently in July 2001, it has not yet been implemented. Indeed, a gazette notification was needed to make the bill implemented. Although the change of the government was made in 2001, neither the interim government nor the ruling government initiated any procedure to publish the gazette in this regard (Monju, 2002: 10).

While BTV's role changes with the alteration of the character of the government, under the Care Taker government of Justice (Rtd) Latifur Rahman, my field data demonstrates BTV's pro-Jamat predisposition by placing A.K. M Hanif as the Chief

News editor of BTV. Under his patronisation BTV broadcast the exclusive news about Jamat -i Islami at its 8' o clock national news on 24 August 2001 (Janakantha 25 August 2001). Hanif has been marked as a controversial person by a group of TV officials, newspapers and the cultural organisations who is speculated as a member of Al-Badar gangster in 1971. The data, which has been procured in this regard, demonstrate that, being an activist of the Jamati Islamic party he was recruited in the news section of BTV in the decade of eighty (Rabbani, interview, 03 November 2003; Ram, interview, 21 September 2003).

Another illustration could be documented in this regard, which was viewed by the researcher herself on TV screen during her field study period. A female reporter name, Tahmida came on TV screen by covering the entire body with the garb of Heejab (*Burkhab*) during the period of the Care-Taker government. The get up which was projected in such a fashion has been considered as inconsistent with the prevailing dress code of the national medium by a group of TV officials and the news readers of BTV (Kalam, interview, 5 August 2001; Rabbani, interview, 3 November; Tasmin, interview, 22 October 2003).

While television has been incorporated as an integral part in the political trajectory of Bangladesh, the ruling BNP government with its Jamat alliance seems more coercive in tightening its control over BTV. After their ascendancy in power BTV shut down its thirteen magazine and reporting programmes including *Pariprakhit*, *Utshab*, *Alowkik* within a week and enforced censorship on the news broadcasters including Tahmina Zakaria, Sheikh Saleh, Ramandra Majumdar and others (Ram, interview, 2001). The domination of the allied government remained confined not only within the cultural domain of BTV. Rather their operation unveiled their interest in strangulating any type of alternative voice, which in their view is not neutral and loyal to them. When the entire world is moving towards wider freedom and greater international interaction between people, then the ruling Khaleda government closed ETV (the only private and independent channel of BTV) on 28 August 2002 by

following the highest court verdict that, ETV licence was not legal one. Although in the eye of Dr. Kamal Hossain, a noted lawyer of the country, 'There was no normal notification by the Supreme Court to cut down ETV', the government seized the transmission equipment of ETV and shut down its transmission abruptly (Daily Star 31 August 2002).

The Closure of ETV and its Controversy

The closure of ETV was apparent as the most controversial phenomenon in the media world of Bangladesh. ETV the researcher finds was a very popular television station of Bangladesh, which got the top position as the most preferred television channel in her studied group. The Dhaka middle class TV viewers in their interview session clarified that, ETV gained huge popularity because of its attractive content, presentation and balance in its coverage of news and views as well as a high standard of journalism in an environment of intense political partisan. The popularity of ETV became more explicit during the trial of the case before the court, when the cross section of people brought out the demonstrations and expressed their concern in different places of Bangladesh. A good number of newspapers published editorial and post-editorials in support of the continuation of the operation of ETV (Janakantha; Daily Star and Bangladesh Observer 01 September 2002).

The data which was procured from the several newspapers, articles about ETV demonstrates that during the period of Care-Taker Government of Latifur Rahman, three distinguished citizens (as the petitioners claim) including two Dhaka University Professors and one journalist filed the Writ Petition against ETV with the objective to protect the national interest of Bangladesh by the way of public interest litigation. The Petitioners had been identified as Professor Mahmood Hasan, Professor Mohammad Abdul Rob and the journalist Gias Kamal Chowdhury. While the closure of ETV was regarded as a very sensitive phenomenon, the researcher intended to explore the matter in depth in the second phase of her fieldwork. Having such an

objective the researcher accomplished in conducting the interviews of Professor Rob, one of the petitioners and Nasir, a high official of ETV.

From the very beginning Rob in his interview session endeavoured to rationalise the position of the petitioners by marking them as the conscious citizens of the country who do believe in free flow of media. By considering the case of ETV as an illustration of fraudulence he brought into focus the issue of irregularity, corruption and forgery which was carried on at the top level of the government. His focus was exclusively centred on the legal aspect by revealing how a series of irregularities and illegalities had been committed by various departments of Bangladesh during the period of AL in granting license to A S Mahmood. ETV in his view had been allowed to use the transmission towers of the BTV causing the losses of crores of Taka (One *Crore* of Taka = ten million Taka) to the public exchequer. The entire process of the granting license to A S Mahmood and thereafter assigning the benefit of the licensing agreement to the ETV Ltd. in his opinion was designed to grant undue benefit to a set of private individuals at the cost of national interest. While such action is 'malafide, unauthorised and unlawful' they opposed the venture of ETV, 'as their main concern was to protect the national economic interest' (Interview, 19 November 2003).

Although he justified the closure of ETV from the legal point of view by asserting that, ETV failed to present the legal documents in front of the court, he denied bringing into focus any political subject behind such operation. Simultaneously, he declined to disclose the political affiliation of the petitioners with the Jamati Islamic party, when such question was raised to him with the reference of several levels of sources. Indeed, Professor Rod seemed uncomfortable when some crucial political questions had been raised to him in order to discover whether the political change of the government did contribute any part behind the closure of ETV. The questions which remained crucial for the researcher was to trace out the reasons of the delay of the writ petition which was filed against ETV after two years of its commencement when AL lost the election in 2001. Another quarry of researcher was to elicit whether

the adequate legal papers were presented before the court in support of ETV by the ruling BNP-Jmatmat allied force who openly demonstrated their aggressive attitude towards of ETV. While neither Rob nor Nasir provides the answer of these any questions, the researcher assumed it would not be possible to gain the answer of these questions under the present political circumstances.

Although in the interview session Rob demonstrated his unwillingness to unveil his political insight, his book manifests it transparently. Both politically and culturally, he regarded ETV as a destructive medium, which was anti-Islamic and anti-BNP Jamat in character. The slogan of ETV 'committed to change' in his vision was 'designed to destroy the Bangladeshi Muslim culture, principle and tradition' (Rob, 2003:53). From the inception of ETV, he attempted to reveal how 'Islam, *Namaj*, *Roza* became the subject of cultural humiliation in its dramas, advertisement and entertainment' (Rob, 2003:54). While ETV was anti-Islamic in character in his view it demonstrated its indifference in broadcasting the programmes in Ramadan, *Moharram*, *Shabe-ba-rat* although he observed its enthusiasm in broadcasting the programmes on *Janamastomi*, *Durga Puja*, and Christmas. Neither 'the Azan nor the Islamic terminologies including *Salam*, *Khoda Hafeez*, *Eid –Mubarak* was ever used by ETV in its any programmes' (2003:72). It was such an exceptional channel, which in his account broke the Islamic tradition by projecting the programmes in Ramadan without veil or any kind of *Purdah*. Although the believer and the polytheist demonstrate their distinct trajectory, ETV televised a drama named *Agunlaga Sandha*, which was based on the love story of a Muslim boy and Hindu girl. *Satabdir-Alo* was another programme where Rob observed how Hindu Tagore was adored by the presenter and the terrorist Khudiram and Surzasen were highlighted but Muslim Nazrul remained non-apparent (2003: 58-80).

While the programmes of ETV were inconsistent with the Islamic way of life, he endeavoured to demonstrate how the Bangladeshi nationalists and the Islamic political leaders were presented in a distorted fashion in ETV's news and several

programmes. By citing couple of examples he intended to demonstrate how BNP and Jamat were annoyed with its coverage by raising the objection that, the channel was more biased to AL. He denied accepting ETV as a neutral medium while in his view it endeavoured to damage the image of Khaleda Zia through its presentation method. Moreover, immediately after the election of 2001, when the minorities were beaten, as ETV flashed the news of that event he considered the channel as a biased one. 'While ETV broadcast neither any programmes on Zia nor even allot any time on Zia's death anniversary', rather 'broadcast a drama named, *Aysha Mongal* where Zia was portrayed as an exterminators', BNP in Rob's view took the 'hard line against ETV' (2003: 95).

Rob has unveiled his marginalised evaluation towards Simon Dring, the managing Director of ETV in the narrative of the book and in his interview statement. Mr. Dring was portrayed 'as a bonafide Christian' in his book 'who had a mission to destroy the Muslim culture and tradition and maintained close affiliation with the immigrant Indians' (Rob, 3003:72). In the interview session, Rob identifies Simon Dring exclusively 'as a foreigner and a person of dual characters who was innovative but got involved with the forgery of ETV' (Interview, 19 November, 2003). It is worth mentioning that Mr. Dring contributed in the Liberation War of Bangladesh as a reporter of Daily Telegraph by flashing the news about the unleashed genocide committed by Pakistani Army to the people in the entire world (Quareri, 1997: 61). This part of history has remained absolutely non-apparent in his book although he has acknowledged the fact in his interview session but identified his paradoxical operation. He rationalised the government's attempt in case of driving out the foreigner Dring, from Bangladesh within twenty-four hours in the light of the prevailing rules and regulations of the country (Interview, 19 November 2003).

Without disclosing any political phenomenon including the relevance of Jamati Islami as well as AL, Nasir considered politics as a vital factor behind the closure of ETV. One of the major objections against ETV, in his view was calculated by

hypothesising its alliance with the previous AL government. The ownership of ETV in this regard remained as a controversial issue in the whole procedure, while the ruling government speculated its affiliation with the top authority of AL. Nasir characterised the features of ETV exclusively from his professional point of view. By considering ETV as a professional television he emphasised on profit and business enterprise as the prime objective and philosophy of ETV. Being a commercial viable organisation as it intended to catch more viewers, in his account 'its programmes were much sleeker, brighter and attractive' (Interview, 11 December 2003).

ETV in Nasir's narrative could not be regarded as a religious channel. It did not exploit religion for its own destination. While one of ETV's objectives was to exhibit its difference, it presented the female newsreaders without veil during the month of Ramadan. Being a distinct TV channel it initiated the broadcasting of the band music or wrestling after the time of *Iftar* (breaking the fast in Ramadan). While the people hear Azan in different places in different time in Bangladesh, instead of broadcasting the Azan ETV introduced its substitute. According to such formulation ETV used to broadcast the statement in Bengali vernacular in the following manner: 'Now the time has come for Azan in Sylhet/or Dhaka/or Rajshahi. This is a time for *Iftar*. You can have your *Iftar* now' (Interview, 11 December 2003).

The War of Liberation Nasir disclosed was regarded as a pertinent subject by the administration of ETV. The channel was called ETV while it symbolised the great upsurge of the linguistic movement of the 21st February 1952. The name Ekushy was adopted by Farhad Mamood, Simon Dring and A.S Mahmood, three concerned persons of ETV, after a long discussion in the context of the cultural and political history of Bangladesh. While Ekushy was regarded as the first phase of the Liberation War, those three executives of ETV ultimately adored the name. While the channel was associated with the history of the nation, it attempted to represent the Bangali culture and vernacular covering all aspects of life of the people of Bangladesh.

Indeed, one of its objectives was to put priority on Bangaliness through the transmission of the dramas and documentary films. ETV used to broadcast a programme on each day by describing the particular incident of that day of 1971, during the time of Liberation War. With the objective to portray the Bangaliness, it visualised *tip, saree*, as well as broadcast the folk songs including the *Baul*, *Lalon* in its programme '*Deshjury*' (Interview, 11 December 2003).

Nasir considered ETV as the 'most reliable source of information in Bangladesh' (Interview, 11 December 2003). While BTV operated as a state controlled medium in the country, the people he observed were hunger for information, news as well as eager for the entertainment. Whereas one-sided news has been marked as the typical news pattern of BTV in all political regimes, ETV there emerged with its alternative and independent character in order to convey the news with neutrality and objectivity. By interpreting the term neutrality Nasir affirmed that ETV intended to present the incident to its viewers in its actual form, whatever its nature and consequences was (Interview, 11 December 2003).

The conflicting and contrasting statements of Professor Rob and Nasir offer an inner insight of the unnatural death of ETV, which could be traced in the process of the dichotomization of the nation and the political transition of the country. Being an alternative voice ETV's aims and aspirations were absolutely different from the national medium BTV. Although ETV could not be placed above controversy from the legal point of view, its deviation from BTV was fundamental and perceptible as it often operates as propaganda apparatus for party in power (Jahangir, 1997: 10).

Conclusion

This chapter brings into focus the political construction of the Bangladeshi nationalism, which has moved away from the discourse of Bangali nationalism and generated a massive debate in the political domain of contemporary Bangladesh.

Closely associated with this nationalism dilemma, the thesis finds is the mystification, based on the paradoxical interpretation of history of Liberation War and the complex interrelation of culture and religion. Although the military bureaucrats justify its emergence as an age-old nationalism, the chapter demonstrates how it was invented in post-75 Bangladesh by changing the Constitution, creating the myth of development and rehabilitating the collaborators to mask their lust for power and collusion.

Through a comparative analysis, the chapter also addresses the paradoxical role of BTV in the process of such construction and reconstruction of the national identity under the different political constituencies in Bangladesh. Although Page and Crawley have considered the electronic media as an integrative force, which have been deployed by the central government in South Asia, the thesis reaches on a different conclusion. Being a state controlled media it reveals how BTV is highly politicised by all governments and fail to operate as a career of national integration. While it operates as a straight-forward official instrument in all political regimes of Bangladesh, on the basis of my field data and interviews, this thesis finds its contribution in dividing the nation by interpreting and reinterpreting the historical fact of the Liberation War and redefining the patriotic feeling of the middle class community in Bangladesh. Since the middle class viewers are compelled to swallow the 'mythic' ideology of this government run medium, they conflict within themselves by raising the question that, 'who they really are?'

Chapter Six

Emergence of Satellite Television (STV) and Nationalism Paradox in Bangladesh (1992-2003)

Introduction

The problem of national identity of the middle class of Bangladesh has assumed a more complex form after the advent of the satellite television (STV) in the country. Although the state regulated BTV was the dominant medium of entertainment for prolonged twenty-eight years (1964-1992), its monopoly ended with the penetration of STV in 1992. With the emergence of STV, at present, the sky of Bangladesh has become an open territory and the middle class viewers with a cable connection can choose from among 20-30 channels (Daily Star 01 October 2003). Due to such acquaintance with the programmes of the different cultures through STV, a new debate has been generated about its contribution in case of altering their very notion of national culture and value structure. The chapter aims to focus on this aspect by analysing the impact of the programmes of the multi channels of STV, particularly the cultural representation of the Hindi channels.

Rise of the Global Media: Theoretical Paradigms

To comprehend the influence of the free flow of the foreign programmes, which has raised several possibilities and concern in Bangladesh I have analysed both the modernisation and the dependency paradigms in the context of current era of globalisation. Although cultural globalisation is a contested concept, the idea has been developed by the modernisation thinkers who consider the transnational horizontal integration of media structures and media interaction, as the key features of the globalisation process. According to such theoretical formulation, the world is becoming a single world society through a satellite based communication network, which contributes in changing the viewer's notion of belongingness and their sense of common experiences by producing the diverse as well as pluralistic images and

languages (Brown, 2003; Pieterse, 1995: 45). As a global media while STV suggest the possibility of continued change by increasing the diversity and offsetting the centralising tendencies (Herman and Mc Chesney, 1997), the modernisation thinkers lighten it's de-regulating attribute to bring about freedom of cultural choice and practice (Thompson, 1997). Its competitive pressure on and threat to, state controlled broadcasting system in their view is noteworthy while some of these are complacent and perform poorly.

The dependency thinkers negate the thesis of cultural globalisation by considering STV as an essential component of global capitalism. By regarding globalisation as a procedure of cultural dominance and regulation, they adopt the term cultural imperialism to reveal the systematic penetration and domination of the cultural life of the West, which aims to rebuild the values, and identity of the oppressed people to conform to the interests of the imperial classes (Schiller, 1976; McPhail, 1989; Tomilson, 1991). Media from such theoretical perspective is used to create a state of dependence in the periphery and contributes in establishing the hegemonic authority of the developed countries by shaping the popular consciousness.

While identity is constructed through the cultural representation, Meyrowitz (1986) intends to demonstrate how television undermines the national identity and override the local traditions among the various transnational communications and media networks. Hall's narrative is more explicit about the three possible consequences of globalisation on cultural identities, which are marked as follows: erosion, reinforcing and the construction of new identities. As the social life becomes more mediated by marketing of styles, the identities in his account become more detached and disembodied from times and place in the era of late modernity (Hall, 1992: 310).

For Appadurai, the tension between cultural homogenisation and cultural heterogenisation is the central problem of today's global interaction. Although the homogenisation argument is based on the idea of Americanisation or

Commoditization, in his understanding these explanations fail to consider that, when the new cultural form including the music or styles are brought from the various metropolises to the new societies or how they tend to become indigenised in one or another way. Instead of Americanisation, Indonesianization may be more worrisome for the people of Iranian Jaya or Indianisation for Srilanka. One man's imagined community in his conceptualisation is another man's political prison (1990: 5-6). Appaduari is influential for this thesis as he demonstrates how the global media is breaking down the old concept of the national identity in association with commerce and consumer fantasies and offering a new sphere for the construction of the imagined selves and the imagined world. Instead of homogenisation as he emphasised on indigenisation and fear of cultural absorption by the larger politics and culture, it is relevant to understand the impact of regional channels of STV, particularly the Indian channels on the cultural sphere of Bangladesh.

While the very notion of culture and identity of the middle class has begun to change with the penetration of Bollywood culture in Bangladesh I have also considered the argument of Page and Crawely (2001: 24) who documented the impact of satellite revolution in five countries of South Asian region (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Srilanka and Nepal). Television in their analytical study is presented as an effective instrument in creating a new South Asian popular culture, which is a still one way-from India outward. While in their study it is explicit that, India has created an endogenous form of cultural dominance in the region, their view has been re-examined in the proposed study.

Concept of Satellite Television in Bangladesh

The sophistication of telecommunication in a given region depends on the economy of that area. The 'have' nations involve the well-developed communication systems while the have not nations are barely able to sustain the systems. Whereas the rapid growth of cable TV was regarded as a distinctive feature in the Western World in the

1960s (Hillard and Keith, 1996: 88) there being the resident of an information poor country, the middle class viewers of Bangladesh did not possess any clear insight about STV for prolonged years. They were familiar exclusively with the name of Sputnik, which was a satellite of former Soviet Union (Faisal, 1992: 83).

Beginning of the Change in Bangladesh

STV appeared as the 'Talk of the Town' in Dhaka city for the first time in 1991 when the local daily 'Bangladesh Times' reported that 'CNN likely to be on air soon' (Holiday, 17-01-1992). But, its appearance was not that soon and until 1992, the Dhaka middle class viewers remained in dilemma about the future of STV in Bangladesh. STV re-appeared as an issue in the capital city, when the middle class viewers got acquainted with the name of STAR in the form of advertisement in the different daily Newspapers of Bangladesh. But as the Wireless and Telegraphy Act of 1933(which did not include any rule about the Dish Antenna) was still active in Bangladesh, without the amendment of the Act it was not possible for the government to welcome STV in the country during that time (Sanaullah, 1993: 69-71).

Transborder Flow of Television Programmes in Bangladesh

The transborder flow of Television programmes could not be regarded as a new phenomenon in Bangladesh. There has always been transmission of some foreign programmes on the state channel of BTV. According to the Report of Niriksha, BTV imports 32% programmes from abroad (Niriksha, 1980: 31). The contribution of the medium like a video cassette recorder (VCR) is worth mentioning at the private level in case of bringing the foreign programmes for the viewers of the country.

VCR Boom in Bangladesh

Although the middle class viewers of Bangladesh were passionate in viewing the foreign programmes, particularly the Hindi as well as Indian Bengali movies, for many years, those were absolutely censored in the country (Faisal, 1993:86). Indeed,

in the decade of late seventy, the craze for viewing the Hindi and Bengali films rose to such an extent that in attempts to ensure better TV reception from neighbouring country, various kinds of aids(as Boaster Antenna) were used (Narunnabi, 1994:202). Neither the state television nor-any Cinema Hall then was allowed to telecast any Indian movies in the country because of government's restriction. VCR for the first time brought a great breakthrough in that stagnant condition, by opening the door for the easy access of the Hindi film in Bangladesh.

Despite government's regulation, because of the invasion of VCR, the humble drawing room of the Bangali middle class had been flooded with the Indian movies. Although initially video was regarded as a symbol of prestige and power, within a short period of time the penetration of video moved from the capital town to the districts and villages. VCR, started to diffuse rapidly in the decade of 1980s, when BTV's black and white broadcasting went coloured and the government of General Ziaur Rahman liberalised the import duties on TV sets (Anonna, 01 July 1992).

Development of Satellite Television (STV) in Bangladesh

Although BTV struggled to find its place in the media preferences of urban viewers due to video operations, the real competitive threat was posed to it from the Direct Satellite to Broadcasting (DBS) after its advent in 1992. For the couple of decades as the state television imposed the middle class viewers to see, what the government wanted them to see, they were eager to get a variety of entertainment programmes. Finally, their aspiration was fulfilled with the legal statement made by the government of Khaleda Zia in support of Television Receive Only Dish (TVRO) in 1992 (Dainik Bangla 24 July 1992).

Emergence of TVRO as a Novel Status Symbol in Bangladesh

After having the explicit declaration from the government level, the trend of installing TVRO for receiving alternative TV programmes from abroad had been initiated in

Bangladesh. TVRO initially were owned basically by the luxurious hotels with the objectives to attract the international travellers and foreign tourists. In parallel the American Information Centre, some other diplomatic offices and two Newspaper's head offices also commenced the using TVRO in Dhaka city, when its price was almost about one *Lakh* (one hundred thousand) *Taka* (Dainik Bangla 24 July 1992). Although the price of the TVRO was too high for the average middle class in Bangladesh, within a short period of time, it appeared as a 'beauty of the roof' in many of the posh residential areas (including Dhanmondi, Banani, Gulshan, Baridhara) in Dhaka city. The upper middle stratum then appeared as the principal media consumers by purchasing that new type of receiver, despite its price variation from 50 thousands to one *Lakh Taka* (Faisal, 1993).

Sociologically speaking, no appropriate terminology is available in Bangladesh to indicate this group of media consumer of the country. The social scientists of the country offer the contrasting narrative in case of identification of the rank of these people in the society. Whereas the group has been marked as the thriving middle class in the context of the capitalist transformation and consumer revolution in the framework of one scholarship, there the other trend unveils them as parasitic and comprador class of the society in the light of the boom of 'black money' (Ekota, 13th April, 1984) which is estimated as 60,000 Crore Taka in contemporary Bangladesh (Janakantha 12 April 2002).

Bangladesh is such a country which still remains in a dual world including the peasant culture and modernity, primary products and industrial goods. Because of the co-existence of these two modes of production, the capitalist transformation has not yet been completed in Bangladesh and the indigenous bourgeoisie could not accomplish to emerge as an independent class from the womb of that feudal structure (Islam, 1991: 73). Indeed, with a GNP per capita of \$252, Bangladesh has been ranked as one of the poorest countries in contemporary world (Observer Magazine, 2000: 4). Despite the persistence of mass poverty, and food insecurity, a small

affluent group has been expanded in the country with the greater availability of consumption and purchasing capacity. While consumption is associated with the discourse of luxury and class identity, after the declaration of the government this moneyed group installed TVRO, at the roof of their skyscrapers to demonstrate their novel symbolic status (Daily Azadi 30 May 1992).

Cable Connection in Dhaka City

Although TVRO remained as a 'golden dream' for the middle class dwellers in Dhaka City, it was out of their purchasing capacity due to its 'too high' price. The entire condition had been changed in 1993, when the cable operators made possible the 'victory of satellite' for the middle class viewers in Dhaka City by initiating the wiring up homes in its different zones. Due to lowest cost of the cable connection, it succeeds in reaching the widest audiences in the Dhaka City (Jahangir, 1997: 79-95).

TV without Border: CNN entry in Bangladesh

With the emergence of the American News Network CNN (Cable News Network), which launched the direct satellite based broadcasting of the Gulf War in 1991, television news and information appeared as an international cultural artefact. It was Ted Turner, an Atlanta based cable entrepreneur who revolutionised the news business by launching the twenty four hours news services in 1980. Through such a procedure he contributed in providing the shape to McLuhan's prediction on global village which would be constructed through the televisual experiences (Flourmay and Stewart, 1997).

After the end of the Gulf War, CNN appeared as a global medium and endeavoured to increase its viewers as well as designed to set up the new regional bureaux in Asia. With the objective to reach these targets, CNN intended to expand its markets in Bangladesh and successfully developed a good rapport with the then government of Khaleda Zia of Bangladesh. Couple of commercial executives of CNN visited

Bangladesh and met Khaleda Zia and her administration with the objective to exchange their views about the future plan of CNN. Finally, Turner himself met Khaleda Zia (when as a Prime Minister of Bangladesh, she visited USA) and made a fruitful discussion about the advent of CNN in Bangladesh. Through such a procedure, Turner's vision assumed the realistic form as his CNN achieved the legal permission from the government of Khaleda Zia to open its channel in the country. In return, Turner did not forget to broadcast the interview of Khaleda Zia on the big screen of CNN (Faisal, 1993: 87).

At the initial phase, CNN was experimentally being relayed only for a few hours. In accordance with the government strategy, the authority of BTV decided to broadcast the programmes of CNN from 7am to 2pm by considering it as one of its six-month programmes (Jahangir, 1993: 97). The motive behind that slow footing strategy of the government was to evaluate CNN's acceptance and popularity among the viewers of Bangladesh. A survey then had been conducted by 'News Scan 90', by collecting the views from among 548 respondents, living in Dhaka city. In the Survey Report it had been documented that, whereas 81% respondents were the regular viewers of CNN there 64% viewers seemed irregular in watching its programmes in Dhaka City. By identifying language as a barrier, 55% viewers could not able to watch CNN whereas 35% viewers expressed their least interest in watching its programmes (Bhorer Kagoj 30 October 1992). Although the modernisation thinkers consider the spread of English as an international language through the global communication media (Cohen and Kennedy, 2000:57), the above statistics demonstrates its inability in capturing the local language audiences and transmitting the international material in this language.

Satellite Television Asian Region (STAR) in Bangladesh

Although CNN pioneered the direct transnational broadcasting, without the real entertainment programme, it was enjoyable only for the few middle class viewers in Dhaka City. The real boost to direct transnational broadcasting was received with the

launch of Hong Kong based Satellite Television Asian Region (STAR) network (Leonard, 1993: 124). The distinctive features of the STAR lie in the fact that, it was inaugurated with the objective to offer the programmes in the cultural context of Asian countries with their local vernaculars.

STAR won the viewers of Bangladesh when it began beaming its five channels in the region. The middle class viewers got the real flavour of the foreign programmes when the STAR TV commenced the beaming down its 'round-the-clock news' and the sports programmes. Particularly, STAR gained huge popularity among the middle class viewers when BTV transmitted 23 live matches, out of 139 matches of '1992 World Cup Cricket', through its sport channel network (Dainik Bangla 24 July 1992). While STAR channel is devoted to Indian language, the factor contributes in making its programmes more popular and acceptable in Bangladesh.

Zee TV and other Hindi Language Channels in Bangladesh

Since the political transformation of 1975, although an intricate bi-lateral relationship is existing between India and Bangladesh, because of cultural affiliation, the Dhaka middle class viewers are found enthusiastic in case of watching the Indian movies and dramas. Indeed, in the nationalist project of post-75 government India was conceived as a greater country with hegemonic character due to some delicate subjects including rampant cross border smuggling, gas export issue, transit facilities etc (Franda, 1982; Kabir, 2002). Despite the manifestation of such sensitive issues in the Bangladeshi nationalist project, the middle class viewers of Bangladesh endeavoured to view the programmes of Doordorshan in the decade of eighty by using the Boaster Antenna. All of those attempts of the middle class viewers was ended after the advent of Indian channel Zee TV, Zee Cinema Sony, etc (Goonesekera, 1998: 7).

Although STV was launched by CNN in Bangladesh, Zee TV contributed to make it incredibly popular among the middle class viewers in Dhaka City. When the Dhaka middle class viewers were eager to have more attractive and quality programmes, Zee TV and other Indian channels then arrived with the huge entertainment show. A Survey, conducted by 'Centre For Communication and Research' in 1994, explicitly demonstrates the popularity as well as the strong footing of the Zee TV in Bangladesh. Whereas 41% city viewers revealed their passion for Zee TV, there 21% were identified as the viewers of Channel V, 11% adored STAR Plus and 7% watched Prime Sports regularly in Dhaka city (Rahman 1994: 11). The statistics is indicative in gaining an insight about the penetration of the Indian language channel in Bangladesh, which contributes in fracturing the traditional cultural domain of Bangladesh as the new socio-cultural resources.

Emergence of Bengali Language Satellite Channel

Due to the popularity of the Hindi language channels, while most of the viewers of Dhaka and Calcutta had already been captured by its multi Channels, Alpha was launched with the aim to fuse the rich past of Bangali culture with present (Television Asia, 1999). Accordingly, it intended to cover a wide spectrum of the Bangali culture and tradition in its programmes. Besides Alpha, some more Bengali language channels including ATN Bangla, Channels I, DD Bangla, ETV Bangla and Tara were also been launched in the region.

External Factors for the Emergence of Satellite Television in Bangladesh

This section intends to trace the emergence of STV as a global media at the end of the twentieth century and the relevant political, economic and technological factors that have led to its ascension in Bangladesh.

Globalisation was one of the buzzwords of 1990, which demonstrates such a phenomenon that resulted in part from the end of the Cold War in Europe. The

dismantling of the Soviet Union, the end of the East-West conflict and the collapse of the bipolar world order dramatically reorganised the entire structure of the prevailing 'World System'. Rather than being the end of history, a new phase of history has been opened up in 1990 after the break down of the USSR. A wave of global liberalisation gathered momentum during the period in which the state enterprises were privatised, private business were de-regulated and thus made a triumph era of Globalisation and liberal democracy (Herman and McChesney, 1997).

The history of satellite based broadcasting is interwoven within such economic and political changes of the 'World System'. While globalisation has been made possible due to the advent of improved information (Observer Magazine, 19 May 2000: 3), the new information technologies are being seen as heralds of the new history where the relevance of the nation-state itself is being questioned. As the greater part of the social life is being determined by the process of globalisation, the imagination of 'national border' has become less significant (Asia Week, 1993: 36).

To demonstrate the association between globalisation and the decisive change in media network, this section throws light particularly on GATT. GATT (General Agreement on Trade and Tariff) is a unique phenomenon, which contributes to an understanding of the new era of globalisation by opening up the new commercial opportunities for the cultural production. For an extensive period the cultural products including the movies, television programmes were exempted from trade liberalisation (Goonasekera, 1998: 215). But such dichotomization had been removed in Uruguay Round of Talks in 1986 when 111 participant countries adopted the free trade policy in audio-visual services due to which the market became open for international trade in TV programmes (French and Richards, 1996: 343).

Being one of the participant countries as Bangladesh signed on GATT, she had been integrated with the global market economy, and the media enterprise. The nationalisation trajectory of Bangladesh for the first time had been replaced by the

privatisation policy within the military discourse of Ziaur Rahman. Due to his patronisation of a kind of Laissez-Faire economic policy, the collaboration between the private sector and foreign corporation then was accepted in principle (Sen, 1986: 307). By adopting the homogeneous socio-economic strategy of Zia administration, the government of Ershad announced a New Industrial Policy (NIP) with the objective for the capitalist transformation and the industrial growth through the private sectors. The NIP was further liberalised in 1986, which aimed at expanding the industrial development under the Revised Industrial Policy (RIP) which ultimately helped in strengthening the export promotion measures (Observer Magazine 19 May 2000: 4).

Because of Bangladesh's involvement in the world economy, another industrial policy was announced in July 1991 when BNP returned to power under the leadership of Khaleda Zia. The policy which was then developed by the then government aspired to go global and encouraged the productivity in the industrial sector by means of deregulation, privatisation and establishment of export oriented industries. As Bangladesh was integrated with the world economy through such industrial approaches, the policy makers of the government viewed that novel economic and ideological environment as the essential prerequisites for the stabilisation of the democratic policy and removal of the isolation of the people of Bangladesh. While through such a procedure they expected a common cultural environment would develop to see themselves and the world through their own lenses, they lightened the concepts of 'transborder flow', 'freedom of choice' to bring about modernisation and democratic atmosphere in the country (Lipon, 1997: 9).

A group of media analysts, including Lipon (1996), Abad (1993) expressed their large disagreement with such government approach about the impact of the globalisation upon Bangladesh economy and culture. Such view addressed the issue that in the camouflage of the capitalist economy, those strategies would carry the message of consumerism and promote the acquisitive behaviour by encouraging the

displacement of critical questions connected to a divided society like Bangladesh (Lipon, 1996: 3-9). Such environment would foster not only the dichotomization of 'economically rich' and 'economically poor', but would widen the gap between the 'information rich' and 'information poor' of the country (Lipon, 1996).

Because of the end of East West conflict and dissolved of the socialist block, when politically a strong trend was apparent toward de-regulation, privatisation and commercialisation of media, then the people of Bangladesh declared the end of the 'Era of Martial Law' by combating against the Ershadian autocracy and military dictatorship. For an extensive period the succession of power through the military coup (1975-1990) remained as a significant feature in the political culture of Bangladesh. Although military is an a-political institution (Webster, 1990: 144) which is taught to accept professionalism and civilian supremacy (Masoom, 2000: 2), in Bangladesh it's frequent seizure of the state power indicates its emergence as a formidable political force which violated the constitutional law in the name of political reform and modernisation of the country. But that trend of politics was halted in the last decade of the twentieth century, when a new movement for the Caretaker Government had been launched by the two major political parties of Bangladesh with the objective to restore democracy and people voting right (Hakim, 1993:103).

The movement ultimately resulted in the mass upsurge in 1990 and consequently for the first time the general election held under the neutral Caretaker Government in Bangladesh in February 1991 (Hakim, 1993:103). The concept of Caretaker Government was apparent with the novelty and originality in Bangladesh. The theme of the Caretaker Government was developed with the aspiration that, the next three general elections of Bangladesh will be held under aegis of neutral government in order to conduct the free and fair parliamentary election and initiate the democratic process in the country (Hasina, 1997: 43).

The movement of 1990 paved the way for both the procedure of democratisation and freedom of media in Bangladesh. Although no significant changes have taken place in field of mass media in Bangladesh since independence, a massive upsurge in their growth was witnessed in the wake of the fall of Ershad in 1990. The freedom of media is associated with the democratic right of the citizens, as media has been seen as the way to keep the political elites accountable to the people and to provide a device for competing interests and conflicting perspectives to be heard (Morgan, 1989:240). Since a democratic society depends on an informed populace making the political choice, people expected a well-developed mass media policy from the newly elected democratic government of Khaleda Zia, which returned to power after the fall of Ershad. With the objective to accomplish the dream of the people, the government of Khaleda Zia launched a new media policy with the declaration that, her government would air- different views over the media. Consequently, in May 1992, the government lifted the restrictions on the private use of satellite antennas due to which Arabsat (CNN) and Asiasat (STAR TV) programmes became open to the private viewers in Bangladesh (Moslem, 1993: 8).

The media revolution in Asia in addition influenced the government of Khaleda Zia to embrace the new strategy in the domain of mass communication in Bangladesh. Indeed, when the Indian and the Pakistani viewers were enjoying the global programmes in their private channel even without having the dish antenna, then the middle class viewers in Bangladesh remained completely isolated from the arena of the global entertainment. Despite Bangladesh's conversion to colour TV before India and Pakistan, those neighbouring countries initiated the watching of STV before her middle class viewers (Robbar 19 February 1992). Initially, the middle class viewers were found indifferent towards the programmes of STV in Bangladesh. But the demand was stimulated by the '1992 World Cup Cricket', which was then held in Australia.

Internal Factors Responsible for the Advent of Satellite Television in Bangladesh

The enthusiasm, which was generated among the middle class viewers of Dhaka City for STV gradually, gathered the momentum in the same reign. In order to comprehend the significance of such demand, the endogenous socio-political environment of Bangladesh would be analysed in this section.

The crucial phenomenon that inspired the democratisation in Bangladesh was people's mass upsurge, which toppled the dictatorship of Ershed in 1990. The event led to the general election and Khaleda returned to power with the ambition to construct the new image of her government. As one of the important elements of her political campaign was the democratisation of the mass communication, she rendered her consent on CNN entry when the offer came from Ted Turner to open its bazaar in Bangladesh sky. Both the parties had self-interest in this regard. Whereas Turner looked for commercial objective and profit gaining, there Khaleda intended to gain 'International' reputation by conceiving television as an 'image building medium' (Faisal, 1993: 87).

Despite such initiative of the government, the democratic voters cum viewers got soon shocked when they discovered the concentration and monopolisation of the BNP government on BTV by following the path of the JP (Jaitya Party of General Ershad) government. Indeed, under the both governments, BTV got its alliance with the ruling party and lends continued support to them by promoting and protecting their partisan politics. Although the government of Khaleda Zia assigned full autonomy to the print media with the explanation that, there was a need for broader access to the media; the electronic media remained exclusively captive in the hand of her government (Janakontha 31 December 1993). Despite the public demand for the autonomy and independence of BTV, the then Information Minister Nazmul Huda explicitly rationalised the government's control and censorship on BTV by arguing,

'We have got the people mandate for five years. BTV will be conducted in accordance with our own direction' (Janakontha, 17 July 1995).

To have a better understanding of the partisan bias and state regulation which play the predominant role in determining the BTV culture, the researcher intends to illustrate two major objections of the Dhaka middle class which was raised by them to demonstrate the reason of unpopularity of BTV. Much of the BTV's reportage and news in their view was superficial and inaccurate. Due to lack of objectivity, transparency and accountability, they had critically viewed BTV as a political medium. Omar, a young Bangali viewer thus reveals,

I do not find any interest in BTV news. It never broadcasts the neutral and transparent news. At starting, it spends almost ten to fifteen minutes by highlighting the activities of the Prime Minister or President of the country. After that it starts to broadcast the news about the ministers who either distribute the relief in the public gathering or the prizes in several occasions' (Interview, 12 September 2001).

Along with this objection, the middle class viewers also demonstrated their dissatisfaction towards their state channel because of its low quality programmes. Most programmes of BTV in their analysis are passive, stodgy and monotonous. By focusing on this issue, Monjur thus expresses 'I do not like to watch the programmes of BTV. There is no variation in its programmes; its programmes therefore do not attract me' (Interview, 7 December 2001). Farah's opinion is no way different as she says, 'BTV programmes are not interesting. I like the entertainment programmes, but the numbers of the entertainment programmes are few in BTV' (Interview, 15 January 2002).

While BTV programmes remained stereotyped and non-attractive in nature in the regime of Khaleda Zia, the middle class viewers got disappointed by watching it's

low quality programmes. Despite Khaleda's claimed for the project of economic liberalisation, privatisation and commercialisation, the decision to liberalise BTV from the government intervention remained illusive. While the middle class viewers did not find any change in its cultural production, a big question then had been raised by the critiques about the government intention, 'Whether or not Khaleda and her administration want the viewers for BTV' (Janakontha 17 July 1995)?

Because of government's indifferent trajectory while the administration of BTV failed to improve the quality of the programmes, the middle class viewers got annoyed with the state channel. Due to their dissatisfaction, they initiated their new search for a more diverse and richer media environment. Most audiences in Dhaka City primarily are the middle class people who do not mind paying for quality shows (Farah, interview, 15 January 2002; Tanvir, interview, 04 December 2001).

By perceiving the internationalisation of the mass communication and the discontentment of the middle class viewers, the government of Khaleda Zia then adopted the 'double standard' principle in the media policy. The advent of STV in Bangladesh was the resultant feature of that political strategy. The media policy then had been re-evaluated with the ambition to remove the dissatisfaction of the middle class viewers of Dhaka city who play a determining role in the formation of the government in Bangladesh (It is worth mentioning that, BNP won 12 seats of Dhaka city in the election of 1991) and to keep BTV under absolute control as a mouthpiece of the government. Because of the universal push towards the globalisation, Khaleda's administration apprehended the fact that, for a developing country like Bangladesh, it would not be possible to resist against the worldwide globalisation process, which is penetrating from the centre to the every corner of the periphery. As the defining medium of the age, STV accordingly was welcomed in Bangladesh for the fulfilment of the aspiration of the middle class viewers and the political objectives of the Bangladeshi middle class government (Lipon, 1997: 10).

The advent of STV could be interpreted as a kind of 'compensation' for the middle class viewers in Dhaka city, who for long years have been deprived from viewing the quality program on state television. Indeed, by taking over the double standard media strategy, Khaleda had been appreciated and condemned by the academicians and political elites of Bangladesh. Although ends justify the means, it can not be denied that, she contradicted herself by opening the trajectory for the free flow of uncontrolled Western values in a country like Bangladesh that has exposed to Islamicist values. It is such a country where Bismillah-ar-Rahman-or-Rahim (In the name of Allah, the Beneficent) has been inserted in the Constitution and sexuality, hedonism is strictly regulated by religion and social custom. Although BNP is found strongly audible against the socio-cultural aggression of India, it was Khaleda's administration, which opened the door for penetration of Indian culture in Bangladesh through the free flow of satellite communication. While the advent of STV has generated a massive debate in such a manner, the researcher intends to review the opinions of the Dhaka middle class to get an insight about its impact on their concept of national identity, indigenous culture and tradition of Bangladesh in this chapter.

Entertainment Bazaar and Vulgarisation of Indigenous Culture

The middle class discourse the thesis discovers has contributed in imagining and inventing the Bangali as well as Bangladeshi nationalism in Bangladesh. The Bangali nationalism rose in post-partition Pakistan due to cultural, political and material tensions between the Punjabi ruling elite and the Bangali Muslim middle class (Huq, 2003: 132). The support for this Bangali nationalist movement came from the University students, the salaried classes, managers, professionals who inspired the Bangali Muslim with a new sense of nationalism based on language, culture and tradition in the context of the Linguistic Movement of 1952 (Ahmed, 1997: 185-186).

The novelty of the Bangali middle class thus lies in its expression of the ideas and images of the Bangali nation in association with its linguistic spirit and cultural

solidarity (Khan, 2000: 108). The class has been placed with considerable importance in Bangladesh history because of its aspiration to clear the fog, which surrounded the identity of Bangali middle class for a long time by emphasising the privilege of the linguistic identity over religion. Its role is remarkably influential in the Liberation Movement of 1971 for unifying the all section of people of Bangladesh on the basis of integrated Bangali culture and turning them into a political entity in order to confront with the Pakistani autocratic force (Umar, 2000: 53).

In post-independent Bangladesh the class also played the vital role in articulating the Bangali nationalist spirit in all sphere of cultural life including education, literature, music etc. Whereas in Pakistan period, Islamic history was introduced at all levels to get an holistic insight of Islamic tradition and culture (Ibrahim, 1974: 373), there the first civilian government of the Bangali middle class found a Commission on Education to modify the educational system on the basis of the four state principles of the constitution including Bangali nationalism, democracy, secularism and socialism (Maniruzzaman, 1994: 11). The Bangali middle class the thesis finds is inclined to the humanistic ideals clustered around the term secularism. They consider secularism not merely as a political category but the manifestation of their aspiration, a revelation of their faith (O'Connell, 2001: 180). For the Bangali middle class, the 1971 war demonstrated that the Islamic solidarity could not cover up the cultural differences between West and East Pakistan and implicating Islam in politics only had led to exploitation and mishap (Huq, 2003: 148).

In those early years of Bangali nationalist discourse, the ideal of secularism had been expressed in the Bangali literature and culture. Folk songs, customs, and esoteric songs of *Baul* then were regarded exclusively as an integral part of Bangali literature and culture (O'Connell, 2001: 196). Moreover, during the period, a good number of patriotic songs and plays were written in the light of the Linguistic movement and Liberation War of Bangladesh (Chowdhury, 2002: 135). The Bangali middle class was also found enthusiastic in using the Bengali name or letter on sign boards on

shop, street or car plate, celebrating the *Pahela Baishak* or *Poush Mela* (winter fair) and the birthday of Tagore, Nazrul with their new nationalist ethos and patriotic zeal. Thus, the Bangali middle class has been grown up with the belief that, Bangali nationalism is the basis of the Bangali nation which derives its identity from its language and attained a sovereign and independent Bangladesh through a united struggle in the War of Liberation (Malek, 2001).

The Bangladeshi middle class on the other hand has been developed after the political change of 1975 within the military discourse of Ziaur Rahman. This class the thesis finds has developed an interest in the religious identity in the light of Bangladeshi nationalist project, which was invented by Zia himself. Indeed, it was Zia who moved away from Mujib's Bangali nationalism by incorporating Islam in his nationalist project and provided the Islam-oriented parties with a larger space in political force as a demonstration of Islamic solidarity. By adopting the several measures such as making the religious education compulsory at the school level, patronising the *Madrassa* education, encouraging the traditional leaders including the pirs and mullahs to play an active role in the political affairs of the country, holding the *Milad* and throwing the official *Iftar* parties during the month of Ramadan (Rahim, 2001: 255), hanging the posters in the government places with citation from the Quran calling for dispensation of equitable right, hoisting the *Eid Mubarak* pennants with the national flags on two Eid festival days and publicising the governmental statement on the other Muslim occasions like *Eid-i-Miladun-Nabi*, *Shabe-ba-rat* and *Moharram*, (Ahmed, 1983: 240), Zia created the conditions for the emergence of Islamic symbols in Bangladesh politics.

While the Bangladeshi middle class thus has been exposed to Islamic principle and culture through the propagation of the Bangladeshi governing elites the class conceives its national unity in the light of its distinct definition of Muslim cultural heritage. Bangladesh in its social thought remains as a pre-dominantly Muslim region and accordingly it expresses its faith on majoritarian Muslim nationalism. The class

asserts its strength as a nation by fostering its inherent Muslim cultural character and claiming that Islam could not be confined only within cult or philosophy. Rather it would be explained as a social force and be implemented for social solidarity. According to its analytical framework, Islam is important in the nationalist project as religious belief and principle control the mental set up of the people of Bangladesh (Samad, 1994: 127).

Although the Bangladeshi middle class thus shares many non-modern values like fundamentalism or religious revivalism, the thesis finds it is very modern in its outward appearance. It is such a class, which discovers the meaning of life in consumer culture and hedonistic principle as the group was developed under that economic strategy of Zia which encouraged the private investment and promoted the rapid denationalisation of the industrial sector to create a new class of entrepreneur and traders (Feldman, 2001: 217). The group therefore has been regarded as a new middle class in the thesis which maintains a social distance from the other groups of people by exposing its beauty of life in Bollywood manner as well as through Islamic etiquette, which makes the group paradoxical in its presence.

Bangladeshi middle class is that group of people which enjoys a high standard of living and has emerged as the principal consumer class in Bangladesh. The field data of the thesis contributes in revealing the sound economic background of the class, which belong to the upper middle stratum and live in the very posh areas including Banani, Uttara and Dhanmondi in Dhaka city. Evidence of their affluence has been found in the construction and renovation of luxury residences in the said areas of the Dhaka city. Multi- storied apartment housing or flat ownership has added a new dimension in Dhaka middle class culture which also demonstrates the solid economic foundation of the group while many of them are the owner of these costliest flats which prices varies from 20-50 lakh taka (2-5) million (Matin, 1999: 26).

The Bangali and the Bangladeshi middle class thus demonstrate their isolation in the context of political ideology, cultural values and historical environment. Although both the classes articulate the uniqueness of their culture either by claiming a distinctive linguistic heritage or the religious tradition, due to sky invasion, this traditional and custom-bound middle class is now adapting to global culture because of its inclination with the entertainment bazaar. The researcher's field data provides the information that, by placing the entertainment and commercial objectives on top, the middle class of Dhaka city has already 'lost their soul in the dish antenna' (William 1990: 5-6).

This section intends to unveil how this middle class with its distinct notion of culture now negotiate and confront with the alien culture of STV. Although the thesis finds that the Dhaka middle class is keen in highlighting its decent, sober and distinct cultural value with pride and dignity, in parallel it can not hide its temptation for the cheap amusement and entertainment offered by STV. Due to new pattern of cultural consumption through STV, these gentlemen/women folk are now confronting with their own culture, which is the determinant of their own status, privilege and aesthetics in the society.

The dynamic and the complex processes of negotiation and confrontation between their own culture and the alien culture the thesis finds is the major concern of the Dhaka middle class today. In the narrative of the maximum viewers of Dhaka city although STV is apparent as an exciting and healthy media environment, amazingly, the same number of viewers have treated its programme as detrimental and deleterious. Hence, although the entertainment and commercial programmes get the top priority to the middle class families, they prefer to watch those programmes either in solitary or privately to hush up the matter to others. This is the major dilemma of the Dhaka middle class today whose morality and values although are culturally determined by their society, due to penetration of STV, their old values and moralities are now negotiating with their pleasure principle and primitive wishes.

Because of such paradoxical experiences, the Dhaka middle class display their contrasting assessment by considering STV as a big threat as well as window to the world. For the presentation of the sleeker, thrilling and some sort of sensational programmes, STV has been sharply condemned by them. But at the same time it has been regarded as a blessing too which in their account is leading to better understanding among the divergent cultures and demonstrating a new path in their country by widening their horizon and opening the minds. From the perspective of the maximum respondents, STV is thus functioning as a double-edged sword, which has both the positive and negative impact on Bangladesh society. In the statement of Syfur, an engineer, this dilemma is explicitly found as once he says, 'STV has many positive impacts I have taken the cable connection to listen to the news of BBC. We do not get the authentic news from our national channel. BBC is one of my favourite channels as through its news we get the current information of the entire world. BBC, CNN are very helpful to understand the current news of the world'. But in parallel he expresses his concern by contradicting his own statement in the following manner 'Yet, we can not deny its negative impact on our society. I can talk about my son. When he goes to the shop, he always tries to buy this or that toys or dress, which he finds in the different programmes of STV. Our young generation is thus getting influenced by the alien culture' (Interview, 17 December 2001).

While television is one of the important mediums of entertainment in the middle class families in Bangladesh, its members prefer to gather around the TV set to watch its programmes all together and hold the family tie in such a manner (Jhumur, interview 5 September 2001). But such family interaction and relation the thesis reveals no longer depend on this traditional mode of approach due to their new pattern of cultural consumption through STV. While obscenity, naked scenes, provocative dress and vulgar dances remain as the major theme in many of the movies and musical channels of STV, in the conceptualisation of the Dhaka middle class those programmes are culturally alien and unsuitable for their family environment, religious

values and cultural norms. Jhumur, being a caring mother, expresses her apprehension in this context by stating,

I have heard that, fourteen years boys and girls live together in the western countries. We can't think of this type of social system. It is out of our imagination. If I find that my son is walking with a girl by holding her hand, I will not tolerate it. But the element of free mixing society has already penetrated in our society through the satellite channels' (Interview, 05 September 2001).

As the cultural productions of STV create nothing but embarrassment for the middle class, it brought a major change in the viewing pattern of the TV programmes of the middle class families. Lailee, a young college girl thus focuses on this subject by disclosing the fact, 'Although I am very eager to watch the programmes of STV, I can't watch many of its programmes with my brothers. I feel very uneasy if I sit with them and find the dirty dances and Westernised costumes in those programmes' (Interview, 29 October 2001). Helen expresses in the similar fashion 'I get embarrassed to watch all type of programmes of STV with my younger brother or nephew. Some sequences and scenes of the programmes are too bad. We find the vulgar dances, half naked women and the filthy languages in many channels of STV' (Interview, 18 November 2001)

The aforementioned statements are indicative to get an insight about how the middle families and their culture are now in danger and moral panic due to uncontrolled flow of western values in their society. This anxiety of the middle class has been found more explicitly when they focused their discussion on the dominance of Hindi channels, despite their fascination for the Hindi movies and music. Indeed, fifteen middle class viewers have marked the Hindi channels as more destructive than the western channels, which contribute in disseminating the consumer culture in the region. The depiction of sex, violence and perversion are higher they claim in the

Indian channel than in western channel. Only two viewers have charged the western channel whereas seven viewers condemned both the channels for disrupting and polluting their own cultural values and philosophy.

Although from the perspective of the dependency theory, globalisation is considered as a Western project and condemned for the dissemination of the Western values, ethics and aesthetics, the Dhaka middle class demonstrates that, it is not only the Western channels which contain the values and ethos of capitalism and consumerism. The Indian channel despite its regional character is simultaneously operating as a new vehicle for promoting the idea of sexual freedom, free mixing culture and individualism in the region. While the Indian channels are portraying the capitalist values and the consumer culture in the Indian style it is creating more panic for the Dhaka middle class families due to their cultural affiliation with the Indian society.

Panic, fear and anxiety now have been mingled with the middle class culture and entertainment in such a manner in contemporary Bangladesh. STV has been condemned by the Dhaka middle class for taking the hold in the family life and changing its moral values and traditional norms. By addressing the issues thus Nasir expresses 'Except some cheap amusement, I do not find any moral ethics or cultural value in STV programmes. Although family life, family relation, moral values are important for us, these channels only project sex. And some of those scenes are so vulgar that in my view two adult persons can not even sit together to watch those scenes' (Nasir, interview, 08 September 2001). While the middle class considers family as a fundamental force in its social, religious, and cultural affairs by emphasising on integrity, harmony, responsibility and self-discipline for holding the family bond and tie, they condemned STV due to non-appearance of these values in its programmes (Ghumur, interview 5 September 2001, Imran, interview, 05 January 2001).

Instead, the phenomena including the extra marital affairs, promiscuity, broken family as are often portrayed on STV, many of its Indian channels, particularly Zee TV have been criticised harshly by the middle class viewers of Dhaka City. 'In the maximum drama of Zee TV', Linda reveals, 'we find those stories where a husband get an illegal relation with the sister-in-law. Although, this type of relationship directly contradicts with our social values, its projection makes it acceptable to many, especially to our younger generation' (interview, 18 September 2001). By citing some more examples Nasir and Ghumur equally argue that, due to penetration of STV the boys are now watching the blue film and becoming more deviant by taking drug or teasing the girls (Interview, 2001).

Middle class parents of almost all background have expressed their concern for the young as well as the future generation of Bangladesh, which is now growing up under the influence of STV culture. Middle class is such a class which aspires to bring up its children with good education and moral values in the light of its own cultural tradition (Hutbar, 1976). Such socialisation process in the view of the Dhaka middle class now has also been altered by STV since the heads of the kids and the young generation are now filling up with the global culture and global values from their early life. Although the socialisation process starts from the early life through the agencies like family, school, religion, today, the children of the middle class family are getting acquainted with the STV culture from their childhood and spending their maximum time by watching the programmes of Zee TV, Zee Cinema, Sonny, MTV, Cartoon Networks and the sports channels.

By projecting the attractive and glamorous programmes, in the opinion of a group of Dhaka middle class STV is now functioning as a brain washing machine and accordingly it has been considered as blight for the new generation of Bangladesh. Akbar, a father of two sons thus has expressed his distress by disclosing, 'My sons are very fond of wrestling programme. My younger son has got injured as he intended to imitate such type of action' (Interview, 11 January, 2002). Helen

(Interview, 5 October, 2001), Linda (Interview, 18 September, 2001), Lailee (Interview, 29 October 2001) have equally noticed how the children of the middle class families now enjoy the intimate love scene of Star Plus or Hindi channels privately, which remain non-apparent in their national channel. The teenagers in their narrative are simultaneously crazy for the programmes of STV who enjoy the explicit scenes and do not even hesitate to express those feeling openly (Aditi, interview, 26 October 2001).

While STV has added a new dimension in the viewing pattern of the middle class families, Nasir (Interview, 08 September 2001) and Sobur (Interview, 02 November 2001) offer another description by particularly focusing on their children's behaviour pattern. By considering STV as a brainstorming machine both bring into focus how STV is ruining the family discipline of the middle class today. As the parents prefer to watch the late night Hindi movies, the children equally got enthusiastic in case of viewing the late night shows. As a result, the children fail to wake up early in the morning and go to school on time. Physically, the children are becoming ill and their thought process is not developing. Under the circumstances, both disconnected their dish line to save their children and got back the healthy family environment with discipline, order and punctuality.

Of course, such type of statement the thesis finds has not gone uncontested. By declining its negative impact STV has been considered as one of the major sources of information and entertainment by the middle class viewers of Dhaka city, which in their account constitute a new mode of horizontal relation through the procedure of intermingling of culture and removing the barrier of the physical distance to get the instantaneous information and knowledge about the global events. Tanvir, a middle class government official thus expresses his positive impression by arguing, 'STV provides lots of information to us. I watch CNN and I think this is enough to get the current news of the entire world. Definitely, STV is good. Even we can learn cooking

from it' (Interview, 04 December 2001). By considering STV as instructional and educational, Navid echoes in the similar way 'STV encourages the intellectual curiosity. I never miss the bio-science programme of BBC where I get the latest technological information' (Interview, 19 December 2001). Jhumur's statement is no way different from it as she also mentions, 'We are now watching 'Afghan War' because of STV. We get the news of Twin-Tower instantaneously only because of STV. Certainly these are its positive aspects' (Interview, 05 September 2001).

The Dhaka middle class thus demonstrates its anomalous passion for STV when the issue of banning of the foreign programmes was raised to it. Indeed, twenty-five viewers conceive the banning of the foreign programmes as illogical and irrational and accordingly want the restrictions only on those few channels, which have been identified by them as objectionable such as MTV, Channel V, MGM and Hall Mark. Only five viewers have been found supportive regarding the issue of ban on the foreign programmes to resist the adverse impact of alien culture on religious and social values of the people of Bangladesh. The middle class passion and the fascination for STV has been found explicitly when the government of Khaleda Zia took the decision to shut down eight satellite pay channels and other free to air channels on 20 May 2002. The city people sharply reacted against such attempt by condemning the government decision. While the ruling Bangladeshi government lifted the ban on eleven out of thirteen channels only after the one day the incident remained as a subject of considerable dispute among the media analysts of the country (Daily Star 21 May 2002).

Penetration of Bollywood Culture and Nationalism Paradox in Bangladesh

What do all these mean for nationalism and national identity in Bangladesh? Because of the invention of Bangladeshi nationalism, it has already been argued that the national identity of the middle class has been fragmented and diversified in contemporary Bangladesh. Over the last twenty-eight years (1975-2003), the middle

class of Bangladesh have been found in paradoxical condition due to invention of numerous political ideologies and philosophies. This crisis of national identity the thesis finds has been intensified in the discourse of sky invasion, particularly after penetration of Bollywood culture. This section focuses on this issue by demonstrating how the massive flow of Bollywood films and music put a huge influence on Dhaka middle class satellite watching audiences.

Indeed, except three, rest of the viewers of my studied group has been identified as the regular viewer of the Hindi channels despite their belief in disparate national identity. Although the middle class viewers of Dhaka city reveal the dichotomization of the nation through their contrasting opinion of the national identity, they demonstrate their homogeneous passion for the Bollywood cultural production. Despite affirming the Bangladeshi national identity thus Dilruba expressed her positive outlook towards STV by stating, 'I like all channels of STV. I like Indian channels too. The Punjabi folk song or *Vangra* has become so popular in this day' (Interview, 16 January 2002). Although Momata explicitly defined her self-identification as a Bangali Muslim by requiring the projection of more Islamic programmes on BTV screen, she was found extremely enthusiastic in case of watching the old Hindi movies as well as the Bengali movies of Calcutta Doordorshan (Interview, 14 November 2001).

The Indian channels dominate the sky of Bangladesh in such a manner because of having the cultural homogenisation and syncretisation. Bollywood succeeds in creating a new entertainment bazaar and gaining the wide popularity in the country due to credulous presentation of the story, looks alike character and the linguistic privileges (Page and Crawley, 2001). Catchy music and fabulous picturisation are two other fascinating elements of the Hindi channels (Ganguly, 2004), which contribute in attracting the middle class viewers of Bangladesh. The influence of Bollywood over Bangladesh is so tremendous that, more than 50% of cable television in Bangladesh is ruled by Indian channels and more than 90% of the time Bangali

viewers tune in to the Hindi channels such as Zee TV, Sony and MTV India (Hassan, 2000: 15).

While perceiving such cultural hegemony and monopoly of India, the middle class viewers have expressed their concern about the Bollywood penetration which in their understanding poses a great threat to their national integration by swamping the local culture and transforming the independent nation into a mimicking one. By addressing the issue Nasir argues,

Instead of the artistic production, Bollywood is turning our attention towards consumer culture through its popular programmes. By portraying the fantasy and delusive images, it is replacing our own culture. Our *Jari*, *Sari* is going to be replaced by the Hindi music and our young generation has become the copy cat (Interview, 8 September 2001).

Bangladesh, historically speaking has been emerged as an independent nation state in 1971 on the basis of Bangali cultural nationalism. The Linguistic Movement of 1952 to recognise Bengali as a state language we have already seen in the preceding chapter is regarded as the first phase towards the independence of the country. It was such a cultural revolution where the Bangali youth combated against the linguistic aggression of Urdu to retain the dignity of their vernacular. Although the middle class youth acted as the vanguard of that cultural movement, the perception of the linguistic spirit of their descendants have been altered in the recent history of Bangladesh. Language is such a tool, which plays a vital role to anaesthetise a nation culturally. It could not be regarded as a neutral medium as power and the cultural relationship shapes its connotation (Kidd and Nicholls, 1998).

Because of the advent of STV as Hindi is gradually assuming the status of a new Lingua Franca in the region (Page and Crawley, 2001: 156), it establishes a new discourse of dominance in an interactive way. By shedding light on this aspect of

language aggression, Oli, a father of a child has disclosed how the change is taking place within the family structure. 'My young daughter' he asserts 'is crazy for Hindi songs and Hindi dances. She often picks up the Hindi words and imitates the style of Bollywood film star' (interview, 17 November 2001). Linda equally reveals, 'Although the elder persons of my family do not understand many of the Hindi words, our kids do. They prefer to follow either the style of Sharuk Khan or Madhuri Dixit' (Interview, 18 September 2001).

While the urban middle class has been marked as the target audience of the Hindi channel, their programmes are designed with the aspiration of the material accomplishment and commodification of culture (Dwyer, 2000). For most of the time the middle class consciousness and ideology are interpreted within the framework of consumer culture where the actors are surrounded by desirable commodities and material conveniences in the Hindi channels. Indeed, one of the central features of the consumer culture is the availability of an extensive range of commodities, goods and experiences which are to be consumed, maintained and dreamt (Feasterston, 1991: 114). While the contents of the Bollywood programmes are consumption oriented, it is now pulling the Dhaka middle class towards 'stylisation and beautification of everyday life' (Kashfi, interview, 23 December 2001; Parvin, interview, 14 November 2001; Marufa, interview, 08 January 2002).

The spectacular production of Bollywood constructs an ideological sphere not only in support of the Indian culture. Simultaneously, it operates as an important tool for expanding her economic market. Hindi channels are the important vehicles for Indian goods and merchandise, which enhance the commodification of culture. Since Indian film and television enjoy virtually an unchallenged position of dominance in the South Asian region, it is alive and kicking everywhere. The industrial market of Bangladesh has been flooded with the Indian goods from clothing or cosmetics to household appliances. Indian brand names such as Lakme, BPL, Aril, Colgate and Indian Maruti are more abundant than the Bangladeshi brand. Indian clothes are

selling like hot cakes in Bangladesh while her own textile industry is suffering (Hassan, 2000: 15).

Bollywood films, film stars and their style exert a retrogressive influence not only on children or teenagers. The middle class women are found equally passionate to have the latest Indian *Sarees* and dresses for themselves. By bringing the issue into focus Syfur has revealed, 'If you go to the Uttara market, you will find the latest, expensive and fashionable *Sarees* in the shops. Why are these so expensive? Because this or that heroine has put on it in a super-hit movie'(interview, 17 December 2001). Kashfi equally expresses, 'We always look towards India. The Indians are very patriots but we imitate them. Although we have got lovely *Jamdani* and *Nakshi Kantha*, our women are crazy for Indian *Saree*' (Interview, 23 December 2001). Despite such expression, the contradictions of the middle class women folk, which were perceived by the researcher, demonstrates that, they could not escape its overwhelming impact. Indeed, among the fifteen middle class viewers, the researcher finds only Momata, Hanufa and Jhumur in *Saree* in the interview sessions, which explicitly indicates that the sari is now losing its ground to Indian Salower-Kamiz.

While the middle class is being bombarded by the Indian channels in such a manner, the fear of Indianisation is explicitly found among the middle class families. Instead of history, culture and language, the discourse of consumerism Dhaka middle class addresses contributes in a larger way in defining people's identities and reshaping the attitude of the new generation of Bangladesh. With the diffusion of Bollywood culture through STV, the traditional sense of collectivises of the nation in their view has got endangered. Although Bangladesh possesses a distinct socio-cultural heritage which blends the traditional values, religious customs and indigenous culture, for her new generation instead of Tagore, Lalon or Nazrul, the Bollywood film stars are apparent as the new ideal persons. The open air rural opera which is commonly known as *Yatra*- in the account of Dhaka middle class has already mingled with the alien culture by losing their original and distinct form (Omar, interview, 12

September 2001; Tanvir, interview, 4 December; Binod, interview, 14 November 2001). The children and teenagers of Dhaka City they assert can name the Hindi stars with whom they are familiar through daily exposure on the TV screen, but are unaware about the struggle of the nation and its history of Liberation War.

Because of the non-appearance of the historical programmes on BTV screen they are not acquainted with the name of their national heroes, other than those whose names appear in school textbooks. Within the discourse of Indianisation, as either Sharuk Khan (the most popular hero of Bollywood) or Kumar Sanu (the favourite singer of Hindi film) is cherished by the new generation of Bangladesh, their idea of collective identification is now radically transforming. Because of the wider diffusion of alien culture, the travelling storytellers, and folk singers of Bangladesh in their view are now disappearing. By addressing how the local songs have already been replaced by the band music, Abdul mentions, 'My son is crazy for band music but I like Rabindra Sangeet (Tagore songs). Sometimes I try to sit with him to listen that music. But within few minutes I get tired. The young generation does not want to listen to good music' (Interview, 11 January 2002). Tanvir's impression is no way different from it as he argues 'Our young boys will be able to say the name of 10 band groups. But they do not know the name of a Tagore singer' (Interview, 4 December 2001).

The values, ideology and the lifestyle, which are encouraged on STV in their view, contradict with the cultural tradition and social life of Bangladesh. While it has the power to define and redefine the notion of the national and the local area through its cultural product, it has created a great anxiety in the society. At the national and family level, whereas the children perceive the conservative environment and acquire the religious knowledge and moral philosophy, there on STV, they observe completely the opposite representation (Monjur; Parvin, interview 2001) Since the children are growing up under the influence of the culture of hybridity and heterogeneity in contemporary Bangladesh, they are getting more confused about their own history, cultural and tradition.

Geo-political Strategy of Bangladeshi Nationalism and its contradiction with STV

STV according to Page and Crawley (2001) has acquired the geo-political significance by creating its new cultural market, which transcends the national boundaries. 'Most South Asian states' in their view 'have their own repressed regional cultures and their own crisis of identity thrown up by their flawed politics of nationalism since independence' (p.28). Although these nationalist projects discourage the articulation of regional cultures and languages to different extents in each state, it is disappointing that the state in South Asia have not risen to the challenge of the satellite era more distinctively (p: 31). Under the circumstances, STV poses the new questions about the phenomenon of national identity and about the ability of the prevalent state structures to deal with them.

Bangladesh, the thesis reveals has been caught into the nationalist dilemma since the post-1975 era because of the invention of the Bangladeshi nationalism. The Bangladeshi nationalism, it has already been argued, was invented by Zia with the objective to devastate the indigenous Bangali culture including folk, *Yatra*, as well as Tagorian and Nazrulian philosophy of humanism and secularism to differentiate the people of Bangladesh from the people of West Bengal of India who possess the homogeneous Bengali vernacular and cultural tradition. The cultural interaction between the Bengali speaking worlds of India and Bangladesh in fact is high, perhaps the highest of any people living in separate countries in South Asia. There is a large migrant population in both areas and both share the cultural luminaries and a common literary heritage (Chowdhury, 2003: 100).

While perceiving such existing reality, Bangladeshi nationalism the thesis finds has been articulated within its geo-political environment of the South Asia. As geographically Bangladesh is not only a small country, but almost encircled by India from her three corners, the Bangladeshi nationalists suffered from the xenophobia

(Aftab, interview 27 August 2001). The fear of Indianisation and the hegemonic character of India was manifested in the Bangladeshi nationalist project by perceiving her supremacy within the bi-lateral relation between the two countries on the issue of sharing of water from the Farraka Barrage, India's failure to hand over Tin Bigha Corridor to Bangladesh to get access to the Bangladeshi enclaves of Dohargram and Angorpota, frequent migration of the refugees from Bangladesh in the states of West Bengal, Asam, Tripura etc. Not only that, Zia himself was suspicious about the motive of India which in his view could overturn his regime and render Bangladesh independence meaningless (Franda, 1982:287). While India was thus conceived as a greater country with her commanding and dominant influence by the Bangladeshi nationalists, Zia himself brought into focus all these anti-Indian propagation by arguing that, only the Bangladeshi nationalism could wide out foreignism from the country as well as be a safeguard against all evil designs of the sovereignty of Bangladesh (Bangladesh Observer, 29 December 1980).

Bangladeshi nationalism for Zia thus emerged as an alternative nationalist doctrine for the people of Bangladesh whereas Bangali nationalism in his understanding demonstrates the conceptual integration with the West Bengal of India. Islam accordingly from such a perspective has been used as an emotive tool to make the Bangali national identity enigmatic and to demonstrate the distinctive image of Bangladesh in the region. Whereas the integrity of the culture remains as a key concern in the Bangali nationalist project there for the Bangladeshi demagogue's religious nationalism remain as the key political force in contemporary Bangladesh for the protection of her sovereignty in the South Asian region (Kyum, 1994). While the Bangladeshi leaders intend to define the nation by denying the past linkages with West Bengal and undermining the Bangali culture, they employ Islam as an effective weapon to counter the cultural hegemony of India. To override the Bangali nationalist identity although the Bangladeshi nationalists use BTV as a propaganda machinery by disrupting the traditional link among history, culture and vernacular on the one

hand and highlighting the Islamic values and ethos on the other, in case of challenging the penetration of Bollywood culture, their strategy is rather enigmatic.

Hence, although the Bangladeshi government is audible in making a distinction between veil and *Tiluk*, *Tupi* and *Dhuti*, it has not initiated any attempt to challenge the threat of Indianisation process through STV. Rather it was the Bangladeshi government of Khaleda Zia, which welcomed STV with open arms in their conceived Muslim Bangladesh. Although the fear of Indianisation and the propagation of the provocative slogan “Islam is in danger” (Chowdhury, 2002) are explicit in the political statements of the Bangladeshi nationalists, being the successor of Ziaur Rahman, the government of Khaleda Zia paved the way for the infiltration of the Bollywood culture in Bangladesh.

Indeed, in one political speech although Khaleda herself pronounced that in the wrap of the Bangali nationalism, “the Ulu Dhani (Hindu religious chant) will be heard in the mosque instead of Azan (Call to the Muslim for prayer) in the regime of AL” (Kabir, 2003: 182), neither she nor her administration ever raised the voice against the Indian cultural penetration through the emergence of the global satellite television. Rather they are found sonorous in case of opposing the display of *Shikha Chirantan* (which projects the eternal flame of *Muktiyodho*) at a place in the Suhrawardy Uddan at Dhaka city by branding it as idolatry-something forbidden in Islam (Kabir, 2002: 182), instead of demonstrating any negative approach towards the penetration of Bollywood culture. Despite the coexistence of such propagation of Indianisation and Islamisation as the two essential components of the Bangladeshi nationalist project, while they remain silent on the issue of Bollywood aggression in Bangladesh, it demonstrates their contradictions with the principle ethos of their nationalist project and the geo-political strategy.

Conclusion

Hence, within the context of prevailing nationalist dilemma whereas BTV contributes in creating an oblivion state by constructing the paradoxical interpretation of history and culture, there STV, intensifies this crisis of national identities with more enigma, dichotomization and diversification by diverting the attention of the middle class from indigenisation to heterogenisation. Particularly, the Bollywood films and India based TV programmes play an influential role in this regard by fragmenting the traditional sources of cultural identity and challenging the old notion of national belonging of the middle class viewers of Bangladesh. Indeed, after the advent of STV as a global commercial media system, Indian popular cinema has made remarkable success in attracting very large South Asian audiences as well as in linking up South Asian communities across the globe (Page and Crawley, 2001). India has emerged as one of the major producers and global exporters of audio-visual materials in contemporary world (Gokulsing and Dissanayake, 2004).

While Bollywood films and music have succeeded in creating a new popular culture with the projection of the glamour of the consumer society and the principle of cultural modernity, the penetration of Bollywood culture through STV is remarkable in Bangladesh. With the massive entertainment programmes and the spectacular production, the Hindi channels of STV therefore are now diverting middle class attention towards the syncretisation of culture by disrupting their cultural and historical link with the territorial boundary. By addressing the issue in such a manner, a middle class viewer has unveiled the paradoxical operation of both BTV and STV by arguing 'BTV is not paying proper attention on our own culture and history. Our new generation does not get any inspiration from BTV. STV on the other hand is destroying our indigenous culture and tradition. So, ultimately we are damaging our entire nation' (Imran, interview, 05 January 2002). The emergence of STV, particularly the Hindi language channels thus has created a new paradox in the nationalist discourse of the middle class of Bangladesh

Chapter: Seven

Middle Class and Its Problem of National Identity in Bangladesh

Introduction

The history of nationalism of the middle class, the preceding chapters demonstrate is full of contradictions and complexities. While the nationalist discourse of middle class in Bangladesh is split into two streams including the linguistic/ secular spirit as well as the religious and Islamic ethos, this chapter unveils how the middle class conceptualises these issues and expresses its view about the history of Liberation War, Proclamation of Independence, role of the national heroes as well as cultural heritage and the religious tradition from the conflicting point of views. This section throws light on the views and statements of the middle class of Dhaka city to demonstrate the fragmentation, multiplicity and the plurality of their national identities in association with television, which operates both as the cultural and political medium in Bangladesh.

Theoretical Insight

The chapter relies on Wahrman (1995) in this case to explain the complexity of national identities of middle class of contemporary Bangladesh in the light of different political circumstances which play the crucial role in imagining and inventing its diversified concepts with distinct political languages, symbolic expressions and philosophical thoughts. By considering the middle class as an invented community Wahrman brings into focus how (a) the particular notion of the middle class is imagined in the particular political environment (b) the political languages including the political speech, political debate etc. contribute in opening up a particular space for the middle class in society and (c) the middle class operates in and through the political process in the society. This theoretical insight the thesis

finds is useful to comprehend the nature of the fragmented national identities of the middle class of Bangladesh today who conceptualise their national identities in divergent ways under the different political circumstances where television operates as a state controlled medium in reflecting those different political periods with different political languages, thoughts and cultures.

Hence, on the basis of the field data of the researcher this chapter brings into focus the problem of the national identity of the middle class including its five categorisations such as Bangali, Bangladeshi, Bangali Muslim, Bangladeshi Bangali and Bangali Bangladeshi Muslim, who identify themselves in such a diversified ways in their interview sessions by responding to the programmes of the state television under the different political circumstances of Bangladesh.

Viewers Who Do Believe in Bangali Nationalism

Among the thirty middle class viewers of Dhaka City, thirteen viewers have considered Bangali nationalism as the basis of their national identity. The viewers who have defined their identity in such a way, their name, age, address have been procured by the researcher when the interview had been conducted in Dhaka City. The record clearly demonstrates that, both the viewers of the older and new generation do believe in Bangali nationalism who belong to the age group between twenty-one and fifty-seven. The most important aspect of this categorisation is that, it encompasses only four viewers of the new generation. Economically speaking, nine viewers of this group belong to the middle class income group whose income is 10,000.00 to 17,000.00 Tk. per month. Three viewers are the residents of the posh area of Dhaka city (Banani, Uttara) whose monthly income varies from 20,000.00 to 50,000.00 TK. Per month. Only one viewer of this group has been found in lower income group whose family income is 5,000.00 Tk. Per month.

The record also provides the information that, it is such a category, which involves the people of multi- religious communities. Another important aspect of this categorisation is that, the elderly Bangali viewers have been started watching television since the decade of sixty and got the privilege to observe the political condition of both the pre-independent and post-independent Bangladesh. The younger viewers on the other hand are that 'lucky chaps' who have been brought up within the environment of TV culture as they have been observing BTV programme since their childhood.

BTV is associated by the Bangali viewers alike with lies and distortions as the issue of *Muktiyodho*, rehabilitation of the *Razakars* (collaborators) and the hypocrisy of veil culture are the prime concern for this group of people. By considering BTV as a government institution, they throw light basically on the politicisation procedure and express the view that, the historical programmes of BTV alters with the change in power structure of the country. While BTV presents the history of Liberation War in the light of the partisan view of each government, they accuse it for the destruction of the spirit of Liberation War and distortion of the historical facts. By illustrating various examples, the Bangali viewers aspire to demonstrate the paradoxical role of BTV, which in their conceptualisation not only divide the nation through its confusing message but also contributes in making the young generation apathetic.

'History should be one and unique' (Hasem, interview, 2 January 2002) although they opine it, in their narrative it has already been rewritten and apparent with ambiguities. Since, neither the visual nor the print media (not even the textbook) play any role in exploring the truth of history and inconsistency in historical event; these viewers have expressed their concern for the young generation. Hasem, a university professor thus reveals,

We do not get the correct information from BTV. What we hear today, tomorrow we find a gulf of differences in it. By observing several

regimes and receiving various types of messages, our young generation has already become confused. From my practical experience, I can say that, many non-victim areas have been projected as war victim areas on BTV screen (Interview, 2 January 2002).

Along with the transformation of the government, the Bangali viewers perceive the alteration not only in the interpretation of history. Simultaneously, they observe how the role of the national heroes and their contributions are analysed from the conflicting points of view. By regarding Mujib as an un-parallel hero of Bangladesh this group of viewers have critically analysed the role of BTV for creating an illusive image of Zia with the revisionist history. Indeed, the Bangali middle class viewers have condemned Zia for his initiative of the rehabilitation of the *Razakar* and incumbent of the well-known collaborators of Pakistani occupation forces in his cabinet where BTV operated as a political medium for the introduction of cultural lie (Imran, interview, 5 January 2002; Syfur, interview 17 December 2001). Imran, a middle class Bangali viewer who is running an industry thus argues, 'Although Zia participated in our Liberation War as a freedom fighter; he is the person who appointed Shah Aziz, a well known *Razakar*, as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh' (Interview, 5 January 2002).

Farah, a Bangali viewer also reveals her passion by expressing,

For the first time in Zia regime, I heard that, Zia proclaimed our War of Independence in 1971. Although I was an eyewitness of *Muktiyoddho* and my elder brother directly participated in that war, I do not know what Zia exactly said in his speech. Not even I heard that full speech of Zia from any programme of BTV' (Interview, 15 January 2002).

Imran also seems dubious about the announcement of Zia by raising the question, 'What was the background of that speech of Zia? How could it become possible for a

major like Zia to declare the War of Independence on 27th March? He was not even an elected representative' (Interview, 5 January 2002).

The junior viewers, Omar (interview, 12 September 2001) and Lailee (interview, 29 October 2001) of this group unveil the fragmentation of the nation more explicitly. For them, the ongoing nationalist debate has created nothing but ambiguity. Did Mujib declare the independence against Pakistan on 7th/26th March or was that Zia who announced the War of Independence on 27 March? - remain as the most controversial issue for them. BTV in their narrative for the first time broadcast the historical speech of 7th March of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in the regime of Shaikh Hasina and contributed in unveiling the substance of the entire speech of 7th March.

But it operated in a paradoxical manner regarding the contribution of Zia in the War of Liberation. Although in the regime of Khaleda Zia, BTV portrayed the image of Zia exclusively as the national hero of Bangladesh, after 1996, they observed how BTV discovered Mujib as '*Bangabondhu*' (Friend of Bangladesh) and the father of the nation by broadcasting the speech of 7th March and other facts and documents of Liberation War. While the history did not end there, after the election of 2001 they found the revision in the previous narrative. By bringing the issue into focus Lailee thus wonders which message she would accept from BTV news and programmes, while she perceives how the neutral president Shahabuddin Ahmed glorified the role of Zia as the Declarer of Independence after the election of 2001, although only few days ago he regarded Sheikh Mujib as the father of the nation and the commander of the Liberation War (Interview, 29 October 2001).

Despite such conundrum and ambiguities, both the senior and junior Bangali viewers bring into focus the regime of AL, for the projection of factual history on BTV screen, either from 1972 to 1975 or 1996 to 2001. Particularly, the era of Sheikh Hasina in the narrative of the Bangali viewers is marked as distinguishable, which endeavoured to unveil the mysteries of history by revealing the authentic facts and

figures of *Muktiyodho* in wide volume. BTV in this regard they assert help the viewers to return to history of *Muktiyodho* with the presentation of a large number of documentary films and features which was never broadcast before the regime of AL (Jayma, Interview, 4 February 2002).

The most distinctive feature of the Bangali middle class viewers, which has been discovered by the researcher, displays their highest regard for *Muktiyodho* and the aspiration for the revelation of the truth of history. Whereas the elderly viewers of the group inspire their children to watch the *Muktiyodho* programme of BTV (Syfur, Interview 17 December 2001; Sadek, interview 17 October 2001) there the young viewers of the group seem curious about their own history and culture. With the objective to gain insight about the phenomenon, they read the relevant books, visit the Shaheed Minar (Language Martyr Monument) and share their views with their parents and other members of the family (Jayma, interview, 4 February 2002; Aditi, interview 26 October 2001; Lailee, interview 29 October 2001). Syfur, who is an engineer in profession and belongs to the older generation of this group thus reveals, “During the period of Liberation War, I was a student of class twelve and my younger brother was a baby boy. He therefore does not know what happened in 1971 or how the *Razakar* or *Al-Badar* tortured our people. I therefore always advise him to watch the drama of BTV based on the history of our *Muktiyodho*” (Syfur, interview 17 December 2001). Aditi, a young Bangali viewer of the group also expresses her passion by revealing ‘When I went to Savar to see the National Monument I became very emotional. Although I was not born during the period of Liberation War, I felt that I have a very close relation with the Monument, which is the symbol of our Liberation War’ (Interview 26 October 2001).

The Bangali viewers have expressed their mixed reaction towards the religious programmes of BTV. Whereas Sadek and Jayma seem indifferent in case of watching any religious programmes of BTV, there the other viewers have demonstrated some sort of passion for couple of religious programmes including *Udzibon*, *Maha*

Ramadan of BTV. Indeed, nine viewers of this group prefer to watch the religious programmes of BTV usually in the month of *Ramadan* and at the night of *Shabe-Kadar* or *Shabe-ba-rat*. Veil which BTV introduces in the month of *Ramadan* has been considered as hypocrisy by the five Muslim viewers of this group. Thus, Jayma, a NGO worker expresses her negative attitude by arguing ‘I do not think veiling is essential for *Ramadan*. Sacredness is a personal matter, relative term. If you want to maintain the sanctity of *Ramadan*, then why do you project the women on the screen of BTV?’ (Interview, 4 February 2002). Navid’s statement, who is serving as a government official, is no way different from it as he opines, ‘Veiling is a contradictory matter since the female presenters use veil with full make-up and heavy jewellery’ (Interview, 19 December 2001).

The Bangali middle class viewers have also raised another point, as they seem dubious about the objective of the portrayal of veil culture on BTV landscape (Imran; Omar; Hasem, interview 2002). Hasem, a university professor thus expresses ‘Why does BTV introduce such a dress code in Ramadan, is not clear to me. Does BTV consider it as an important marker of Islamic tradition?’ (Interview, 2 January 2002). Or ‘Does it carry out the order of the top authority to deceive the people with the aim to exploit their religious passion?’ (Syfur, interview, 17 December 2001) remain as the enigmatic issues to these viewers.

In the statement of the two Bangali viewers of the minority communities, another critical phenomenon is reflected by demonstrating how BTV constructs the boundary within the nation in the name of religion. Farah, who is working as a development coordinator in a NGO, addresses the issue in the following way ‘‘We do not find the practical implication of secularism in our social life. Although a good number of Christian people live in this country, you will never feel it by observing the programmes of BTV’’ (Interview, 15 January 2001). Aditi's passion is more profound as she argues, ‘We don’t have any importance in Bangladesh. BTV does not bother to broadcast any rich religious programme for us. I am not Indian. Bangladesh is my

birth place. But many of my close Muslim friends do not want to believe it' (Interview, 26 October 2001). This statement of Aditi is significant to demonstrate that, how (a) BTV operates exclusively for the cultivation of the Islamic culture and (b) religion draws the boundary between the Muslim and the Non-Muslim as well as (c) majoritarian domination causes the rise of minoritarian separation in Bangladesh.

By regarding the 'village' as the root of Bangali culture, this group of viewers has expressed their passion and concern for the folk programmes of BTV. Although BTV's approach towards the folk culture is considered as marginal by Sadek, Hasem, Lailee, Jhumur, in parallel they consider its positive role for the reflection of the rustic way of life in the programmes of *Lalon* song, *Vatiali* song, Tagore's drama as well as in the programmes of *Pahela Baishak*. Such view contradicts with the opinion of Navid, Syfur, Aditi, Omar who raise a question about the future of the folk programme and its association with BTV as a national medium. BTV in their narrative is slenderly connected with the folk culture and tradition of Bangladesh. Although *Yatra* (soap opera) of BTV was once considered one of its very popular programmes, it now pays very little attention on it. Above all, because of the poor presentation of folk programme, this group of viewers has lost their attraction for this type of programmes.

Opinion of the Bangladeshi Viewers

Seven viewers the target group of the researcher have identified themselves as Bangladeshi who primarily belongs to the new generation of Bangladesh, age group between 20 to 35 years. Five of them are the dwellers of the three posh areas including Banani, Uttara or Dhanmondi area of Dhaka city and belong to the upper middle class. Two other Bangladeshi viewers live in Mirpur residential area and belong to the middle income group. The viewers who do believe in Bangladeshi nationalism, researcher's field data demonstrates their distinctiveness by unveiling the fact that after the political change of 1975, the group started watching the

programmes of BTV. The fact remains crucial in this research project for the manifestation of the culturalisation of this group of viewers who have been brought up under the influence of that TV culture which was created by the military discourse of Zia and Ershad.

While BTV operated primarily as a heavy-handed propaganda machine in the both regimes, it contributes in developing a different notion of history and perception of *Muktiyodho* among the Bangladeshi viewers. By displaying the highest regard for *Muktiyodho* whereas the Bangali viewers appreciate the role of BTV for packaging its programmes for the first time in Hasina regime, there the Bangladeshi viewers condemn its role for the extensive projection of the history of the Liberation War in the reign of Sheikh Hasina (1996-2001). Thus, Kashfi a young Bangladeshi viewer, who is serving as a banker, reveals '*Our Muktoyodho* programmes should not be based on too much melo-drama. These are not essential. You just tell the fact with brief narrative without too much adjectives' (Interview, 23 December 2001). History should be abbreviated without any descriptive projection— it was their line of argument (Kashfi, interview, 23 December 2001; Marufa, interview, 8 January; Dilruba, interview, 3 September 2001; Parvin, interview, 28 December 2001).

Such conceptualisation the thesis finds is natural since except the five years rule of the Hasina government; these viewers were habituated to see the programmes of history in a 'marginalised' fashion either on the celebration of the Independence Day (26 March) or the Victory Day (16 December). These viewers are those young folk of Bangladesh, who hardly heard the term '*Bangabondhu*' and name of Mujib in the '*Muktiyodho* programmes' of BTV before the regime of AL. Instead, they were acquainted with the name of Zia as a freedom fighter who declared the War of Independence in 1971. Since their psyche has been set up in such a way by watching the programmes of BTV (from 1975-1996) and reading other text materials for a prolonged period, after 1996, when they discover a great change in the same BTV programme, they perceive it as inconsistent and impulsive. By using the term

'exaggeration' they raise objection against BTV for the extensive use of the name of *Bangabondhu*. Thus, Marufa, who is a college student, has expressed her passion by stating, 'It is really boring to hear the name of *Bangabondhu* in all programmes of BTV. Hasina has used her father's name so extensively' (Interview, 08 January 2002). Kashfi equally opines, 'In the programmes of *Muktiyodho*, in the last five years we have found too much melo-drama and too much emotion. By watching the last five-year programmes of BTV, it seems to me that, we are still in 1970' (Interview, 23 December 2001).

The aforementioned statement is indicative to comprehend that, although this group of viewers has evaluated the role of BTV in a negative manner for the exaggeration of the historical fact, they have not raised any objection against its operation for the prohibition of the name of Sheikh Mujib or the slogan of '*Joy Bangla*' for long years in BTV programmes. Indeed, these viewers seem reluctant in comparison among the several historical programmes, which was broadcast by BTV in different ways in different political regimes of Bangladesh. Fauzia, a schoolteacher, focuses her discussion on this aspect by saying, 'I do not see the programmes of Freedom Movement for any type of comparison' (Interview, 14 November 2001). Marufa echoes in the similar way by telling, 'I never go in a depth analysis for this type of programmes' (Interview, 8 January 2001).

Indeed, researcher's field data reveals the inexact and obscure insight of the Bangladeshi middle class regarding the history of the Liberation War of Bangladesh. By acknowledging the fact Marufa reveals,

Truly speaking we don't have any comprehensive knowledge about our own history. Our textbooks do not reflect the history of Bangladesh in detail as well as with a holistic approach. From class one to class seven; our books include a short history where we find only the name of seven freedom fighters. I have read this brief history only, nothing more. You

will find the name of Salam, Barkat, the linguist martyrs who have sacrificed their lives in the Language Movement in 1952 only in one or two lines (Interview, 8 January 2001).

Their impression about the announcement of Zia, which they consider, as the Proclamation of the War of Independence is not even unclouded and conspicuous. Thus, whereas in Parvin's account, who is serving as a physician, Zia is apparent with the speech "I am Major Zia, I declare the war of independence" (Interview, 28 December 2001) there in Bokul's narrative, a college girl, it assumed the following form, "I am major Zia speaking, the declarer of war of independence" (Interview, 15 October 2001).

Although this group of viewers consider Mujib as a great national hero (Bokul, interview, 15 October 201; Monjur, interview, 7 December 2001; Marufa interview, 8 January 2002) who is inevitably associated with the history of Bangladesh, he was never apparent as *Bangabondhu* or the father of the nation in their narrative. Rather it was Zia who in parallel has been adored by the group as the declarer of the War of Independence. By bringing the image of Zia into prominence in such a manner, they equalise his position to Mujib in the War of Independence in 1971. The attitude which has been displayed by the Bangladeshi viewers about their national heroes in their interview session, the thesis finds is almost synonymous with the attitude of the Bangladeshi government of Khaleda Zia which rewarded the Independence Award to both Mujib and Zia for their contribution in Liberation War. By placing Zia beside Mujib, the government's interpretation is no way different from the narrative of the Bangladeshi middle class who intend to establish the fact that, there was no unparallel leader in the Liberation Movement of Bangladesh.

Religion assumes a distinctive place in the social life of these viewers who regard Islam as a modern religion. Conservatism in their conceptualisation is an essential element of a Muslim country like Bangladesh, which could not be regarded as

superstition or prejudice but rule or order. The special religious programmes of Ramadan, *Eid-I-Miladun- Nabi*, *Shabe-Kadar* are often viewed by them to gain insight about Islamic thought and principles. The group illustrates the name of Kari Bellali's religious programme by marking it as an instructional for Quran and *Namaz* which was watched by them in their childhood.

By considering the veil as an inevitable part of Islamic culture, Monjur (interview, 7 December 2001), Bukul (interview, 15 October 2001) and Dilruba (interview, 3 September 2001) consider its projection as 'natural' on BTV screen during the month of the Ramadan. By appreciating the initiative of BTV, thus Monjur argues, 'Veil is a matter of our social value and it is also the symbol of our Islamic culture'(Interview, 7 December 2001). Dilruba's view is no way different as she also reveals 'Yes, I like it. It is related to our Islamic value and culture' (Interview, 3 September 2001). But Parvin (interview, 28 December 2001) Kashfi (interview, 23 December 2001) and Fauzia (interview, 14 November 2001) three other Bangladeshi viewers demonstrate their distinctive attitude in this regard by arguing that a Muslim can not follow the principle of Quran merely for a month or a day. If BTV intends to introduce it, they assert it should be implemented for the whole year.

The Bangladeshi viewers demonstrate their distinctive attitude towards the folk programmes by isolating themselves from the village people. Indeed, none of the Bangladeshi viewers have ever watched any *Yatra* programme on BTV. Although some of the folk programmes including *Hiramon*, *Gunai Bibi* (folk drama) or Nina Hamid's programmes (folk singer) were once watched by Dilruba, Parvin, Monjur, Bukul and Marufa, Kashfi and Fauzia were never ever the viewers of such type of any programmes because of their poor way of presentation.

Believer in Bangali Muslim Identity

Among the thirty middle class viewers of Dhaka city, Mamota, Akbar, Nasir and Sobur have been identified as the believer in Bangali Muslim identity, who belong to the upper as well as middle income group and whose age group is between 40- 60. The most distinguishable feature of the group is that, both the programmes of Dhaka TV (in pre-independent Bangladesh) as well as BTV (in post independent Bangladesh) have been watched by them. Although these four viewers are the eyewitnesses of the Liberation War of 1971, it is amazing that a sharp contrast has been found in their opinion in regarding with *Muktiyodho* and religious issues. By addressing the hybrid term 'Bangali Muslim' whereas Mamota (Physician) and Akbar (Advocate) have put more emphasis on Islamic ethos rather than Bangali culture, there Nasir (Engineer) and Sobur (Physician) insist on the centrality of the Bangali identity by highlighting the history of *Muktiyodho*.

Mamota and Akbar have been discovered as those two regular viewers of BTV who look quite satisfied by observing the reflection of the fundamental principles of Islam in its religious programmes. They were equally loud in supporting of veil culture by considering it as an Islamic and a deserved garb for the women folk of Bangladesh. Mamota reveals such passion with the satisfaction, 'It is good that BTV introduces veil in the month of *Ramadan*. I appreciate it. In our religion we find this type of direction. It is our duty to follow the order and principle of Islam' (Interview, 14 November 2001). Akbar echoes in the similar manner by arguing, 'In accordance with the religious tradition our women use veil during the month of *Ramadan* and at the time of Azan. It is good that our women use veil in this month. Veiling is not harmful for our women. It can't be a matter of controversy' (Interview, 2 October). By highlighting the Muslim identification in such a fashion, both the viewers aspire for the implementation of more Islamic rules and principles in society as well as on BTV. This is explicitly found in Mamota's statement, 'I am a Muslim. I want to see more Islamic values and principles on BTV. Our young generation has become

spoiled now. They should be guided by the direction of Quran' (Interview, 14 November 2001).

The most interesting data, which is explicit in the researcher's record, demonstrates their unwillingness in disclosing the facts of *Muktoyodho*. Although they experienced the disaster of the war and are knowledgeable about the role of Sheikh Mujib they endeavour to overlook the phenomenon. Although, Akbar seems aware of BTV's operation for the incongruous packaging of the history of *Muktiyodho*, he denies in analysing the matter in detail because of his professional identity. With the objective to ignore Mujib's name, Mamota demonstrates her indifference in any elaborate discussion of *Muktiyodho*.

Whereas Mamota endeavours to keep Mujib's name non-apparent in her narrative, there Nasir and Sobur bring his contribution at the centre of their discussion by regarding him as the architect of Bangladesh. BTV in their account contributed in the distortion of the historical fact by prohibiting the name of the founder of the nation and the prime slogan '*Joy Bangla*' of *Muktiyodha* for a long time in its programmes. For the distortion of the historical fact and the destruction of the spirit of Liberation War both accuse Zia and his party men. By throwing light on this debatable issue, Sobur expresses, 'Although BNP propagates that Zia has declared the War of Independence, we know history. We participated in *Muktiyodho*. Mr. Hannan, an AL leader was the first person who announced the independence of Bangladesh over the radio on behalf of *Bangabondhu*' (Interview, 2 November 2001). By making a distinction between '*Joy Bangla*' and '*Jindabad*', Nasir also condemns Zia and reveals, "I do believe in the slogan of Joy Bangla instead of Jindabad. Joy Bangla indicates patriotism; it is the spirit of the Liberation War of 1971. Being a Muslim when I say *Naraya Takbir, Allah-hu-Akbar*, I feel a power. Like that, when I say *Joy Bangla*, being a Bangali I also feel a power' (Interview, 8 September 2001).

Both the viewers also express their concern for the new generation of Bangladesh, which in their understanding is incapable in making the distinction between the real history and the fabricated history of BTV. By receiving the fabricated message from BTV for the prolonged twenty-one years, they argue, the young generation of Bangladesh can not even imagine how BTV made history is far away from the reality of history. BTV in their view brought a major break through in this domain in the regime of Sheikh Hasina when they heard the slogan of *Joy Bangla* in BTV programme and their children also learnt to say *Joy Bangla*.

Nasiruddin demonstrates his distinct passion for some of the religious programmes which in his view is instructional (as *Udzibon*) and broadcast in Ramadan. Sobur seems reluctant in this regard, as he identifies himself not as a strong believer in religion. But both consider the projection of the veil culture on BTV screen absolutely as hypocrisy, while it is introduced only for one month, as well is applied only for the women folk. 'Although our female news reader uses the veil in Ramadan, the male news reader comes on TV without Tupi or any Islamic garb. Purdha is not only for women but for both men and women in Islam. So if you want to follow the instruction of Islam, then you should follow it in a proper way' (Sabur, interview, 2 November 2001), it was their line of argument.

The Viewers Who Do Believe in Bangali Bangladeshi Nationalism

Manna Dey and Linda Carol, two viewers of the minority community shed light on their Bangali Bangladeshi identity by amalgamating the both terminologies. Both the viewers the researcher's field data demonstrates live in the Razabazar area and socio-economically belong to the middle income group. Linda is an employee of a foreign agency and has been watching the programmes of BTV since 1977. Schoolteacher Manna Dey on the other hand got the privilege to watch the programmes of television for the first time in 1965 in the Ayubian decade.

The essence of their nationalist philosophy lies in the fact that, it includes the homogenization instead of any segregation between the Bangali nationalism and Bangladeshi nationalism. 'I am a Bangali' thus Linda argues 'as well as a Bangladeshi too. I do not find any difference between these two spirits' (Interview, 18 September 2001). Although Manna insists on his Bangali identification but with the assertion that 'being a citizen I am a Bangladeshi too' (Interview, 31 January 2002). Despite their individual faith in amalgamation of these nationalist philosophies, they acknowledge the problem of the national identity of Bangladesh by considering her history of Liberation War as a subject of massive debate. The governments as well as middle class including the progressive intellectuals and the conservative writers in their narrative are responsible for the dichotomisation of the nation. They accuse all governments for the construction of the confusing state among the young generation regarding the history of *Muktiyadho*.

While BTV is used as a tool of political indoctrination by each government, it operates in a paradoxical fashion by packaging the history of the nation with different interpretations. By illustrating an example Manna rationalises,

It is essential to admit that, Zia has declared the War of Independence in 1971. But at the same time it is important to apprehend that, he did not declare it by his own decision. In the speech of Zia it was explicit that he did it on behalf of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. But BTV never reveals the fact by broadcasting his full speech. Moreover, before Zia, Mr. Hannan declared the War of Independence. But this issues remain non-apparent in BTV programme (Interview, 31 January 2002).

Indeed, both Manna and Linda evaluate the role of BTV in a negative fashion for the projection of low quality and monotonous programmes on *Muktiyodho*, which in their narrative fail to make any appeal to the people. 'In BTV dramas', thus Manna says, 'A *Razakar* is often portrayed as a bearded person who uses a *Tupi* on head. This is not

the proper way to evaluate the deeds of the collaborators by hurting the religious sentiment of the people' (Interview, 31 January 2002). This statement of Manna demonstrates the major paradox of Bangladesh in case of defining and identifying the *Razakar* today.

Due to negative role of the Islamic political parties in the Liberation War of Bangladesh, although BTV projects the person with Tupi and beard as the collaborator in the regime of AL, Manna raised objection against such symbolic projection of the *Razakar*. He rather emphasises more on the potentiality of BTV in unveiling their criminal offence with their full name and identity who worked as the associated force of the Pakistani Army and assisted them in killing the Bangali people. Without revealing such history with authentic facts, while in Manna's view BTV projected the *Razakar* only symbolically in the regime of AL, it created nothing but the discontents and debate in the society. Tupi and beard Manna asserts are also the symbol of the pious Muslim.

While both conceive that, religion can not be the basis of the self identification of a person, they deny in identifying themselves either as a Hindu or Christian and express their least interest in the religious programmes which BTV broadcast for the people of their own religious community. Although Manna prefers to watch the programmes of *Lalon* song, *Baul* song to get the smell of the soil, and Linda is very eager to see *Yatra Pala* (Soap opera); both consider most of its folk programmes as passive and dull.

Viewers Who Do Believe in Bangali, Bangladeshi and Muslim Identity

One viewer, name Majeta Rahman, age 35, has identified herself as a believer in Bangali, Bangladeshi and Muslim national identity, by incorporating a new dimension in the nationalist stream of Bangladesh. She demonstrates many of the similarities with the Bangladeshi viewers, as she belongs to the same age group, lives

in Uttara, one of the very posh areas of Dhaka city, possesses a sound socio-economic background, and has been watching the programmes of television since 1977. Despite this, her socio-cultural insight and political ideology are quite different from those of the Bangladeshi viewers. Being a believer in tripartite national identity, schoolteacher Majeta puts equal importance on Islamic religious tradition, folk culture and the history of the Liberation War of Bangladesh. She is one of those regular viewers of the religious programmes of BTV and ATN, who seem enthusiastic in receiving the religious messages from those programmes of television. In her own narrative 'We can get many instructions about the rule of *Namaj*, including how we will sit for it or how can we improve our Arabic accent, from this type of programmes' (Interview, 14 October 2001). In fact, since her childhood she has got the privilege to watch the religious programmes of BTV.

While in her conceptualisation, BTV projects the veil culture in a ridiculous way instead of presenting it as a proper Islamic get-up during the month of Ramadan; she expresses her negative attitude towards the show down of the veil culture. 'In Ramadan' she reveals, 'although our female news readers use veil but with heavy make-up and lot of jewellerys. Since, just for show they cover their head with saree; they cover only half portion of their head. The rest of their head remains uncovered, and we can easily see their matching ear ring, matching blouse' (Interview, 14 October 2001).

Majeta demonstrates her great interest in *Muktiyodho* and aspiration for its vivid projection on BTV screen to get the factual history of Bangladesh. She identifies the self-interest of different political governments as an obstacle in this regard to perceive the authentic facts, figures and portrayal of *Muktiyodho* on BTV landscape. Whereas, in the reign of Hasina she discovers the name of Sheikh Mujib exclusively with his associates including Tajuddin Ahmed, Syed Nazrul Islam, etc. after the election of 2001, other than Zia she finds no other's name, not even the name of Col. Osmany in many programmes of BTV. In the different political regimes since the image of the

national heroes are portrayed in such a diversified way, she has expressed her great concern for the new generation of Bangladesh. The new generation of Bangladesh in her narrative will be unable to conceive Mujib as the commander of the nation rather than the father of Sheikh Hasina. Whereas his name was used extensively in Hasina regime there at present his name has never been pronounced in any single programme of BTV. The history of *Muktiyodho* thus has assumed the controversial character not only in such a manner, but also apparent in a story form, particularly for the young generation who in her account is absolutely ignorant about the Language Movement or the brutality of Pakistani occupation force.

Because of the absence of the factual history including its ethos and relevance, the programmes, which are broadcast by BTV on *Muktiyodho*, in her understanding, fail to touch the heart of the people. She has rationalised the matter from her personal experiences as she is serving in an English medium school of Dhaka city. The students of the English medium students, she discloses are absolutely ill informed about the history of 26th March or 16th December because of their different syllabus which does not have any association with Bangladesh society and history. In her own language, 'Our children, our kids know nothing. By watching the programme of BTV, our children feel nothing. They start laughing by watching this type of BTV programmes' (Interview, 14 October 2001).

She is found passionate for the folk song *Palli Geeti* and *Lalon Geeti* and prefers to watch this type of folk programmes regularly on BTV. Although she considers some of the programmes as praiseworthy for the projection of the culture of Bangladesh in an effective manner, most programmes in her view are very low in quality.

Middle Class, Television and Its Fragmentation

The above analysis clearly demonstrates how the national identity persists as a serious enigma for the middle class in Bangladesh today. Its nationalist discourse has

assumed an intricate form by involving several themes and sub-themes with multiple connotations and ambiguities regarding the issue of Liberation War, Islamic tradition and indigenous culture. Complexities and multi-dimensions therefore are two key features of the nationalist framework of the middle class of contemporary Bangladesh whose psyche has been troubled with the paradoxical interpretation of the history of Liberation War, declaration of Independence and the significance of the religious values and cultural ethos. The middle class the chapter finds has been caught between the cultural and the religious limit in association with the issue of Muktiyodho.

Historically speaking, Bangladesh emerged as an independent and sovereign nation state in 1971 on the basis of Bangali nationalism by shattering the Muslim nationalism of Pakistan and that secular Bangali character was retained by the class as its prime nationalist spirit until the political change of 1975. But after the political transition of 1975 when the military discourse contributed in inventing the Bangladeshi nationalism with its religio-territorial distinctiveness, since then the confrontation between the Bangali language and religion, indigenous Bangali culture and Islamic tradition has been started as the fundamental problem of the nationalist discourse of Bangladesh today. While the national identities thus has been invented and reinvented with new political language, idioms and symbols in the context of changing political configuration, the chapter provides the complex example of how television has been used as a political medium by the governing political elite in a paradoxical ways in this regard. By packaging the several flow of incongruous and improbable information about history, culture and tradition, the chapter reveals how it contributes in reinterpreting history, inventing the new myths and constructing the diverse concept of national identities of the middle class in Bangladesh today.

In the statements and opinions of Dhaka middle class it is explicit that the present day crisis of national identity is intricately associated with the political history and the televisual programmes of Bangladesh which reflects the parallel existence of multiple social thoughts and various political ideologies. While the current crisis of

national identity is the resultant feature of the political confrontation, narratives and languages of the ruling political authorities of pre and post-75 Bangladesh, the Dhaka middle class are found into two political blocks who express their views about the history of the genesis of the nation, contribution of the national heroes and the issue of the collaborators from the opposite perspectives.

Since the Dhaka middle class endeavour to discover their national identity in such a paradoxical fashion under the influence of the TV culture according to the political orientation of the country, the chapter reveals how the history of the Liberation War now has become a view point, a matter of opinion and an issue of agreement and disagreement for the middle class in Bangladesh. Since the visibility of Islam on BTV is now ubiquitous, the chapter also reveals how it has succeeded in constructing a sufficient condition for the revival of Islamic sense of identity to confront with the secular nationalist spirit of Bangladesh.

Conclusion

On the basis of viewer's opinion and statement the chapter thus brings into focus how television exerts an influence on the middle class in Bangladesh in constructing, defining, contesting and re-contesting their national identities with different languages, thoughts and idioms. While country's culture, heritage and history are projected in an anomalous way on the screen of BTV, it contributes in shaping and reshaping the national identities and the synchronous patterns of social thought. While BTV creates such a context within which its viewers perceive the insight about politics, history and culture in paradoxical fashion, by receiving the programmes from that state controlled medium, the middle class could not comprise any coherent unity today. Rather with heterogeneity and complexities, it has been found as the most contentious class in contemporary Bangladesh.

Chapter Eight

Findings and Conclusion

Introduction

This thesis is a study on nationalism of Bangladesh, which has been imagined and invented by the middle class and the visual medium like television over time. This exploratory work particularly on state and satellite television reveals their role and impact in case of promotion, transformation and disruption of national identity among the middle class viewers in Dhaka City. In the context of association between middle class and television, this thesis discovers their paradoxical influences as both contribute to integrate and fragment the nation by defining and redefining people's linguistic and religious identities in contemporary Bangladesh. This piece of work therefore brings into focus the problem of national identity of Bangladesh under the circumstances of socio-cultural orientation, political growth of middle class and its relation with the historical development of television.

Bangali Nationalism, National Integration and Role of Television

Bangali nationalism is a linguistic based cultural nationalism, which has been regarded as an imagined national identity in this piece of work. The phrase 'Imagined Community', which has been coined by Anderson, signals a source of identity and a sense of belonging to something bigger than oneself (Gokulsing, 2004, p.52). In the light of theoretical paradigm of Anderson, this research has discovered the historical role of Dhaka Television and TV artists in case of promoting Bangali national identity among the middle class viewers of the then East Pakistan during the period from 1964-1971. Whereas for Anderson the print media is the creator of imagined communities at the national level, there this thesis has exposed the role of electronic media by demonstrating how the Bangali national identity was fostered by the televisual programmes of Dhaka TV. While Anderson puts emphasis on vernacular as an essential element for the emergence of new political and secular identity, this thesis unveils the role of Bengali

language as the key determinant for the emergence of a new cultural identity among the Bangali Muslims of the then East Pakistan. Linguistic based Bangali nationalism was that new cultural and secular identity, which marks its difference from the religion based Muslim identity, developed as a resultant feature of the doctrine of Two-Nation Theory of Pakistan. The thesis has revealed the role of Dhaka TV and its cultural artists for playing a significant role in providing the ideas and images of Bangali cultural identity in pre-independent Bangladesh. Under the rule of Pakistan government although it was a state-run medium, it did function as a cultural institution for the national integration of the people of Bangladesh. During the stormy political decade (1969-71), it created conditions both directly and indirectly for the integration of Bangali people to transform them into a nation state and put an impact at the level of consciousness in making them to feel that they are the members of the Bangali nation.

With an aural and visual effect, Dhaka TV actively shaped Bangali's consciousness about their own territorial, cultural and political identity. Bengali language, literature and culture were the pertinent subject for Dhaka TV from the beginning of its establishment. It contributed in strengthening Bangali nationalist sentiments by projecting programmes on natural beauty, seasonal changes, rustic life, and folk tradition on its screen to demonstrate the distinct emotion, aspiration and syncretic culture of the people of East Pakistan. It played a crucial part in representing Bengali language and culture by highlighting the historical fact of linguistic movement of 1952 and mass demonstration of 1969. Although all these historical documents have been projected either in symbolic or indirect manner, their impact was dramatic. Within the atmosphere of language aggression and dominance of Urdu and pan-Islamic cultural tradition, the projection of those historical facts were exciting and challenging since then it offered an explanation for the prevailing political circumstances and indicated the hope for the future landscape of Bangladesh.

At the phase of cultural aggression when Tagore was considered as taboo, Dhaka TV played a vital role in reviving and popularising his song, drama and dance

drama. It also brought a break through in displaying the new symbols of Bangali national identity by projecting the women in *Saree*, *Tip* or dancing exposure which was the exact anti-symbol of Islamic culture. Its role was worth mentioning in broadening the secular philosophy through its representation of Tagore, Nazrul, Jasimuddin, Sukanta who wrote for the people of Bangladesh neither being Muslim nor as Hindu poet. Rather they strove to define unique Bangali cultural identities embodying what they believed to be the most essential characters of their nations. Although there was an official attempt to discover Nazrul as a Muslim poet and exclude Tagore as a preacher of Hinduism, Dhaka TV endeavoured to present those poets as the pride of the soil of East Bengal in a masterly manner in its various programmes. Dhaka TV helped in forming the public opinion by selecting the dramas, songs and poems of those poets, which narrate the beauty, glory and rebel spirit of Bengal in multiple ways. As the people of East Pakistan found their cultural identity in those televisual programmes, those programmes helped them in stressing their new Bangali identity by declining their Muslim identity prescribed by Pakistan.

In strengthening the existing political agitation Dhaka TV also contributed by flashing the news of the incident of natural disaster in the decade of seventy. By projecting the image of the cyclone and putting an interpretation on it, it then galvanised the entire population and gave momentum to mass uprising for the demand of a separate landscape for the people of East Pakistan. Finally, it played a revolutionary role in the creation of Bangladesh when its Bangali cultural artists actively participated in non co-operation movement by demonstrating their distinctive degree of autonomy. Indeed, before the crackdown by Pakistani occupation force Dhaka TV was virtually free for more than two weeks in March 1971, when its cultural artists played the crucial role in unifying the people in one thread by producing programmes in support of Bangali cultural nationalism.

Bangladeshi Nationalism, National Disintegration and Role of BTV

Although all countries and all nations are being imagined and re-imagined in all times (Corbridge and Harriss, 2000: xvii) Bangladesh is a unique example of the

deliberate act of invention. This piece of work tells not only an account of the power of television and Bangali nationalism. Rather it also narrates Bangladesh's contemporary history and its changing structure of polity by unveiling how in a paradoxical fashion post-independent Bangladesh constitutes a new order of socio-political reality. In the context of the changing circumstances the thesis has contributed in discovering how BTV is used consciously as an official instrument of the state for the replacement of secular Bangali cultural values by inventing the new form of Bangladeshi national identity. The term Bangladeshi nationalism was used for the first time by the post-75 military government of Ziaur Rahman and later has been adopted by the Islamists. The religio-territorial distinctiveness the new philosophy suggests is the determining principle of the collective identity of the people of Bangladesh (Kabir 2002: 181).

The doctrine emphasises on religio-territorial distinctiveness on the basis of the definition of them/ us distinction and friend/ foe psychology. As the military bureaucrats were concerned of the common foe of the country, in their view the distinctive feature of Bangladeshi nationalism is to differentiate the people of Bangladesh from the linguistically similar but religiously different people of West Bengal of India. The general stress in this procedure was to make a boundary line between the linguistic based secular Bangali cultural values and the Islamic discourse. The key approach of the expounders of Bangladeshi nationalism is to assert that Bangali nationalism was designed to promote the philosophy of anti-Islam as well as Hinduism. The ascendancy of Islamist ideology and activism therefore are two significant indices in the paradigm of the Bangladeshi nationalism to reject and defy secular ruling regimes and Indian cultural underpinnings.

There is also an attempt in this philosophical account to consider the Bangladeshi nationalism as an original and fundamental form of nationalism for the people of Bangladesh. Although the term Bangladeshi nationalism was developed in a reciprocal relationship with the military bureaucracy of Bangladesh, its exponents consider it as the product of the historical struggle of the people of Bangladesh to

establish their common identity. Bangladeshi nationalism reveals its chameleon nature when the Bangladeshi nationalists define it as an integrative force to unite the nation by embracing the doctrine of theology, role model of army officials, debunking of politicians and the rehabilitation of the collaborators. Although the doctrine addresses the issue of national integration, it divides the population based on faith by emphasising on majoritarian Muslim nationalism and marginalising the presence of non-Muslims in Bangladesh. By denying the past cultural link with the West Bengal of India although this nationalist project determines people's identity in the light of territorial boundary, it accepts Nazrul Islam as the national poet of Bangladesh. Although both Nazrul and Tagore were born in West Bengal of India, it constructs the image of Tagore absolutely as a Hindu poet who belongs to India.

While the Bangladeshi nationalism thus involves several confusing connotations and ambiguities, it has become a subject of massive debate in contemporary Bangladesh. This piece of work therefore provides a new insight into the meaning of this nationalism by considering it as an invented nationalism in the context of theoretical framework of Hobsbawm. This line of argument has been supported by the field data of this research, which has particularly focused on the role of Bangladesh Television to demonstrate how it produces a necessary condition for the creation of the myth of Bangladeshi nationalism.

BTV is active this thesis finds in the ideological and symbolic representation of Bangladeshi nationalism since the post-75 era. The image of television in fact has the peculiar capacity to produce what the literary critics call a reality effect. It shows things and makes people believe in what it shows (Browne, 1997: 189). From this philosophical point of view, the thesis brings into light the contribution of BTV as an essential instrument for the military political elite of Bangladesh to institutionalise the new myths about the history of Liberation War, Linguistic Movement, as well as people's tie with Islamic Ummah and Islamic tradition. While myth creates a necessary condition for the construction of nationhood (Fulbrook, 1997: 73), in the political sphere of Bangladesh the dominant

Bangladeshi military bureaucrat has sought to propagate certain new myths to construct its novel form of nationalist project.

This thesis contributes in exploring those new myths and ideologies, which have been produced by BTV over old truth and documented history. This thesis has succeeded in unveiling how for the prolonged twenty-one years (1975-1996) BTV has been used for official propagation in discovering the new national hero, declarer of Independence and in creating an oblivion state to crush the nation's past and the collective memory. The findings of the thesis explicitly demonstrates how the middle class of Dhaka city is now in dilemma about their own history, contribution of the national heroes and the significance of the indigenous culture and the religious values.

By investigating the reason behind this existent dilemma, this research has identified the character of the middle class, which is intimately associated with this dichotomization process of Bangladesh politics today. Indeed, what had happened in 1971 is interpreted, reinterpreted and coloured by the language of the governing elite and the messages of the state television in such a way that it is difficult for the people of contemporary Bangladesh to pick up the real facts from the political propagation and televised information. According to the explored data of this piece of work, the War of Liberation has been marginally narrated as a War of Independence or military war during the rule of the Bangladeshi government.

But that context demonstrates a change when the Bangali nationalist force returned to the power after almost two decades. As their approach was entirely different, then there was an attempt to glorify the Liberation War of 1971 as a socio-political and cultural war between the two nations, one trying to emerge with its identity from the other subjugating it. The War of Liberation from this political point of view can not be regarded merely as a war where a nation got into armed struggle all of a sudden. It was equally not a war between two conventional armies of two countries to conquer a territory (Malek, 2001: 16). The history of

Liberation since thus has been put forward with different interpretations and narrations by politicians and intellectuals; BTV has contributed in cultivating these paradoxical principles.

Indeed, the thesis has attempted to reveal how BTV serves in contemporary Bangladesh for the strategy of political indoctrination of the middle class nationalists, intellectuals and political authority. Television is influential in the procedure because of its powerful capacity, which can hide by showing (Bourdieu, 1998: 19) and reshape the images of the event. It can hide things by showing something other than what would be shown. It not only narrates the event on which people can form the opinion. Rather it also selects the events and put an interpretation on it (Browne, 1997: 190). BTV lay exactly on this device, this study finds for the extensive twenty-one years by broadcasting programmes on the history of Liberation War without mentioning the name of Sheikh Mujib, the slogan of Joy Bangla or the term Razakar- Albadar.

Since television involves the power of exaggeration, the novelty of BTV lies in its televised politics by constructing the splendid image of Ziaur Rahman as a new national hero, the declarer of independence and a martyr. It has also paved the way in dramatising Zia's role and character by distorting his announcement and the date on which that announcement was delivered. The confusion and controversy regarding the Declaration of Independence thus is the consequence of the media-myth. In such varieties of ways since BTV constructs that cultural atmosphere where the people live by culture of lie and revision of historical fact, instead of integration it has disintegrated the society. By packaging the abundant flow of confusing and conflicting information of history and independence, it has sharpen the division in middle class between those who want to keep true history with Mujib and those who want to see history with Zia.

BTV has also served to package Islam for the construction of new forms of Bangladeshi identity. This is another major finding of the thesis, which explains how the Islamisation process has been extended through a visual medium like

television. The Bangladeshi middle class this thesis demonstrates has played the key role in embedding Islam in post-seventy-five politics for the marketisation of its new nationalist doctrine. By regarding Islam as more than a religion and as a political culture, the new governing elite changed the Constitution of 1972 to delete the secular philosophy from the state principle. The new doctrine also propagates the idea that Islam is no more a private issue but a code of life, a political choice and the key marker of the national identity of the people of Bangladesh. When the country was pushed into the direction of such an Islamic politics and policies, the study finds how BTV also then became rapidly de-secularised. In order to provide the Islamic character to the new nationalist project, BTV in fact has done much by disseminating Islamic knowledge, Quranic principles and mobilising Islamic symbol to its viewers. The greater visibility of Islamic norms, values and symbols in the public arena thus has been made possible through the broadcasting of regular religious programmes on BTV.

Cultural Globalisation, Indianisation and the Disruption of National Identity in Bangladesh

The identity of the middle class the study reveals are formed and transformed not only by their location in history, language, culture and religion. Rather it is also constructed through the material production and cultural consumption in the era of cultural globalisation. For this very practical reason, the thesis brings into focus the satellite television (STV) experience and cultural practices of the middle class of Dhaka city in the context of displacement and fragmentation of cultural sources of authority and identity. By investigating the interactive association among television, politics and globalisation, this study has discovered how the culture of lie has been intermingled with culture of consumption in Bangladesh today to retain the complexity of identity politics. Although the Bangladeshi government and its allied forces justify their political policy and nationalist philosophy on the ground that they are the real safeguard of Islam and only armour against Indian aggression, the findings of the study manifests the different reality. It is the Bangladeshi government, which located its middle class audiences in the global media environment in 1992 by becoming a client of the entertainment bazaar. It is

the Bangladeshi middle class, which is now widely accepting Indian popular culture and entertainment despite its philosophy to resist against the Indian cultural hegemony.

The Bangladeshi middle class this thesis finds is such a category, which is very loud in designing its own Bangladeshi culture by denying its past link with West Bengal and disowning a huge chunk of cultural heritage. The Bangali middle class, who once fought against the cultural aggression of Urdu, is now equally compromising with Bollywood culture and its cheap amusement. Identity politics has assumed a major significance for the new generation of contemporary Bangladesh as some of them have already been in the oblivion state and others are confused about their own history, culture and tradition. Indeed, in the televised programmes of BTV Dhaka middle class finds too many interpretation and reinterpretation about the secular cultural philosophy, linguistic spirit, significance of the Liberation War as well as too much zeal for Islamic principles and discourse. Knowledge of nationalist revolution, secular spirit, and cultural tradition as produced and disseminated in such a way through BTV, it has constituted a state of cultural apathy among its middle class viewers. Under such a circumstance, this thesis finds how the free flow of the attractive and colourful Hindi programmes is playing a larger role in diverting their attention from indigenous cultural values to cultural consumption.

Indeed, this thesis has succeeded in revealing both the apprehension and fascination of the middle class for STV in a paradoxical manner. From the perspective of modernisation paradigm, the cultural boundary of the Dhaka middle class cannot be located anymore in a particular territory today. STV in this case has integrated the Dhaka middle class with the corporate culture, which is based on shared values, and beliefs due to which it is eager to get the current information and news about the latest global events including, war, scientific invention, fashion or style through its various channels. Yet, while most of the channels of STV are commercial channels, which contain the ethos and values of capitalism and consumerism, it has been strongly condemned by the middle class

for altering their family values, religious ethos and passion for the local culture. For the systematic penetration of the values, ethos and consumer culture of the Western societies, since thus the middle class of Dhaka city has been found in a state of anxiety the thesis demonstrates how the doctrine of cultural imperialism is still relevant in Bangladesh today. Globalisation the thesis reveals is perceived as a process of domination by the Dhaka middle class, whose concept of national boundary and cultural identity is not only threatened by the Western values. Rather because of the regionalisation of television, the penetration of Hindi channel has created a novel phase of cultural dependence by detaching the middle class from their history, culture, tradition and disrupting the traditional link between culture and national identity.

Fragmented Middle Class and its Problem of National Identity

This thesis places the middle class of Bangladesh in their socio-historical and political contexts in order to explain how they exercise a powerful impact in case of imagination and invention of national identity by controlling the power of a cultural medium like television. By investigating the interactive association between the middle class and television, the thesis contributes in discovering two distinctive features of middle class: (1) its fragmented national identities and (2) its inherent contradictions. The middle class of Bangladesh the thesis reveals is now an age of identity crisis, which is the creation of the anomalous political strategy of the class itself. The class suffers from cultural insecurity as the dichotomization has been created in all sphere of national life including history, politics, culture and nationalism. The identity of middle class in contemporary Bangladesh has been fragmented in such a way that several terminologies such as Bangali, Bangladeshi, Bangali Muslim, Bangali Bangladeshi, and Bangali Bangladeshi Muslim are apparent in this piece of work. These terminologies manifest how the search for identity in the history of recent Bangladesh has been mixed up with a wave of scepticism about the spirit of linguistic nationalism, cultural values, religious practices as well as secularism and rehabilitation of the collaborators. As the middle class of Bangladesh is now at the state of collective and self-doubt, these doubts display two-opposed currents of social forces.

Whereas one force wants to go back to history of Liberation War and linguistic movement for a secular, indigenous and cultural identity, there the other group prefers to leap forward for a distinctive Muslim community and religious authority by negating the linguistic identity and common cultural heritage of the people of Bangladesh.

Indeed, this thesis offers a new insight on middle class by unveiling its paradoxical condition which itself has split the nation by twisting the historical document, reviving the religious spirit and rehabilitating the collaborators of the country. The middle class of contemporary Bangladesh, which has been emerged under the shadow of colonialism, this thesis explains how suffer from the inherent contradiction by constituting two modes of national thought which now exist in parallel in Bangladesh.

By adopting the theoretical framework of Wahrman, this thesis in fact has depicted the ways through which the middle class invents and reinvents its national identity under different political circumstances. This thesis negates the universal conception of middle class by revealing how the middle class who was the chief architect of Bangali nationalism in 1971 constructed a quite different socio-political reality in post-75 Bangladesh only to pursue its own political interest and activities. Although the new political order has been justified in the name of national integration, Islamic tradition, and Bangladeshi nationalist spirit, the findings of this thesis contradicts with this new language and philosophical argument of the middle class. The design of religio-territorial distinctiveness for the establishment of a Muslim state this thesis finds is nothing but a calculated design. The middle class in Bangladesh therefore not only contributes in imagining and constructing the new cultural philosophy and linguistic identity. Rather it also introduces new vocabulary, invents the tradition and creates the myth of new identities, to support its own existence through the political change of the country.

Questions for Future Research

This thesis has attempted to touch some of very sensitive issues in order to understand more critically the problem of nationalism in post-Independent Bangladesh. The issue of the revival of the collaborators and the anti-liberation force is one of such delicate issues, which has generated a massive debate in Bangladesh politics today. By conducting the interviews of the BTV officials, the researcher has experienced that the subject is not an easy one due to which most TV officials want to keep mum about this controversial issue, particularly the rehabilitation of the collaborator artists and their role in BTV today. In the light of this field experience the researcher intends to recommend that some more in-depth research should be done particularly on this subject to unveil the existing reality within BTV world. The closure of ETV is another highly debateable phenomenon in the recent political history of Bangladesh. Although the researcher has succeeded in eliciting some hidden elements behind the closure of ETV by conducting the interviews of two concerned persons and collecting the relevant materials, she acknowledges some gaps in the procedure, which could not be possible to cover by the available materials. Since the issue is a very current one and closely connected with the interest of the two major political parties, in her view further research could be done to get more concrete data about the operation of the Jamati Islamic group behind closure of ETV and Awami League's affiliation with the ownership of that new channel.

Conclusion

This thesis presents an interpretative analysis on nationalism paradox by tracing its association with middle class and television in contemporary Bangladesh. Dhaka middle class this piece of work demonstrates stand in polar opposition because of their beliefs in different interpretation of history, culture, religion as well as in selection of various markers of national identities. Although the problem of identity in contemporary Bangladesh is often regarded as the manifestation of the ideological and political conflict of the two major political parties, the thesis has taken rather a different approach. It has shown how the

television and the politics of TV broadcasting are used to imagine and invent the ever-shifting national identities amongst the middle class in Bangladesh.

Glossary

Al-Badar	Name of an associate force of Pakistani Occupation Force
Alpana	One kind of painting on road/floor, used in various occasions
Ashraf	Muslim gentry. The term includes that section of immigrants or high class Muslim whose claim was explicit about their foreign ancestry.
Azan	Call to Prayer
Banda Mataram	A slogan is used by the Nationalist forces in India
Bangabondhu	Friend of Bengal
Barsha	Monsoon
Basanta	Spring
Baul/ Bhatiyali/ Kirtan	Several types of folk songs
Bhasha	Language
Bindi	Put red (sometimes other colours also) spot on forehead
Bhadralok	Hindu social elite, product of Permanent Settlement of Land Revenue and English education during the early years of British rule of India
Bidrohi	The Rebel
Buddha Purnima	Birthday of Lord Buddha
Crore	Ten million
Dhuti	Dress for the Hindu male folk
Durga Puja	Greatest Religious festival of Bangali Hindu
Eid	Greatest Religious festival of Muslim
Eid Mubarak	Islamic greeting
Eid-I- Miladun-Nabi	Birthday of Prophet Hazrat Mohammad (SM)
Ekushy February	The 21 st February (The Language Martyr Day of 1952)
Iftar	Break fast in Ramadan
Hadith	The Islamic Rules based on the direction or practices

	of Prophet Hazrat Mohammad (SM)
Hajj	A pilgrimage to Mecca
Hamd	Islamic songs which adore Allah
Hartal	General Strike
Janmastomi	Birthday of Lord Krishna
Jari/Sari	Local folk song in Bangladesh
Jindabad	Slogan: long live
Jotdar	Rural land lord
Joy Bangla	Victory slogan
Kali	Hindu Goddess
Khoda	The Creator
Khoda Hafeez	Farewell Bid
Khonar Bouchon	Weather Lore
Kosh Amded	Well come
Lakh	One hundred thousand
Lalon Geeti	Folk Song
Lathi	Baton
Masjid	Mosque
Milad	A gathering where the Muslims adore and pray for Prophet Hazrat Mohammad (SM)
Moharram	A month of grieve, observed by the Muslims in memory of Imam Hossain (R), a grand son of Prophet Mohammad (SM)
Monajat	Prayer
Muktiyodho	Liberation War
Nabanna	Harvest
Naraya Takbir Alla-hu- Akbar	Pronounce all, Allah the greatest
Namaj	Five time prayers of Muslim
Nutan Bangla	New Bangla
Pahela Baishak	Bengali New Year
Palli Geeti	Folk song

Palli Kabi	Folk Poet
Poush	Winter (December –January)
Punthi	Traditional Bengali Folk Text
Punjabee	Dress for the male folk in Bangladesh
Razakar	Name of an associate force of Pakistani Occupation Army. In general usage it is used to indicate the anti-Liberation Force
Roza	Fasting in Ramadan
Sadhinata	Independence
Salam	Islamic greeting
Saree	National dress for the women folk in Bangladesh
Salower- Kamiz	Female garb usually put on by the Indian and Pakistani women
Shabe-ba-rat	A holy night for the Muslim as they believe their fate is determined by the will of Allah on that day
Shabe-Kadar	A holy night in Ramadan which according to Quran is better than the thousands nights
Shaheed Dibas	Language Martyr Day (21 st February)
Shaheed Minar	The Monument for the Language Martyrs
Sharif	Muslim Elite
Sonar Bangla	Golden Bengal
Sufi	Saints who do not believe in orthodox religious doctrine
Shia	A sect of Muslim, followers of Hazrat Ali (R)
Sati	A religious custom according to which the Hindu widow used to burn themselves after the death of their husbands
Vagabond	The Creator
Taka	Bangladeshi currency
Tiluk	Red Line on forehead
Tip	Red spot on forehead
Tupi	Cap used by the Muslim male folk
Yatra	Soap Opera

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Appendix-1

Letter

Dated,
X Area
Dhaka- ..., Bangladesh

Dear Resident

I am an Assistant Professor at the Department of Sociology, the University of Dhaka. I am also a PhD student of the University of Warwick, the UK. As a PhD research student, I am going to conduct an in-depth qualitative research in the different areas of Dhaka city.

The purpose of my research project is to look at the role of Bangladesh television and Satellite television in case of constructing and reconstructing the national identity in Bangladesh. This thesis will focus particularly on the history, culture and tradition of Bangladesh. In order to collect data about the said issue, I will communicate with you within the next few weeks. During the interviewing period, I will show my identity card with a photograph and ask you for a conversation about the research topic in detail. The information which you will give will be treated in strict confidence. It is worth mentioning that, it will be absolutely an academic research.

I rely on people's voluntary co-operation in carrying out such research work and so I would be very grateful if you agree to take part in this research work.

For further information about my research work, please contact me by telephoning...

Yours sincerely

Zeenat Huda
Assistant Professor
Department of Sociology
University of Dhaka, Bangladesh
Appendix-2

Consent Form

I have given my consent to Zeenat Huda to conduct this interview. I am well informed that, the views which I share will be kept confident and used only for academic purpose.

Date:

Name:

Age:

Occupation:

Religion:

Educational Qualification:

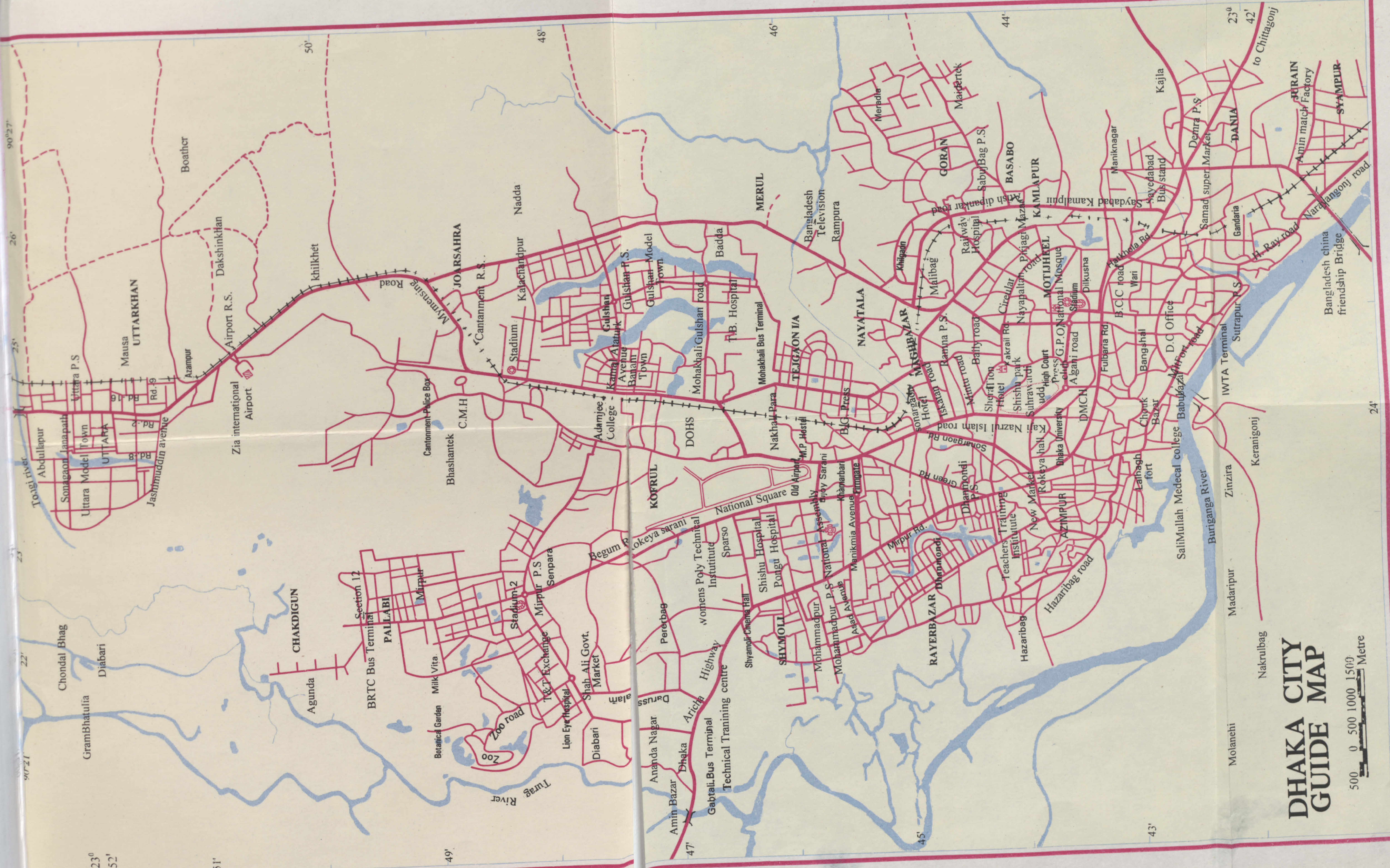
Marital Status:

Address:

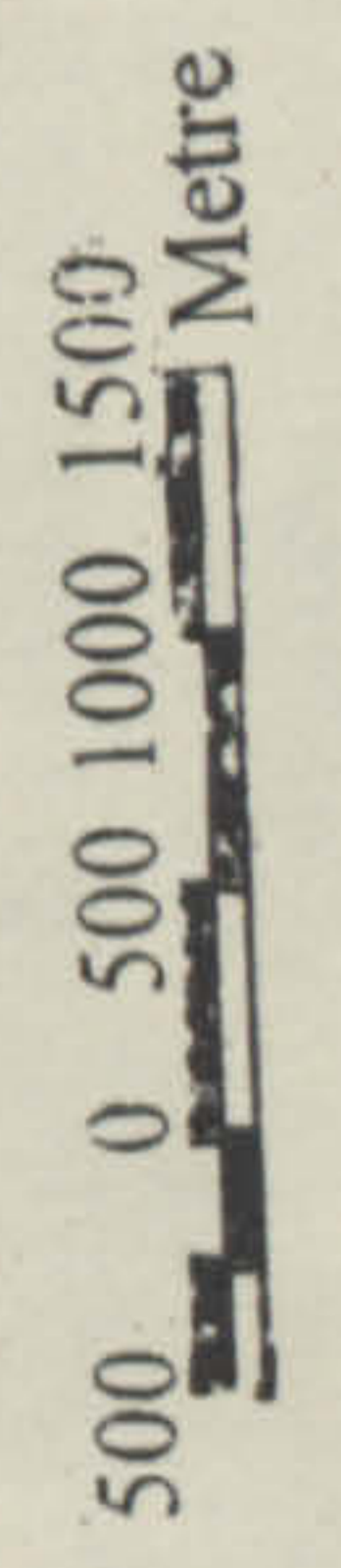
Phone Number for Communication:

Signature:

Appendix-3



DHAKA CITY GUIDE MAP



500 0 500 1000 1500
Metre

90°27' 26' 25' 24' 23' 22' 21' 20' 19' 18' 17' 16' 15' 14' 13' 12' 11' 10' 9' 8' 7' 6' 5' 4' 3' 2' 1' 0'

23° 52' 51' 49' 47' 45' 44' 43' 42' 41' 40' 39' 38' 37' 36' 35' 34' 33' 32' 31' 30' 29' 28' 27' 26' 25' 24' 23' 22' 21' 20' 19' 18' 17' 16' 15' 14' 13' 12' 11' 10' 9' 8' 7' 6' 5' 4' 3' 2' 1' 0'