

Crisis in Governance

Crisis in Governance:

*Military Rule in Bangladesh
during 2007–2008*

By

M Mukhlesur Rahman Chowdhury

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing



Crisis in Governance: Military Rule in Bangladesh during 2007–2008

By M Mukhlesur Rahman Chowdhury

This book first published 2019

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2019 by M Mukhlesur Rahman Chowdhury

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-5275-3642-4

ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-3642-5

To the late editor Alhaj Azizur Rahman Chowdhury,
my late father, Ratnagarva Sharifa Aziz Chowdhury,
my late mother and Bangladesh, my country.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	xi
Foreword by Justice Mohammed Abdur Rouf	xiii
Foreword by Dr Charles Che Fonchingong.....	xvi
Preface.....	xviii
Abbreviations	xxiii
Introduction	xv
Chapter One.....	1
Bangladesh's Democratic Development	
1.0 Introduction.....	1
Part 1	2
1.1 Legacies of external intervention	2
1.2 British legacy	3
1.2.1 Positive aspects	3
1.2.2 Negative aspects	5
1.3 Pakistan legacy	7
1.3.1 Positive aspects	7
1.3.2 Negative aspects	8
1.4 The war of the secession	10
1.4.1 Positive aspects	11
1.4.2 Negative aspects	12
Part 2	15
1.5 Historical Institutionalism (HI).....	15
1.6 Chapter conclusion.....	19
Chapter Two.....	22
Governance of Bangladesh	
2.0 Introduction.....	22
Part 1	23
2.1 Theoretical perspective	23

Part 2	27
2.2 Democracy in Bangladesh	27
2.3 A democratic upheaval after independence	32
2.4 The restoration of democracy in 1991	33
2.5 Crisis in the Governance	36
Part 3	39
2.6 Historical Institutionalism, Critical Juncture and Path dependency	39
2.6.1 Historical Institutionalism in Bangladesh	40
2.6.2 Historical legacy	42
Part 4	43
2.7 Obstacles to democratic consolidation	43
2.7.1 Authoritarian governance	43
2.7.2 Crisis of identity	43
2.7.3 The issue of national unity	44
2.7.4 Political enmity and division	45
2.7.5 State orchestrated violence	45
2.7.6 Corruption	46
2.7.7 Politicisation of administration	46
2.7.8 Politically biased judiciary	47
2.7.9 Ineffective parliament	47
2.7.10 Practice of different governing systems	48
2.7.11 The idea of a Caretaker Government	50
2.7.12 Demand, establishment and abolishment of CTG	51
2.7.13 External factors	53
2.7.14 Military intervention	54
2.8 Chapter conclusion	55
 Chapter Three	 59
The political conditions in Bangladesh prior to the CTG Takeover in 2006	
3.0 Introduction	59
3.1 A much talked of trump card in politics: Dateline 30 April 2004 ..	61
3.2 The <i>Hawa Bhaban</i> issue	62
3.3 The author's appointment issue	64
3.4 Extension of retirement age of judges	67
3.5 Claims and counter-claims in the formation of alliances	68
3.6 The ambition of some government officials	69
3.7 President's 23 days coma following a heart attack	70
3.8 The tug of war between NSI and DGFI, two intelligence agencies	72
3.9 Aminul Karim's 'military kayda'	75

3.10 Political fragmentation.....	78
3.11 Onset of political discord.....	78
3.12 Logi-Boitha (Paddle-Sticks).....	81
3.13 Fall-out of Two-third majority.....	82
3.14 State of army on the eve of takeover by CTG.....	83
3.15 A State of Emergency about to be declared on 29 October 2006.....	85
3.16 Five options for appointing the Chief Adviser were exhausted ...	86
3.17 Reasons of political confrontations.....	88
3.18 Army Chief General Moeen’s Plan.....	90
3.19 Reform in administration and unity in Army.....	93
3.20 The author’s position for democracy.....	95
3.21 Chapter conclusion.....	98
Chapter Four.....	105
Background of the 2007 military intervention in Bangladesh	
4.0 Introduction.....	105
4.1 Theory related to military Intervention.....	106
4.2 All parties’ participation in the planned elections of 22nd January 2007.....	108
4.3 The role of the Army.....	110
4.4 The role of civil society.....	113
4.5 The role of the media.....	114
4.6 The role of businessmen.....	116
4.7 The role of foreign diplomats.....	117
4.8 Media and rumour mongering.....	119
4.9 The media discover the <i>Third Force</i>	120
4.10 The last trump card: No Ershad no election: 3 January 2007....	120
4.11 The SSF and the PGR on ‘1/11’.....	122
4.12 ‘1/11’ and planned Martial Law.....	123
4.13 On 11 January.....	130
4.14 A self-promotion.....	132
4.15 A Synopsis.....	133
4.16 Chapter Conclusion.....	152
Conclusion.....	154
Further Research.....	157
Postscript.....	157

References	159
Further reading	177
Other Books of the Author	177
Published by the author	177
Appendices	178

ABSTRACT

This book is a broad-ranging comprehensive piece of research on Bangladeshi politics and society written by an experienced strategic thinker, researcher, and journalist-turned-politician-cum-statesman. M. Mukhlesur Rahman Chowdhury is a former Adviser to the President and Minister of Bangladesh, with strong political, bureaucratic, military, and media connections. However, in this volume he strays far from the official line concerning the national interest. This research, set in a historical and cultural context, attempts to trace the roots of the democratic and governance problem in Bangladesh. These features include the existing political confrontation, weaknesses in parliamentary practice, the malfunctioning of politics, and the role of the political parties and civil and military institutions.

The approach here is analytical, mostly reviewing the author's experience and expertise, current news, reports, other related materials, theories and scholars' views. Inadequate research has been done so far on the political crisis in Bangladesh that created problems of elections, democratic practice, and governance; especially with establishing and annulling parliaments under the caretaker government system. There has been no detailed study on Bangladesh's problems of elections, caretaker governments, military interventions and the legacy of British rule, Pakistan and the War of Secession means Bangladesh's War of Independence or the War of Liberation. Following democratic movements, war, coups and violent politics, Mukhles Chowdhury explores the on-and-off role of the military within the Bangladeshi government since independence until the last military coup that occurred in 2007. An insider with links to Bangladesh's government and past and present senior officers, Chowdhury provides a unique insight into the army's influence and position as a force in the fight against Jamaatul Mujahidin Bangladesh, a terrorist group. He examines the internal terrorists and corrupt powerful people during the 'Clean Heart Operation' in 2005 and the army's illegitimate takeover in 2007, as well as an account of the crackdown against the politicians which followed.

The book concerns politics, political science, history, offering an in-depth study of the military intervention in Bangladesh in 2007; it refers to academic research. The scope of the book is wide because the generals

ruled the country for many years. The author describes Bangladesh's violent internal politics and international relations in the context of military involvement, with the deep knowledge gained through his experience at the centre of statecraft in Bangladesh, and as editor, political researcher and analyst of civil–military relations.

The book aims to provide a range of perspectives on the key issues that have faced Bangladesh since independence and the challenges it confronts in this era of globalization. Its objective is to fill this gap by establishing the role and impact of the pro-democracy elements during the process of establishing and annulling a democratic system between the years 1991 and 2007. This scholarly work is structured around the main relevant actions of politicians, the civil and military hierarchy, civil society, the judiciary, external factors and constitutional amendments and laws, and looks briefly into the anti-establishment campaign after the caretaker government came into existence in October 2006.

The only political scientists to have written in any detail on the political crisis are Professor Talukdar Maniruzzaman, Professor Rounaq Jahan and Professor Emajuddin Ahamed, who have published on the years 1972 to 1990 and 1992 to 2011 respectively. The subject was discussed in some detail in the early 1960s by the politicians and political scientists Abul Mansur Ahmad and Oli Ahad. Through its discussion of mistrust, suspicion, discord, and enmity this thesis develops theoretical perspectives on themes including good governance, historical institutionalism and the divided/divisive society, which have been important in political discourse. The annulment of the caretaker government was controlled by the judiciary, which favoured the government in order to benefit from it. Bangladesh needs to address better the different challenges posed by non-democratic actors at home and abroad as it experiences a rapidly expanding restructuring of constitutional institutions and systematic modernization of political behaviour and culture as well as the formation of political parties. To that end, the author puts forward a set of detailed proposals.

Keywords: Governance, Democracy, Politics, Military Intervention, Civil Military Relations, Caretaker Government, Parliament, Elections, Britain, Pakistan, Civil Society, Corruption, Legacy, Judiciary, Violence, Administration, Politicization, Accountability, War, Politics.

FOREWORD BY JUSTICE MOHAMMED ABDUR ROUF

I am privileged to write a foreword for a book which consists of insights into the governance and politics of Bangladesh at a very critical period of our national history, written by M. Mukhlesur Rahman Chowdhury, one of the statesmen who served the country from 2004 to 2007. He witnessed many of the ups and downs of Bangladesh's politics and history, and from time to time reveals many untold facts from home and abroad. He had not only many opportunities to observe as well as to analyse the different critical junctures, path dependencies and trajectories of Bangladeshi politics but was also a witness of international relations over the years in the capacity of government actor, columnist and editor of different newspapers. It may be worth mentioning that in addition to his service as a public servant, Mr Chowdhury dedicated himself to research, working to complete his Master's degree. Indeed, I am delighted to observe that Mr Mukhles Chowdhury has been keeping his research alive yet.

Mr Chowdhury did his MA in Mass Communication and Journalism at the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. Later, en route to a PhD, he obtained an MRes from Birkbeck, University of London, gained a distinction as a research graduate at King's College with a King's–UN scholarship and undertook research courses in UK universities including the London School of Economics. As a senior journalist, he was elected President of the Overseas Correspondents' Association Bangladesh (OCAB). While discharging this great responsibility successfully, he was appointed Press Secretary to the President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and afterward as an Adviser to the President with the status of a minister.

I must mention that he worked very hard and diligently during a joint research project with a scholarly team of high ranking academics, historians, and researchers, comprising former vice-chancellors, senior professors of Dhaka and other reputed universities at home and abroad and also archives experts, producing two historic books in 2005. The two separate books, in English and Bangla respectively, were *A Hundred Years of Bangabhaban* and *Bangabhabaner Shatabarsha* – the palace and office of the Honourable President of Bangladesh – when, as Press Secretary to the Honourable President, he was its publisher. I commend his editorial capacity and talent in publishing books. The research project was highly acclaimed and the

books reached international standards and prominence. Apart from these two governments' books, Mr Chowdhury has also published two Bengali books, *Contemporary Journalism* and *Bindings in Protocol*. He carried out extensive research work in these subjects, and was appointed to a number of fellowships, including the Panos Fellowship in the UK, and WBI and EU Fellowships. Mr Chowdhury started writing immediately after the military intervention in Bangladesh in 2007 and he was interviewed at home and abroad on this subject. Later in 2010, he resumed his research on politics in different universities in the UK.

Mr Chowdhury's track record shows that he succeeded in running the country, keeping on the right path during the time of the serious illness of the then President, Professor Dr Iajuddin Ahmed, when he was in a coma and was hospitalized in the Singapore Mount Elizabeth Hospital and Combined Military Hospital in Dhaka for more than a month. This was in addition to his proactive role in publishing historical books on the Bangabhaban, avoiding controversy – which is rare case in a country like Bangladesh. He nevertheless successfully solved the impasse in politics created by political movements such as *Logi-boitha*. On 23 December 2006 he successfully brought all the political parties including the AL-led 14 Parties, the Jatiya Party of Hassain Muhammad Ershad, the Bikalpa Dhara of former President Dr Bodruduzza Chowdhury, the Liberal Democratic Party of Col. Oli Ahmed (Retd.) and the Gana Forum of Dr Kamal Hossain, among others, into the parliamentary election scheduled for 22 January 2007. However, the election was not held as General Hussain Muhammad Ershad's nomination papers were cancelled and the above political parties had withdrawn from the election on 3 January 2007.

Consequently, a state of emergency was declared on 11 January 2007 by the then President of the country. The rival political parties had been in discord since 2004 and there were issues like the 30 April 2004 dateline of the government's collapse, the extension of judges' retirement age, and the dialogue between the AL and the BNP on 31 demands, which was ultimately reduced to one demand. However, the political crisis was not solved.

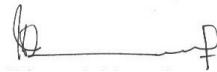
I believe that this valuable as well as important book can properly answer such questions as why such deadlock was created, how it originated, what the insights and stories are, and how Bangladesh can overcome these chronic issues in politics. This will be a unique historical publication in a country like ours and will help politics, history, research, and reference study.

The learned author has completed his monumental work in four chapters, referring in different parts to the cardinal points under discussion. Finally, he has drawn the conclusion that a bicameral

legislature is needed, viz. a 60-member Senate in the centre and 300-member parliamentary assemblies in the eight provinces of Bangladesh. But the fact remains that in building up the structure of such an institution, there is no other option but to pursue the course of holding fair and impartial elections, which is impossible in Bangladesh. There are several reasons for this. The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh has given the authority for holding such elections to the Election Commission, which has no manpower of its own. It is dependent upon government employees for the discharge of its constitutional obligations. Such employees are politically compromised, for obvious reasons. The holding of elections at all levels should be undertaken by the local voters themselves, organized into voters' clubs, to exercise their electoral rights as well as to arrange protection of their vote. Public servants, who are also voters and politicians, must be denied any scope for undue influence either in the process of holding elections or in the declaration of their results.

Considering these aspects of elections and banking upon my own experience as the Chief Election Commissioner (1990–1995), in 1994, on an experimental basis, I arranged the holding of elections to local bodies in several places through the local voters themselves. They acted as presiding and polling officials, without engaging any magistrate or law enforcement agencies at the polling stations for maintaining law and order on the day of polling. But the process gave me 100% positive results, as it helped the motivation of the voters. It was clear to them that they were the *Malik* (owner) of their vote, and as such, they themselves should take the responsibility to protect their vote without giving any scope either to government employees or any other persons who were not voters in the concerned area. Unfortunately, neither the administration nor the majority of politicians showed any interest in the adoption of such a process, the reason being that they are interested in keeping maximum control over the electoral process. I have mentioned my request to the learned author as well as to readers to examine this matter.

I am indebted to the learned author for having selected me to write this foreword. I believe this book will be a great source of knowledge of politics, international relations and history, and will also be found very interesting reading.



(Justice Mohammed Abdur Rouf)
Former Chief Election Commissioner & Judge,
Appellate Division Supreme Court of Bangladesh
Date: 9 February 2016

FOREWORD BY DR CHARLES CHE FONCHINGONG

In a highly charged political discourse on governance in Bangladesh, M. Mukhlesur Rahman Chowdhury, a former adviser and top communication aide to the President of Bangladesh, neatly unpacks military meddling and political conundrums. As an avid observer of the fault lines in “emerging” democracies, I find Chowdhury’s narrative to be most topical; an indictment of the totalitarianism and bureaucratic inertia that characterize politics in Bangladesh as an evolving democracy. In uncovering the dissonance in daily state functioning, Chowdhury uses his inside knowledge of civil and military institutes to unearth the travails of top-down government machinery that does not deliver vital services to the citizenry. The fragility and fragmentation of the political model is laid bare through comprehensive and direct probing of mobilizations and social movements, clamouring for change. With poignant illustrations of governmental failure to fashion a clear trajectory for social and political development, Chowdhury, an ex-acting Secretary General of the Commonwealth Society of Bangladesh, interrogates the forces hampering the consolidation of participative democracy.

Acknowledging the monumentality of the task of reconstructing a viable and workable political model, Chowdhury engages critically with the complexities of state-building. The discourse takes a realistic perspective through concrete proposals and solutions to remedy the inherent fragmentation which characterizes the political system. Chowdhury proposes a joined-up approach based on participative decision making and collective thinking to move the state machinery forward, so it can better cater for the interests and needs of the populace aspiring to effective governance.

This book is timely and challenging. It warrants a deeper read to understand the underlying reasons and factors that are holding back the meaningful development of Bangladesh. The book raises fundamental questions and concerns as to the “resistances” and countervailing factors that impede Bangladesh’s efforts to emerge as a political and economic force in Asia, despite its tantalizing potential. Chowdhury’s style is direct, yet critical and realistic; the book lays bare the complexities and

challenges, and provides a blueprint for the social and political advancement of Bangladesh.

Dr Charles Che Fonchingong

05/10/2015

Public Policy Analyst and Independent Researcher

Policy Research Network, United Kingdom

Author, *Growing Old in Cameroon: Gender, Vulnerability and Social Capital* (University Press of America, 2013).

PREFACE

By the grace of almighty Allah, I have been privileged to discover insights into Bangladesh governance, being at the helm of affairs in a very crucial period. Simultaneously, I was uniquely situated to study Bangladesh's external relations, particularly its relations with the major powers – the USA, UN, UK, EU and India.

In the preparation of this book, even more important than my positions with the government of Bangladesh was my free access to official documents and data. I left the office of the Bangladesh President in January 2007. Since then I have been writing on Bangladesh's democratic development, especially on military intervention, the role of civil society, the media and foreign actors. I have continued the writing started during my career in journalism since the 1980s professionally and with a bi-focal mind. I witnessed Bangladesh's governance in the capacities of editor, spokesman of the head of state and head of the government and as minister. I performed the role of the President of the Overseas Correspondents' Association Bangladesh (OCAB), senior Joint Secretary General of the Commonwealth Journalists' Association, Press Secretary to the President and finally as adviser to the President and as minister in a very volatile and critical situation when political discord turned into a critical juncture that ultimately led to a military intervention. I am in a position to divulge many untold stories with the passage of time. Apart from my service in the *Bangabhaban* during 2004–07, my long career in journalism, including later as an editor, gave me an analytic capacity over the years I have been closely reading politics in Bangladesh. I have also written many columns, watched international relations when I was a diplomatic editor and special correspondent, and have written relevant articles, which became a part of this research. I have been the Editor in Chief of *Bangladesh Worldwide*, Diplomatic Editor of the *Daily Dinkal*, Bangladesh Correspondent of *The Island* of Sri Lanka, *The Japan Times*, Special Correspondent of the *Daily Aajker Kakaj*, the *Daily Naba Abhijan*, Chief Reporter and Diplomatic Editor of the *Dainik Patrika*, among others, since the early 1980s. I have also been Editor of the *Weekly Prekshit*, which was served by my father as Chief Editor from 1991. I published the magazine 'Sromo' from Dhaka in 1983 as an editor and performed as the editor of the Weekly Sarak during 1986-1991. My published political and diplomatic columns in a number of newspapers

including Agami, Kagajbarta, Khoborer Kagaj, Bikram, Muktibani, Nipun, Sandweep, and Sachitra Swadesh clicked in political arena since 1982.

I wrote these chapters from a researcher's point of view rather than that of a government actor. This work was started in 2007 immediately after my forced departure from the *Bangabhaban* and was continued with my coming to the UK in 2008. It began as academic work in 2009. I express my gratitude to the former President of Bangladesh, Professor Dr Iajuddin Ahmed, for appointing me Presidential Adviser, which established my official authority and access to official documents. In the academic world I am indebted to my teachers. I thank Chris New and Zoe Gillard of the LSE, where I participated in two courses of the Reconnect with Research course in 2012. I am grateful to Professor Katharine Adeney and Professor Ian Bache for their involvement in conducting some parts of this extensive research that I started in 2011. I also wish to acknowledge the little help of Professor Dr D. P. De Silva. I recognize the appreciation and contribution of Professor Chris Rumford for playing his scholarly role in 2013 while I was conducting research on military intervention in Bangladesh, specifically the Bangladeshi military intervention during 2007. Professor Chris died on 18 July 2016 suddenly at 60. Dr Katharine Adeney advised me to work on three legacies – British, Pakistani and War of Secession legacies – that had an impact on Bangladesh's democratic development. Although initially Professor Ian Bache thought that a normative approach would be pertinent for parts of this project, Katharine and Ian together came to a conclusion that I might use the theory of historical institutionalism for the democratic development chapter of this research. Furthermore, I succeed in answering Professor Chris Rumford's research questions about why the military intervened in Bangladesh in 2007; I also researched military intervention in Bangladesh's strengths and weaknesses, proving that it was inadequate. This research has grown as I was working relentlessly and I ultimately turned it into four chapters. The extensive research needed to complete my PhD thesis took time, but I have obtained an MRes in Politics at Birkbeck, University of London and won a distinction as a research graduate in War and Diplomacy at King's College with a UN–King's scholarship. As my first Master's degree was in the 1980s, I had an opportunity to study social science afresh with research training including a Qualitative and Quantitative Research module, a dissertation and four other modules. This made me more confident in the field of research in politics. I continued research work with Professor Jack Spence OBE and later with Dr Suzanne Francis and Dr Rachel Massey. My well-wishers, including the former Minister of Bangladesh M. Shamsul Islam, encouraged me to reveal my extraordinary experience

through books. Mr Islam died on 26 April 2018 in Dhaka at 87. Shamsul Alam Chowdhury, who worked with former President Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury in 1971 in organizing the liberation war of Bangladesh from London, and Zoglu Husain, another freedom fighter, now based in London, have both been in close contact with Bangladesh's political developments; they found parts of this research interesting and relevant. I was able to meet Shamsul Chowdhury on the 17 August 2019 for the last time before he died on the 31 August 2019 in London responding his repeated phone calls. I was asked to publish my research work as many have read my articles and interviews in both print and electronic media and thus I received lots of appreciation and support from home and abroad, which indeed encouraged me beyond imagination. I have to acknowledge my gratitude to my supervisors and the professors for their supervision, guidance and all kinds of cooperation for this project. I am thankful to Dr Sarah Potter of my university for editing some important parts of this research while I also express my gratitude to Dr Elaine Housby, a commercial proofreader, for proofreading of some other parts. I express my condolences at the demise of my encouragement including former minister Shamsul Islam, Professor Chris Rumford and Shamsul Chowdhury.

Some parts of my research have already been published in the form of articles in print and electronic media. Additionally, more articles and books are expected to be published soon in other professional journals. This valuable research has been dedicated to the memory of Abba (my late father), Alhaj Azizur Rahman Chowdhury, Editor in Chief of the *Weekly Prekshit*, and Amma (my late mother) "Ratnagarva" Alhajja Sharifa Aziz Chowdhury, who brought me into this world. I am really grateful to my parents for their prayers for my success. I was sad when on 18 February 2018, prior to publication of this book, Amma left this world and was buried beside Abba in our Katihara family graveyard. Meanwhile, Abba left us sixteen years four months six days before Amma on 10 December 2001. I will fail in discharging my duty if I do not mention that much of this book was written in the presence of my constant companions my wife, Sufia Mukhles Chowdhury, sons always curious Monsoor Mukhles Chowdhury, late Maqsud Mukhles Chowdhury and serious fan of football Masroor Mukhles Chowdhury and adorable daughter Ayesha Mukhles Chowdhury, who have been encouragement for me throughout. Although from far away, my younger brother Mofizur Rahman Chowdhury, the Principal of one of the Degree Colleges in Sylhet, Bangladesh, also encouraged me to proceed with this venture. In London, I received cooperation all along from my younger brothers Mahbubur Rahman

Chowdhury and Moshir Rahman Chowdhury, while I miss two brothers Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury in Bangladesh and Morshedur Rahman Chowdhury, away from us. I cannot forget the way my only sister Naznin A. Chowdhury, who lives in Canada with her family, succeeded in finding my would-be killers who wanted to assassinate me in the first half of the year of 2004 in the Habiganj Kibriya Auditorium. Almighty Allah saved me at that time with the help of the administration.

It is worth mentioning that world media, including Reuters, AP, AFP, Xinhua, PTI, *The Times of India* and *The Dawn*, created news stories based on my statements that was clicked on worldwide. Furthermore, the BBC, VOA, Channel S, Bangla TV, NTV and Channel I broadcast interviews with me. To mark “1/11” and on other occasions, the Islam Channel and Takbeer TV based in the UK, among others, also broadcast interviews with me and organized talk shows. The *Independent*, the daily *Sun*, the daily *Manabzamin*, the weekly *Janatar Chokh*, the daily *Amader Shomoy*, the daily *Naya Diganta*, the daily *Amar Desh*, the daily *Ittefaq*, the daily *Bangladesh Pratidin*, the daily *Kaler Kantha* of Bangladesh, the weekly *Thikana*, the weekly *Bangla Patrika* of the USA, the weekly *Bangla Times*, the weekly *Bangla Post*, the *Weekly Euro Bangla* in the UK, *Notun Desh* in Canada, among others, published my interviews, statements and articles. The academic journal *London Institute of South Asia* (LISA), the widely publicized media *Counter Currents*, Dr. Philip Cunliffe of the University of Kent and the research student of KCL, Kazi Mohammed Fuhadur Rahman, interviewed me and published research in their work on “1/11”, democracy, UN peacekeeping and military intervention. Rowshon Ara Romke, Senior Lecturer at ASA University Bangladesh, interviewed me and a number of articles and books included references to my articles and interviews for her PhD research. Sayeed Iftekhar Ahmed wrote his research paper “The Interregnum and the military rule in Civilian Mask: Genesis of Military Intervention in Bangladesh Politics”, in which the author’s *Amar Desh* interview was used. Interestingly, at the University of Kent, senior lecturer Dr Harmonie Toros presided over a roundtable discussion on Thursday 19 March 2015 which was entitled “Student Activism: What’s the point?”, in which the author (as a former adviser to the Bangladeshi President) and Owen Traylor (a former UK diplomat and ambassador who was based in Turkey, Israel and elsewhere) were the main participants. The scholarly gathering discussed and developed questions concerning military intervention and politics and the role of student activism, which the author addressed in an academic and empirical context.

I hope my work will stimulate further studies on a region whose complicated tensions have produced an imbalanced world, which attracts world attention today. Above all, all praise is due to Allah, who has been guiding me throughout, who allowed me to accomplish this great contribution to the nation and beyond. I am thankful to my well-wishers from home and abroad and those who have contributed to this book through their comments. My thanks go to Cambridge Scholars Publishing for this publication. Actually, I and the publishers have been waiting for a quite long time as both recommended proofreader and prepress department of Cambridge Scholars Publishing were extremely busy due to dealing with a large number of manuscripts. Subsequently, I took the opportunities in editing and using theories from my research work in line with the issues of relevance to this book. I am grateful also to Christopher Pipe for his thorough final editing of this manuscript. Despite my efforts, some repetitions and some errors or mistakes may remain in this work. Comments from readers of this book for correction in the next edition are welcome.

I am thankful to former Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Justice Mohammed Abdur Rouf and Dr Charles Che Fonchingong for writing their valuable forewords for this book. Dr Tarek Fazal also deserves my thanks as he maintained liaison between me and Justice M. A. Rouf. While my book was in the last stage of publication, my article was published in the *South Asia Journal*, I became senior editor of the *Birkbeck Law Review*, I was a reviewer for the *International Journal of Ethnic and Social Studies* based in Sri Lanka, I was interviewed by a number of postgraduate researchers, who used a number of my articles and books as references for their research. Different print and electronic media published and broadcast my interviews. Allah willing, these works will appear in my future publications.

It may be mentioned that, this manuscript was updated on 15 June 2016. Afterwards this has been in the queue with the official proofreader and the publisher. Thank Allah that I was given last chance to check the manuscript at a glance with minor corrections option before publishing. Halfway, Bangladesh witnessed its last parliamentary election on 30 December 2018. Reportedly this election was manipulated by the government administration with 60-70 percentage votes casting at night prior to the election. Interestingly, the main opposition political party BNP and its alliances dramatically joined the 'mid-night election' ending the political movements. Earlier, they have ended their strikes and blockades after 92 days following 2014 parliamentary election which was boycotted by the mainstream opposition political parties. Thus the ruling AL

received their victories and recognition with both participatory and without participatory elections by what they continued their rule. I cannot go beyond as this research project has limitations with a timespan between 2007 and 2008. However, for the sake of necessity I used background of the crisis of governance, democracy and military rule that occurred in Bangladesh. Some errors might be found after publication of the book. I welcome suggestions and advice from all concerned for next editions of this book. Finally, as mentioned above, prior publication while updating this for last time on the 29 September 2019 I tried to brief the latest Bangladeshi political situation herewith. Before conclude, I put a note for further research that why Bangladeshi army did stop parliamentary election in 2007 showing reason that one major political party AL and its alliance boycotted the election and why yet they did not cancel election in 2014 for same reason when another major political party BNP and its alliance boycotted the election and in 2018 for even worse case with stuffing the ballots. Last but not least, I avail myself of the opportunity to express deep appreciation to all concerned for extending to me their all-out support, for which I am really indebted to them.

M. Mukhlesur Rahman Chowdhury
Former Adviser (Minister) to the
President of Bangladesh
Barking, London, UK

ABBREVIATIONS

ACC	Anti-Corruption Commission
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADC	Aide-de-Camp
AL	Awami League
AI	Amnesty International
BNP	Bangladesh Nationalist Party
BIISS	Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies
BPC	Bangladesh Penal Code
BTV	Bangladesh Television
CA	Chief Adviser
CM	Chief Minister
CMLA	Chief Martial Law Administrator
CMR	Civil Military Relations
CrPC	Code of Criminal Procedure
CTG	Caretaker Government
DGFI	Directorate General of Forces Intelligence
EC	Election Commission
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product

HC	High Court
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IDB	Islamic Development Bank
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IR	International Relations
JP	Jatiya Party
JI	Jamaate Islami
KCL	King's College London
LSE	London School of Economics and Political Science
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NSI	National Security Intelligence
NTV	National Television, a private TV channel in Bangladesh
OCAB	Overseas Correspondents Associations Bangladesh
PGR	President Guard Regiment
PKSF	Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation
PS	Privaten Secretary
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America
UK	United Kingdom
WB	World Bank
WBI	World Bank Institute

INTRODUCTION

Bangladesh has experimented with different types of government. The country's democracy is still on trial. Although it has switched over to parliamentary democracy from a presidential one, this is nothing but a one person show. Compared with the Westminster type of democracy, the country is fully dependent on the Prime Minister, who is all powerful. Bangladesh has achieved much in different sectors, including garments and textiles, pharmaceuticals, ceramics, shipbuilding, and its contribution to the UN Peacekeeping force. Unfortunately, the country's development has not been stable, mainly due to a lack of political will and determination.

The classical concept of democracy is derived from two Greek words, *demos* (people) and *kratos* (rule). These words together made the single word "democracy", which means "rule by the people" (Beetham, 1993: 55). However, the ideas of "democratic principles" and "representative and responsible structures" are both extremely broad. Therefore, this book takes "democratic principles" to mean representative democracy provided through an elected government, featuring checks and balances achieved through parliamentary scrutiny and review of proposed legislation.

"Representative and responsible structures" are more diffuse. In this book, these are viewed as citizens' involvement and participation in monitoring accountability (UNDP), governance being considered as a matter of policy networks (Rhodes, 1997) and public management (Hood, 1991). In addition, an economic dimension is considered, including coordination of the sectors of the economy (Hollingsworth et al., 1994; Campbell et al., 1991), public-private partnerships (Pierre, 1980) and corporate governance (Williamson, 1996). "A twentieth-century political system is democratic to the extent that its most powerful collective decision makers are selected through fair, honest, and periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes, and in which virtually all the adult population is eligible to vote" (Huntington, 1991).

The situation in Bangladesh does not equate to any of the academic definitions of democracy at the moment. Constitutional bodies, including an ineffective parliament, and the non-functional nature of institutions like the judiciary and the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), are very distinct from those in other countries. However, in the past, it complied with some of the definitions, for example under the caretaker government

(CTG) system. In some ways, the CTG was similar to Linz and Stepan's definition, because all parties agreed with the CTG system safeguarding elections as "the only game in town" (Linz and Stepan, 1997:15; Przerworski, 1999).

Democracy is a system of government which embodies, in a variety of institutions and mechanisms, the ideal of political power based on the will of the people (Boutros-Ghali, 1996). The word "democracy" became popular with its stakeholders with Abraham Lincoln's famous phrase "of the people, by the people and for the people", which was delivered as part of the historic "Gettysburg Address". By focusing on what would constitute good governance in Bangladesh, this book seeks to elucidate the reasons why it has not been achieved.

As Bangladesh has been struggling with different types of rule such as military dictatorship or democratic forms of government, i.e. parliamentary and presidential, since its independence, it needs to find out what kind of rule is appropriate or feasible in this country. The problems Bangladesh is facing are endless. Although democracy was the birth wish of Bangladesh, it is very pertinent to say that, more than 40 years after its war of liberation, it is now fighting to go backward. Following a one party election with crackdowns on the opposition, the country's domestic political issues are now not only internal ones; rather its governance has been established as a world issue. In this era of globalization, the United Nations has started pursuing the democratization issue in Bangladesh.

The UN charter's opening words, "We the Peoples", "reflect the fundamental principle of democracy, that the will of the people is the source of legitimacy of sovereign states and therefore of the United Nations as a whole" (United Nations website).

The UN plays a role in fostering democracy through elections in its member countries. "Electoral assistance is based on the principle established in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that the will of the people, as expressed through periodic and genuine elections, shall be the basis of government authority" (UN website). The Under Secretary General for Political Affairs is designated by the General Assembly as the UN Focal Point for Electoral Assistance Activities. The Secretary General made phone calls to members of the Bangladeshi government on various occasions, visited Bangladesh and finally sent his emissaries on 29 November – 1 December 2006 to the country in order to solve the political crisis. However, the UN's efforts did not meet with any success. Authoritarian governance antagonized the World Bank (WB) on the issue of corruption in relation to the Padma Bridge project in 2012–13. This brought about a situation in which the Bank abandoned the project,

followed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Asian Development Bank (ADB), Islamic Development Bank (IDB), and Japan.

The struggle for democracy earned Bangladesh's independence. However, with the passing of only three years, the country lost its democracy, while the parliamentary system was transformed into a presidential one. In this way a "one person show" and one party rule started in the governance of Bangladesh, which invited military intervention in politics. Then, with a democratic transition and another military takeover, the country ultimately returned to the process of democracy that began again following the 1990 upsurge. Various sections of the Bangladeshi people have been divided from each other since 1991, due to political considerations. The cyclical political crises since then have been linked with both the beginning and the end of the caretaker government system. Murshid (2008) argues that recently the study of violence and killing has emerged as one of the major areas of research in political science as well as in political sociology.

Bangladesh's politics has been considered to be tumultuous. It does not match any of the academic definitions of democracy. The unresolved issue of the CTG is that manifestations of mistrust, suspicion, discord and enmity have been characteristic of political behaviour in the country. In some ways the CTG was similar to this definition, but as the system later failed, this suggests that Huntington's definition of consolidated democracy is wrong or weak.

Parliamentary democracy restarted in Bangladesh in 1991, but it then again faced problems in 1996, when an abortive military coup occurred. However, with magnanimity, sagacity, political will, and determination, politicians and military leaders were able to overcome this and democratic practice continued. Eventually, this system was halted in January 2007, when another military coup took place, and the resulting government ruled the country for two years. The military regime handed over power to a political process in which the winners kept themselves in power by organizing a one-sided election following the end of their term.

The military-backed government of 2007–08 separated the judiciary from the administration. Since then the judiciary of Bangladesh has been independent on paper but in practice it has become worse than before. Politically biased people control all the important organs of government, such as the judiciary, the ACC, the Human Rights Commission, the Independent Information Commission and the University Grants Commission. It has been said that democracy and governance in Bangladesh are still plagued by the absence of the rule of law, violence, corruption, abuse of human rights, lack of accountability, and the

excessive politicization of government institutions, including the judicial system (Hossen and Anwar, 2011).

Previously Abul Mansur Ahmad and Oli Ahad had commented on Bangladesh's politics when this territory was East Pakistan, a part or wing of Pakistan. Later Professor Talukdar Maniruzzaman, Professor Rehman Sobhan, Professor Rounaq Jahan, Professor Emajuddin Ahmed, and Barrister Moudud Ahmed started writing on Bangladesh's political issues. A former US Ambassador to Bangladesh and Pakistan, William B. Milam, the political scientist Dr Mizanur Rahman Shelley, and other academics around the globe followed them. Sharmin Ahmed, a daughter of the first Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Tajuddin Ahmad, has also contributed to the literature. A minister in Sheikh Hasina's previous government, retired Air Vice Marshal A. K. Khandker, has written two books on politics which also revealed many untold facts. The chapters of the present book will discuss and cite references to these scholars' arguments relevant to this research.

Although this book covers the major developments of 2004–07, it also refers to many links in the chain of events in the previous and following periods. This book adopts the historical institutionalism (HI) approach to researching the politics of Bangladesh. According to Sven Steinmo (2008), in social science HI is distinct from other approaches in addressing real world empirical questions; "it is best understood as an approach to studying politics". In addition, the approach has an historical orientation. Thus, it examines "the ways in which institutions structure and shape political behaviour and outcomes".

This book consists of four chapters. They concern Bangladesh's democratic development, the governance of Bangladesh, the political conditions in Bangladesh prior to the caretaker government, and a brief history and background of the 2007 military intervention in Bangladesh. It describes the issues of the legacy of British rule, Pakistan and the War of Secession. It also offers theory, evidence and explanations of the issues concerned.

The first chapter describes Bangladesh's democratic development as well as its political instability. It examines its three legacies, namely the British legacy, the Pakistani legacy and the legacy of the War of Secession meaning Bangladeshi war of independence which is also known as liberation war, using Erdmann's theoretical approach of HIs to analyse the politics of the country. It investigates the importance of the study of democratic practice in Bangladesh, and finally summarizes the major arguments concerning the prospects of institutionalizing democracy in Bangladesh.

The second chapter consists of an overview of various academic theories and definitions of democracy, in particular “consolidated democracy”. A narrative history of Bangladeshi democratization and governance is also included, based on the idea of “path dependency” from the approach of HIs. Lastly, the chapter summarizes the possible solutions to the problems of democracy and good governance in Bangladesh.

The third chapter explains how General Moeen and his faction in the army created the problems of democracy and good governance one after another, and how activities of a section of the political parties helped them to take over power in disguise. This chapter will discuss the issues Bangladesh has been facing over a long period, such as political confrontations, political fragmentation, the onset of political discord, the army chief General Moeen’s plan, Aminul Karim’s “military kayda”, and the tug of war between the NSI and DGFI, which are the two intelligence agencies. Other problems discussed include the Special Security Force (SSF) and the PGR on “1/11”, the ambition of some government officials, a self-promotion, reform in the administration and unity in the army. The chapter then considers the state of emergency which was about to be declared on 29 October 2006 and the state of the army on the eve of the takeover by the CTG. Finally, the issues of *Hawa Bhaban* and the author’s appointment and position for democracy, “1/11”, and the planning of martial law are examined. In conclusion, the chapter summarizes the problems of governance in this period, and indicates the solutions.

The fourth and final chapter examines the brief history and background of the 2007 military intervention in Bangladesh. It shows how political stability was hampered, violence started, the military was made to stand by, and the state of emergency was declared. This chapter explains impact of civil–military relations (CMR) in Bangladesh in connection with Chapter Two’s theoretical review, and its role in the 2007 military takeover. It discusses foreign actors’ roles and the roles of other concerned parties linked to that military intervention. The chapter further elaborates the political problems and the roles of the civil and military actors in Bangladeshi politics, based on the discussion in the previous chapter. The chapter discusses Samuel P. Huntington’s three categories of military coups and Samuel Finer’s four types of civil-military relations (CMR), since both of these are relevant to politics and military intervention which occurred in Bangladesh. The chapter also explains Bangladesh’s democratic upheaval after independence, the restoration of democracy in 1991, the idea of a CTG, the fall-out of the two-thirds majority, the much talked of trump card in politics: dateline 30 April 2004, extension of the retirement age of judges, claims and counter-claims in the formation of