

**DYNAMICS OF INDIA-BANGLADESH
RELATIONS SINCE 1991: BORDER SECURITY,
CONNECTIVITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE.**

**Synopsis of the Thesis Submitted to Jadavpur University
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy (Arts)**

**By
SIDDHARTHA NASKAR**

**Under The Supervision
of
PROF. BIJAYA KUMAR DAS**

**Department of International Relations
Faculty of arts
Jadavpur University
Kolkata – 700032**

2023

SYNOPSIS OF THE THESIS

In the history of world politics the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent nation state on 16th December 1971 was primarily an outcome of internal political conflict between East and West Pakistan. It was a spontaneous revolution and armed conflict between the two wings over the issue of Bengali language, Bengali nationalism, and Bengali self-determination in response to West Pakistan's social discrimination, economic exploitation and political domination. After the transfer of power to the elected representatives of India and Pakistan from British India on the basis of Mohammad Ali Jinnah's 'two nation-theory'¹ under the framework of 'India Independence Act of 1947'², there was the root of internal political conflict between East and West wing with the issue of national language, Urdu or Bengali, social discrimination and the politico-economic domination of West Pakistan towards the East. All the grievances against the indifference and negligence of West Pakistan towards the East enhanced to foster anti-Pakistani sentiment which led to the triumph of Bengali nationalism over Islamic nationalism. "In the parliamentary elections of 1970, the Awami League party of East Pakistan achieved an absolute majority in the National Pakistan Assembly, the majority votes empowering it to lead the Pakistan Government. The then Pakistan president, Agha Mohammad Yahya Khan, however, cancelled the East Pakistan election results, sparking off the Bangladesh Liberation War."³ With the passage of time Pakistan prevented the leader of the largest political party, the Awami League, to form the federal Government in 1970 election, fearing, the loss of Punjab political domination. To suppress the mass movement in East Pakistan the Pakistani military regime, under the orders of General Tikka Khan, took stern military action for almost a week to gain control of East Pakistan's largest city Dacca. There were merciless violence like genocide, gang rape, kidnap, sexual assault on women, brutal killings of opposition leaders, abduction, physical torture, and any sorts of human rights violation, etc. went on many parts of East Pakistan. The Pakistani

¹ Jinnah's Two Nation-Theory states that Muslims and Hindus are two separate nations, therefore Muslims should be able to have their in separate homeland in the Muslim majority areas of India in which Islam can be practiced as their main religion.

² Shekher Bandhayapadhyaya, '**Palasi Theka Partition: Adhunik Bharater Itihas**', Orient Blackswan private Limited, Kolkata, 2013.(Translated by Krishendu Roy), pp-176-177.

³ Hamid,Shamim. '**Bangladesh and the United Nation:Common Principles,Shared Values**' The University Press Limited,Dhaka,2011, p.12.

military operation popularly known as ‘Operation Searchlight⁴,’ undertaken by the then Pakistani Army General Agha Mohammad Yahia Khan, and was carefully devised by several top-ranked Pakistani Army Generals to crush Bengalees’ spontaneous revolt. Although the violence centered on the provincial capital, Dacca, the process of the Bangalees elimination from the Eastern part of Pakistan (today Bangladesh) continued everywhere. Accordingly, unprecedented terror in the Eastern part of Pakistan prevailed. Consequently, an exodus of homeless, helpless refugees began to flow into India’s bordering state of Assam, Tripura, West Bengal, Meghalaya, Nagaland. It created problems of rehabilitation and law and order in India. Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the then Indian charismatic Prime Minister decided to intervene militarily on the humanitarian ground to solve the problem. On 27th March, 1971, Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi declared her Government’s complete support for the East Pakistani peoples’ struggle for independence. The Indian Government made numerous appeals to the international community for political solution of the conflict of the two wings but received no response. She had come to the conclusion that going to war against Pakistan was more cost-effective than taking in millions of refugees in India. During the liberation war the Indian Government’s two-tier strategic policy explicitly made it clear that India’s real intention behind the active support to the Bangladesh struggle was not only to support the just cause of the Bangalee but also to weaken its arch rival Pakistan’s basis of ‘two-nation theory’, which indoctrinated the religious Islamic nationalism that created Pakistan on 14th August, 1947. After the separation of Pakistan from eastern part in 1971, she asserted, ‘We have avenged a thousand years history and thrown the ‘two-nation theory’ into the Indian Ocean.’⁵ The East Pakistan Crisis of 1971, therefore, brought a golden opportunity to India to separate its arch enemy Pakistan. Indian military intervention on behalf of the Bangladeshi freedom fighters was indeed motivated by this resolve. The presence of 10 million East Pakistani Bangalee refugees on Indian soil and the establishment of an exile Bangladesh

⁴ **Operation Searchlight** was a planned ruthless and brutal military operation carried out by the Pakistani army General, Agha Muhammad Yahia Khan, to curb the Bengali nationalist movement in the erstwhile East Pakistan on 25th march 1971. The purpose of the operation was to arrest or kill the distinguished Awami League leaders, students and Bengali intellectuals to disarm the Bengali personnel of military, Para military and police force to capture armory, radio station and telephone exchange.

⁵ **India: The Speeches and Reminiscences of Indira Gandhi (1975)**. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2001, p. 35. (Quoted, Hussain, Ishtiaq, ‘Bangladesh-India Relations: Issues and Problems. *Asian Survey* 21, 2, 1981, p-59, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2643997>, accessed on 12.08.2022.).

Government and its headquarters at 8, theatre road in Calcutta merely provided the necessary justification for its action.⁶ When the Pakistani Air Force launched a preemptive air strike on eleven airfields in North Western India on 3rd December, 1971, India became directly involved in the Bangladesh Liberation War.

The Pakistani air strike was seen by India as an open act of unprovoked aggression. This marked the official start of the Indo-Pak War in 1971. As a response to the attack, both India and Pakistan formally acknowledged the ‘existence of a state of war between the two countries’, even though neither Government had formally issued a declaration of war.⁷ With insurmountable losses, the Pakistani military gave up in less than two weeks. In this war India defeated Pakistan with the help of Soviet Russia. The Pakistani forces in East Pakistan gave up on 16th December, 1971. On the same day the Eastern Command of the Pakistani Armed Forces signed the Instrument of Surrender in Dacca, marking the liberation of the new nation of Bangladesh in south Asia.

The Pakistani Instrument of Surrender was a written agreement between India, Pakistan, and the Provisional Government of Bangladesh. It allowed for the capitulation of 93,000 West Pakistani troops from the Armed Forces Eastern Command on 16th December, 1971. This brought an end to the Bangladesh Liberation War and the India-Pakistani War of 1971. India was the first country who recognized Bangladesh’s Government on 6th December, 1971. Besides, during the Liberation war Yahya Khan was going to arrange a secret military trial to hang Mujib and Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi sent a message to the Heads of Pakistani Government requesting them to exert their influence over president Yahya Khan from May 1971 so that the life of Mujib could be saved.⁸

Since then, India and Bangladesh have entered a new phase in bilateralism with a pragmatic and practical approach based on sovereignty, equality, friendship, trust and reciprocal understanding for the mutual benefit and welfare of their peoples as well as collective prosperity of the south Asian region. In the history of Indo-Bangladesh

⁶Ghosh, P.S.’ **Cooperation and Conflict in South Asia**’, The University Press Ltd, Dhaka ,Bangladesh,1989.

⁷ Garry Jonathan Bass, “**The Blood Telegram: India’s secret war in East Pakistan**”,p.p-270-274.

⁸Gandhi, I. ‘**India and Bangladesh: Selected Speeches and Statements**’, New Delhi: Orient Longman,1972,p.p-136-140.

bilateral relations, there were ups and downs on account of various unresolved issues like cross-border terrorism, issues of security, migration, resource sharing, sharing of river water, exchange of enclaves, Muhurir Char border dispute, Purbasha island dispute, border demarcation, construction of Tipaimukh dam, opening border haats, resolution of maritime boundary dispute, cattle smuggling, infiltration, drug trafficking etc.

The first phase of bilateral relations started from 1972-1975 which relate to the pattern of Government in Bangladesh. Traditionally the Awami League Government has had close link with New Delhi. During that time Indo-Bangladesh relations have suffered cyclic phases of highs and lows, largely reflecting the changing Government both in Dhaka and New Delhi. Nevertheless, it has remained friendly during the regime of 'Bangobondhu' Sheikh Mujib-ur Rahman for numerous years. At the outset, the introduction of socialist, liberal, secular and parliamentary form of Government in Bangladesh, led by country's founding father Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, made the Indo-Bangladesh relations healthy, robust and amicable. During the regime of 'Bangobondhu' Sheikh Mujib-ur Rahman India and Bangladesh tried to resolve each and every contentious issue amicably and accordingly signed 'Indo-Bangladesh Friendship Treaty'⁹ in 1972. During the aftermath of the 1974 deadly famine in Bangladesh he proclaimed national emergency to tide over the deadly famine situation. Consequently Sheikh Mujib-ur Rahman, the charismatic leader and the head of the state of Bangladesh, assumed Presidentship on 25th January, 1975 by amending the constitution to transition into a strong executive presidential system abolishing the post of Primeministrial system. After the assassination of Sheikh Mujib-ur Rahman and the brutal murder of his family members except his two daughters in 1975 Bangladesh was under one or other military rulers between 1975-1990 and was ruled by Khondakar Moshtaq Ahmad, General Zia-Ur Rahman and General Hussen Mohombad Ershad. After the assassination of Sheikh Mujib-ur Rahman in 1975, the new president, Khondakar Moshtaq Ahmad, proclaimed in his radio address to the nation, that the

⁹ 'Indo-Bangladesh Friendship Treaty' was a treaty that was signed on 19 March 1972. It was also known as Indira-Mujib treaty. The twelve Article incorporated in the treaty. Some of the Article are –the present treaty is signed for a term of 25 years, and shall be renewed by mutual agreement (Article-xi). Any differences interpreting any Article of the treaty shall be settled on a bilateral basis by peaceful means in spirit of mutual respect and understanding. (Article-xii). Both the parties shall promote relations in the fields of arts, literature, education, culture, sports and health.. (Article-vii).

country he now headed was the “Islamic Republic of Bangladesh.” Eventually he was removed in the counter coups in the volatile situation.¹⁰ General Ershad tried to inculcate Islamic culture in the politics of Bangladesh. In his term, he coined linguistic nationalism with Islam as opposed to the Bengali nationalism which based upon secularism, language, culture, and heritage. The anti-Indian sentiment that prevailed from the reign of General Zia-Ur Rahman led to the gradual decaying of the relations between two countries. The assassination of General Zia-Ur Rahman on 30th May, 1981, the military rule of Hussein Mohammad Ershad began on 24th March, 1982. Then the politics of Bangladesh became instable. The religious extremism and dictatorship began to dominate the Bangladesh politics. Mujib’s term in office rightly described as the ‘honeymoon years’ between India and Bangladesh. The military dispensation in Bangladesh brought vast changes in its foreign policy in order to fulfill national interest as well as to come out of Indian domination. This shift in Bangladesh’s foreign policy equally led to a paradigm shift in the dynamics of India-Bangladesh relations. Bangladesh diverts its foreign policy towards western countries especially anti liberation countries because of her diplomatic and economic consideration.¹¹ In fact the phase from 1975-1990 has changed the future directions and discourse of the bilateral dynamics between the two countries. The relationship between the two countries was greatly damaged by the military rule. During that phase Bangladesh’s original constitution was reconstituted, with some of its most important principles were dropped, and its new structure was reframed along religious lines to gain legitimacy both inside and outside the country. Since then there was a gradual process of Islamisation in Bangladesh for establishing the law of Allah and principles of Quran and Shariat- as a weapon for capturing power. As a result, the triumph of Bengali nationalism over Islamic nationalism that led to the birth of a new nation in 1971 proved short lived and once again Islamic nationalism re-developed in Bangladesh soil during the tenure of different military Government. The diversion of Bangladesh from secularization to Islamisation was an alarming threat to India in her dynamics journey with Bangladesh.

¹⁰ Arshi saleem hasmi, Bangladesh ban on religion based politics: reviving the secular character of the constitution, regional studies, vol XXIX, no 2, **spring** 2011, pp-80.

¹¹ Shahnawaz A Mantoo, “India Bangladesh relations 1975-1990”, **journal of south Asian studies**, vol-3, no- 3, 2015, pp-331

The political history of the People's Republic of Bangladesh in the 21st century reveals the fact that the country caught in a pendulum-swing between democracy and dictatorship, between despair and hope, and between mass apathy and violent collective action. The country was passing through a new phase of democratic transition. Under the tremendous pressure of Bangladeshi people and the joint leadership of all political parties the restoration of parliamentary democracy came in 1991. In 1991 free and fair Parliamentary election was organized by Non-Party caretaker Government (NCG), headed by Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed. Khaleda Zia, widow of General Zia-ur Rahman, came out victorious with a thumping majority and became the first women Prime Minister in the history of Bangladesh defeating her arch rival Sheikh Hasina, the leader of Awami League party.

During the period of 1991-2006, except Sheikh Hasina's regime from 1996-2001 the relations between India and Bangladesh were neither cordial nor cooperative. A latent fear prevails upon the majority people of Bangladesh by Government controlled media that an all encompassing Indian hegemony and bossing mentality over the South Asia remained. Even the coup and bloody assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib-Ur Rahman were attempted to justify on the grounds that Bangladesh would have accepted Sikkim's fate, Dhaka would have functioned as a satellite state of India, and the Mujib Government would have sold out Bangladesh's national interests to India.¹² At that time Islam evolved as the new symbol of Bangladeshi national identity. As a result, Islamic nationalism triumphs over Bengali nationalism.

India's relations with Bangladesh warmed up when the Awami League, under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina came to power first in June 1996.¹³ After winning the elections in 1996, Sheikh Hasina initiated all the necessary steps to restore true parliamentary democracy in Bangladesh and made the constitution with the principles of secularity, liberty, equality and justice. She made all actions of her Government accountable and transparent to the people for the country's sake. During her first tenure from 1996-2001, the improvement of ties between New Delhi and Dhaka was reciprocated by the then non-Congress leader, Inder Kumar Gujral, through his doctrine

¹²Chakma Bhumitra, "South Asia's Realist Fascination and the Alternatives," **Contemporary Security Policy**", vol. 30, no. 3, 2009,p- 404.

¹³ Dutta,V.P., '**India's foreign policy in a changing world**', Vikash Publishing House,New Delhi,1999.

of enhancing ties with the South Asian neighbours.¹⁴ He propounded a policy towards the South Asian neighbours, popularly known as ‘Gujral Doctrine.’¹⁵ This policy was not new and was somewhat similar to the ‘good neighbour lines policy’ pursued by the former Foreign Minister of India, late Atal Behari Vajpayee, during the rule of Morarji Desai’s Janata Government in the 1970s¹⁶ and Bangladesh was greatly benefited by the ‘Gujral doctrine.’ Like India most of the South Asian countries due to the existence of a democratic Government in Bangladesh under the leadership of Sheikh Mujib’s daughter Sheikh Hasina, expressed their great relief during that time. During her tenure two important agreements the ‘30-year Water Sharing Agreement of the Ganges’ in December 1996¹⁷ and the ‘Peace Accord’ signed in December 1997 with the Chakma tribal dissidents of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), brought New Delhi and Dhaka closer to each other. The first agreement offered a new formula for the sharing of Ganges waters on equitable basis was signed on 12th December, 1996 with the august presence of Sheikh Hasina and H.D Deve Gowda in New Delhi.¹⁸ Both the countries also extended co-operation on issues, related to flood warning and preparedness. During that time, in order to strengthen the trade relation between the two countries, the Government of India extended a Rs.200 crore credit line valid for 3 years to help Dhaka to buy transport equipments and capital goods from India.¹⁹ In return, Hasina Government, exhibited political solidarity in countering anti-India campaigns of Islamic fundamentalist groups

The phase 2001-2006 witnessed hardening of positions of both sides in resolving differences. The Khaleda Zia Government (the Four Party Alliance-BNP, Jamaat-I-Islami, Bangladesh Jatio Party, Islami Oikya Jote), led by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), largely ignored Indian security concerns, border infiltration and sheltered

¹⁴ Aiyar, Vidyasagar ‘Bangladesh’ in Banerjee, Dipankar (ed.) **‘Comprehensive and Co-operative security in South Asia’**, Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, New Delhi, pp.88-119.

¹⁵ For more information see <http://www.theindianeconomy.com/new/the-gujral.doctrine> accessed on 30.03.2016

¹⁶ Jha, Nalini Kant (ed.) **‘Indian Foreign Policy in a Changing World’**, South Asian Publishers, New Delhi, 2000, p.188.

¹⁷ Bindral, S.S. ‘Farakka Barrage Agreement: A Review in Dirender Grover (ed.) **Encyclopedia of SAARC Nations**, Vol.4, No.2, New Delhi, Deep and Deep Publications , pp.580-596.

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ **The Times of India**, Kolkata, September 14, 1999.

Pakistani Inter Service Intelligence (ISI) based insurgent groups. During Khaleda Zia's tenure several state actors and non state actors like ISI, religious fundamentalist, religious political parties, foreign policymakers and pro Pakistani Bangladeshi army contributed to the Islamisation process in Bangladesh. During her second tenure from 2001-2006 the four party coalition government namely BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh Jatio Party, Islami Oikya Jote, led by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), largely ignored Indian security concerns, border infiltration and sheltered Pakistani Inter Service Intelligence (ISI) based insurgent groups like National Democratic Front of Bodoland, National socialist council of Nagaland, National Liberation Front of Tripura, People's Liberation Army of Manipur, United Liberation Front of Assam, Muslim United Liberation Tigers of Assam, Kamtapur Liberation Organisation, People's United Liberation Front (PULF), Zomi Re-unification Organisation (ZRO), Thadou People's Liberation Army (TPLA), Manipur Naga People's Front (MNPF), Manipur Naga Revolutionary Front (MNRF), People's Liberation Army (PLA) and its political wing the Revolutionary People's Front (RPF), United National Liberation Front (UNLF) and its Armed wing the Manipur People's Army (MPA), Kuki Independent Army (KIA), Zomi Revolutionary Front (ZRF), Hynniewtrep National Liberation Council (HNLC), Garo National Liberation Army (GNLA), The National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khaplang) [NSCN/K], Adivasi Kobra Force (Assam) etc. in Indian North Eastern Region to spread terror and hamper Peace and prosperity in the country. Nevertheless, the demand of self-determination by those above mentioned separatists and insurgent groups with the support of external actors such as ISI of Pakistan, Joish-e-Mohammad, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Lashkar-e-Omar, Jammāt-e-Islami, Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh, Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, Taliban, Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami Bangladesh, Al-Qaeda, Hizb-ut-Tohid in Bangladesh have consolidated and expanded their institutional transnational networks with the help of Begum Khaleda Zia Government's support in the past decades.²⁰ The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) pursued an anti-Indian policy during General Ziaur Rahman's tenure and it continued after his wife Begum Khaleda Zia was re-installed in state power as Prime Minister. During Khaleda Zia's regime Indo-Bangladesh relations were not good because Bangladeshi soil was used as anti-Indian and terrorist activities.

²⁰ BIPSS. Transnational security: Threats to Bangladesh, *BIPSS Issue Brief*, Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies, Dhaka, 8 June. 2010, www.bipss.org.bd Accessed on 30.07.2022

There were so many anti-Indian and jihadi groups in Bangladesh who did not eager to build and maintain cordial relations with India. The worst period in Indo-Bangladesh relations was witnessed during the BNP-BJI (Bangladesh Nationalist Party and Bangladesh Jamaat-e-islami) led four party alliance rules from 2001-2006. This was the period which saw a sharp rise in Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism, persecution of minorities, hosting of insurgent groups like the ULFA and others.²¹ On the other hand, BNP adopted a policy of friendship with Islamabad as a counterpoise to Delhi's bossing and hegemonic mentality in south Asian region. In Bangladesh, the ruling BNP, has pursued an anti-India foreign policy breaking the tradition that was created by Awami League's rule from the beginning of parliamentary era of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1972. This ideological transformation brought by Bangladeshi leaders proved a very decisive as far as the future of India and Bangladesh relations was concerned. This transformation changed the future course of Bangladesh politics. As a result, South Asian politics began to naturally change, particularly as China and the Pakistan came closer to Bangladesh. Bangladesh served as a 'corridor' in the South Asian region and is strategically significant to India in case of war with China.

However, the Fakhruddin Ahmed-led care taker Government (CTG) of 2007-2008 restored normalcy to India-Bangladesh relations. Of course, under the military backed Caretaker Government (2006-2008) Indo-Bangladesh relations improved considerably. While no major bilateral problem was resolved, there was an overall improvement in the atmosphere in sharp contrast to relations that existed during the previous Bangladesh Nationalist Party Government. Since the bi-lateral relations during 2001-2006 reached its nadir, there were very little expectations on either side when the Caretaker Government took over in 2007. Under the Caretaker Government, bilateral relations were considerable different and marked by regular and periodic high-level contacts. India's approach to Bangladesh was one of the understanding and accommodation. This was duly reciprocated by the Caretaker Government which contributed to a growing synergy between the two neighbours. Certain incremental steps were taken that contributed to creating a conductive atmosphere for future

²¹ Pramanik, Bimal 'Growing Indo-Bangladesh Relations', **World Focus**, Volume. XXXIII, No.2, February, 2012, p.64.

engagement with each other.²² The Government declared that developing friendly relations with India was a top priority. It also pledged not to allow its soil to be used for anti-India activity.²³ A month after installation of the Caretaker Government in Dhaka on 19th February, 2007 then External Affairs Minister Mr. Pranab Mukherjee visited Bangladesh to invite Bangladesh for the 14th SAARC summit in New Delhi and to confirm India's support to the military based Caretaker Government headed by Fakhruddin Ahmed. In April 2007, Fakhruddin Ahmed represented Bangladesh at the 14th SAARC summit where he met Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh for beginning a new chapter with India. India's foreign secretary Mr. Shiv Shankar Menon visited Dhaka twice in June 2007 and again in 2008 with a view to establish peaceful stability, democratic secularity and prosperity of Bangladesh for India's national interest.

Under Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the Awami League Government, bilateral relations between the two countries have significantly improved. After the unicameral Jatio Sangshad (Parliament) election in 2008, Sheikh Hasina came to power in second term and adopted not only a pragmatic foreign policy but she also established a new era of friendship, cooperation and stability with India to be a model neighbour and economic partner for the sake of country's over all development. She had shown considerable courage and conviction to free its soil from anti-Indian activities to make India's confidence intact in future. Like her father Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Sheikh Hasina introduced secularism and adopted a foreign policy towards India which provided an impetus to sluggish New Delhi-Dhaka relationship. However, within a short span of time, the Hasina Government faced a severe revolt by the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), which shook the foundations of the newly sworn-in Awami League Government. For a couple of days, the very survival of the Sheikh Hasina Government was at stake. Consecutively, in February 2009 and January 2012 two coup attempts, planned by fanatic army personnel under the patronage of Pakistani ISI to oust Hasina Government were occurred but it was foiled by the Bangladeshi army with the help of Indian Government. It was at this crucial juncture where India quietly, unobtrusively,

²² Datta, Sreeradha, '**Caretaker Democracy Political Process in Bangladesh, 2006-2008**', Institute of Defence studies and analysis, August 2009, p.86.

²³ Bhattarcharjee, Joyeeta. 'Changing Dynamic of Bangladesh Politics and India's Internal Security', **Dialogue**, Volume. 10, No. 2, October-December, 2008.

put its weight behind the fledgling Hasina regime and helped the new Government to tide over the crisis. In less than a year after that quiet assistance and support from India, Dhaka reciprocated in kind by initiating a crackdown on top leaders of the Indian insurgent group, the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) based in Bangladesh. The quick handover of top ULEA leaders, Arabinda Rajkhowa, Raju Baruah, Chitran Hazarika and Sasha Choudhury, as well as two important Lashkar-e-Taiba operatives to India marked a new beginning of a better understanding and space for mutual security cooperation.²⁴ During this period, it appears that the dynamics of the India-Bangladesh relations and development revolved round some major thorny issues like sharing of water, demarcation of 6.5 km boundary, bilateral and regional security, United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) activities, NAGA factions, HUJI activities, illegal immigrants, Chakma refugees, fake Indian currency, cross border terrorism, cattle smuggling, women and drug trafficking, export-import, trade and commerce, etc. India's role in the volatile politics of Bangladesh's unfair parliamentary election in 2014 (largely criticized by Western countries for detaining house arrest of the opposition leaders) was very crucial in the context of maintaining democratic order, world peace, economic growth and human rights development as well as south Asian regional politics especially SAARC countries. Not only that, India wanted to sustain Bangladesh's traditional, democratic and secular character for its own interest in order to fight against global terrorism, ISI activities and Pakistan based fanatic religious fundamentalism. Since 1996-2001 and January 2009-till date under Hasina's Prime Ministership economic and developmental cooperation, including border security, connectivity and infrastructure as well as cooperation in critical areas like enclave issues, counter terrorism, illegal migration, cattle smuggling, border fencing and border clash etc have all improved as a result of the strengthening of bilateral relations.

In 2011 Dr. Manmohan Singh was the first Indian head of Government to lead a high-powered delegation since 1972 a similar visit was undertaken by Mrs. Indira Gandhi for signing the historic Indo-Bangladesh treaty of peace and friendship.²⁵ Dr. Singh's visit was crucial in geostrategic, economic as well as political terms for both countries suffered the same concerns for a long period of time. Both the Prime Ministers had almost identical ideology and vision which helped them reach a consensus on the issues

²⁴Staff Reporter ' ULFA chief handed over to India', **The Telegraph**, Kolkata, January 14, 2010.

²⁵ Pramanik, Bimal. op.cit., p.62.

of exchanging long awaited enclaves of adverse possession or opening a new route through Bangladesh, India, Bhutan and Nepal (BBIN) to quickly link a pact allowing trucks and cars to travel seamlessly through these countries.²⁶

The timing of Dr. Singh's visit, at a time when Bangladesh's perception of India is changing fast, is equally significant. A belief has been fast growing among common Bangladeshis that their homeland stands to lose more from Begum Zia and her Jamaat's brand of blind anti-Indianism. Continuing with such a negative strategy would lead neither the present opposition or Bangladesh anywhere. BNP rule marked by strident anti-India posturing, bear ample testimony to this. Even the coups staged for the installation of an anti-India military junta did produce the desired result. That Bangladesh's perception of India had changed in a big way became apparent in the last parliamentary election when the BNP- Jamaat's joint tirade against India evoked such a negative response that Sheikh Hasina's Awami League-led coalition posed a landslide victory.²⁷ The average Bangladeshis think that the days of blind anti-Indianism are over. The Bangladeshi perception that Dr. Manmohan Singh has to address, rightly and adequately, is that close ties with India will have beneficial spin-offs. For instance, the five agreements that Sheikh Hasina and Dr. Manmohan Singh signed in Delhi last year evoked so much hope in the country's business community and a large section of the intelligentsia began to believe that India held the key to shared prosperity and well being. Dr. Singh's visit also gave a shape of the idea of turning India's eastern and northern region, along with neighbouring Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan, into a regional economic and connectivity hub, with Dhaka as the pivot.²⁸

Dr. Singh's visit was historic as one of the agreements signed by the Prime Ministers of both countries will do away with a Particular baggage of Partition – the Radcliffe award that led to the division of Bengal. The enclave and adverse possession issues could not be resolved so far because of the arbitrariness of the award. The '1974 Indira-Mujib Boundary agreement' had sought to resolve the issue, but without success. Manmohan Singh- Hasina meeting finally dealt with this post-partition hangover.

²⁶ Chakravarty, Pinak Ranjan, 'Bangladesh-India Ties: Pragmatic Transformation' **Indian Foreign Affairs Journal**, Volume. 10. No. 3. July-September, 2015, p.214.

²⁷ Pramanik, Bimal. op.cit., p.62.

²⁸ Ibid

Remarkable change occurred with the results of Indian parliamentary election of 16th Lok Sabha were declared in May 2014. In the parliamentary election National Democratic Alliance (NDA) defeated United Progressive Alliance (UPA) Prime Ministerial candidate Dr. Manmohan Singh (2003-2014). Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India immediately sent External Affairs Minister, Sushma Swaraj, to Bangladesh with a view to improve the friendly relations with its immediate neighbour. In June 2014, she again visited Bangladesh to conclude various agreements to boost bilateral ties. On 7th May, 2015 the Indian Parliament, in the presence of Bangladeshi diplomats, unanimously passed the Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) or Chhitmohal Agreement done following the 100th Indian constitutional amendment. It resolved 68 years old border disputes related to Chhitmohal thus ended the dispute of British era. This bill was pending for ratification since the 1974 Mujib-Indira accords. Modi's two day maiden weekend visit to Bangladesh along with Chief Minister of West Bengal Mamata Banerjee in June 2015 created a new era of cordial relations by removing the tricky issues. Though the challenges of Teesta and Fenny water sharing remain unsolved. During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit, Bangladesh apparently decided to put the water sharing issue aside and go ahead with other major bilateral developments.

Indo-Bangladesh bilateral relations with the issue of border security became serious since 1991 when Khaleda Zia took power in Dhaka. Border security has become one of the most serious challenges in South Asian countries especially India-Pakistan and India-Bangladesh border. Border security implies protecting borderland from the illegal movement of weapons, drugs, contraband and people. The India-Bangladesh Border traverses a range of natural and cultural landscapes, which pose a challenge to its effective border security management. The terrain along the border is a mix of hilly and jungle tracks, plains, riverside, and low-lying land. This diverse mix of topographical features makes the border extremely porous. Bangladesh's territories have been used by the insurgent groups of the Northeast India like the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), the Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) and the Muslim United Liberation Tigers of Assam has made the question of India's border security even more complex. The India-Bangladesh border (IBB) does not reflect any geographical or historical realities, but rather it is, in fact, a political and religious boundary. The Indo-Bangladesh border is generally marked by three different

topographies: 1) flat/plain, 2) riverine, and 3) hilly/jungle with practically no natural obstacles.²⁹ The porosity and the various configurations of India-Bangladesh border, which stretches 4096 km, facilitates the movements of people across the border, especially from Bangladesh, which is the main source of irregular immigrants in India. Nevertheless, a significant portion of the India–Bangladesh terrain i.e. about 790 kms is riverine, 180 kms is maritime. River border line poses a very complex problem because the shifting river route, soil erosion and frequent floods make it difficult to demarcate borders especially when they form chars and islands. Following the Kargil conflict between India and Pakistan in 1999, the border management issue was brought to the force, and a report was provided by the Kargil Review Committee. In response, the Indian government established a ‘Task Force’ on Border Management in April 2000 under Madhav Godbole’s leadership. Under his leadership a ‘Group of Ministers (GoM)’ formed to examine the national security system as a whole and the recommendations of the Kargil Review Committee specifically consider measures for border management. The goal of the Task Force in particular, was to consider the recommendations of the Kargil Review Committee and in this regard formulate specific proposals for the ‘Group of Ministers’ (GoM) consideration. In its report, the Group of Ministers (GoM) observed that the country’s borders cannot be effectively managed because of certain inherent problems. First, most of the borders are either disputed or not clearly demarcated. Many are artificial boundaries that do not run along a natural barrier, which makes them extremely porous. This gives rise to multiple problems like illegal migration, smuggling, drugs trafficking, and trans-border movement of insurgents etc. In addition, the multiplicity of forces employed to guard the same border, their repeated withdrawal from the borders on other duties, the lack of adequate infrastructures along the border, and so on deter from efficient guarding of the border. To remove all these problems, the ‘Group of Ministers’ (GoM) broadly recommended that concerted efforts be made to settle border disputes and demarcate the limits at the earliest opportunity. It also recommended that a ‘Department of Border Management’ be created under the Ministry of Home Affairs, which would focus on border security issues.³⁰ The ‘Group of Ministers’ (GoM) Report also recommends that the entire

²⁹ N. S. Jamwal, “Border management: Dilemma of guarding the India Bangladesh border,” **Strategic Analysis**, Vol.28, No.1 (Jan-Mar 2004), p.8.

³⁰ Pushpita Das, ‘Indo-Bangladesh Border Management’, **strategic analysis**, vol -32, issue 3, 2008.

length of the land border with Bangladesh should be fenced as a measure to secure the border against illegal migration and smuggling. The project includes laying 3,286.87 km of fences, along with building roads and bridges, and installing flood lights. The project was undertaken in two phases—phase I (1987–1999) and phase II (2000–present). Presently, a total of 2,455.80 km of fencing, nearly 60 percent of the border has been covered. For the first time, a 9.3 km fence has also been raised between Mantri char and Kalaibari char. On completion, 80 percent of the India–Bangladesh border will have been fenced. Border security management has mainly two major objectives – firstly, to facilitate the movement of legitimate goods and people across the border between two sovereign countries. Secondly to ensure the security of the country by restricting entry of illegal goods and those individuals across the border who might disturb the peace. For this purpose India involved multiple agencies like-border guarding forces (BSF), customs, immigration and local police. In 2011, India and Bangladesh signed a Coordinated Border Management Plan (CBMP). The aim of signing the CBMP was to synergies efforts of the border guarding forces and to control cross-border illegal activities and crimes more effectively and maintain peace and harmony along the border.³¹

Regarding the issues of connectivity, both the governments are undertaking various steps to restore the pre-1965 rail links and other connectivity links that existed between India and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) before partition of India. A stronger connectivity not only strengthens the intra-and inter–regional trade and commerce but also generates higher income and prosperity. Transport is the backbone of economic activities and social developments. Large-scale connectivity increases in production and trade. Connectivity of each mode of transport – roads, railways, maritime, shipping and aviation – has its own physical and operational characteristics which require different considerations.³²

Rail connectivity is one of the most important forms of physical connectivity between different locations. This is also true for Bangladesh and India rail connectivity.

³¹Said Saddiki, **International Journal of Arts & Sciences**, CD-ROM. ISSN: 1944-6934 :: 07(05):111–124 (2016) border fencing in india: between colonial legacy and changing security challenges.

³² “India-Bangladesh Connectivity: Possibilities and Challenges,” Part 1, Obser Research Foundation (ORF), P-19. <https://www.orfonline.org/wpcontent/uploads/2015/06/IndiaBangladesh.pdf>, accessed on 10.06.2022.

Railways networks serve as an indispensable facilitators for trade and commerce as well as essential means of communication. Rail connections between the two countries are not widely used at the moment. Prior to the British partition of India in 1947, train services existed between India and Pakistan and after the creation of Bangladesh in 1971, the Maitree Express re-established this connection between Dhaka and Kolkata in 2008 after being closed for 43 years. During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's maiden visit to Bangladesh in June 2015, the possibility of introducing a second Maitree Express was deliberated. The second train will run between Khulna and Kolkata.³³ In 2017, a second train service, the 'Bandhan Express', was inaugurated connecting Kolkata with the Bangladeshi city of Khulna, replicating the previous one. 'It is the second modern, fully air-conditioned passenger international express train service that connects the Indian city of Kolkata with the Bangladesh city of Khulna. During the visit of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to New Delhi in October 2019 Government of India and Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh, decided to start a new passenger train service named 'Mitali' via recently-restored Haldibari-Chilahati rail link to further strengthen people to people connectivity through Rail networks. This third passenger train service between New Jalpaiguri (India) – Dhaka (Bangladesh)- 'Mitali Express' which was virtually inaugurated by both the Prime Ministers on 27th March, 2021.³⁴ Both the governments decided to commence Dhaka-Siliguri-Gangtok-Dhaka and Dhaka-Siliguri-Darjeeling-Dhaka bus service to enhance people to people contacts between the two countries.

'Maitri Setu', known as the 'Gateway of Northeast', is a 150-meter long (490-foot) bridge on the Feni River that connects Tripura in India to Chittagong port in Bangladesh. It provides a shorter and more cost-effective alternative to the longer route through Assam between India's Eastern and Western states. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina laid the foundation stone for the bridge in June 2015. In 2016 it has been started with an estimated cost of Rs.70 crore in Tripura to transport heavy machineries and goods from the northeastern

³³ 'India to consider Bangladesh proposal for second Maitree train', BusinessStandard, 7 June 2015, http://www.business-standard.com/article/newsians/india-to-consider-bangladesh-proposal-for-second-maitree-train-115060700807_1.html. accessed on 08.09.2022.

³⁴ <https://pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1830026>, accessed on 12.08.2022

states to the rest of India via Bangladesh's Chittagong international port.³⁵ The 150-meter bridge will cut travel time by 36 minutes by connecting Sabroom in Tripura with Ramgarh's Chittagong Sea Port.³⁶ India was responsible for building the bridge and the approach roads to it in Bangladesh and India. For India and Bangladesh, waterway connectivity has enormous potential for economic and interpersonal connections. First signed in 1972, the India-Bangladesh Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade is renewed every two years. Some experts are hesitant to accept waterways as the cheapest mode of transportation when discussing India-Bangladesh protocol routes due to the fact that most rivers are not navigable throughout the year. In order to solve this issue, adequate dredging facilities should not only be established but also made mandatory to enable the rivers navigable. A draft proposal that would allow coastal trade between India and Bangladesh was recently approved by the Bangladesh Cabinet.³⁷ The time it currently takes for trade between the two countries via river and sea routes. It will greatly reduced time and cost for goods. The agreement states that the route will only be open for the movement of cargo. It does not cover the movement of passengers, warships, paramilitary forces, or oceanographic and scientific research vessels. A planned standard operating procedure (SOP) will be used to put the agreement into action. With automatic renewal provisions, the agreement will operate for a period of five years. A joint monitoring to bring about significant reduction in logistic cost and faster delivery of Bangladesh export cargo, Indian side raised the point regarding permitting third party EXIM Trade under coastal shipping Agreement (PIWTT) by allowing trans-shipment through ports on the East Coast of India. Bangladesh agreed to hold stakeholder consultations and revert on the matter. Both sides have also agreed for development of Jogighopa as a trans-shipment terminal for movement of cargo to Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Bhutan.

Regarding people to people connectivity a large number of patients are traveling from Bangladesh to India for various medical and surgical treatments as medical tourism

³⁵ "India begins work on bridge linking northeast to Chittagong", **TripuraInfoways**, 13 June 2016.

³⁶ 'Tripura-Chittagong sea port bridge to be funded by Centre', **The Times of India**, 29 April 2016, <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/agartala/Tripura-Chittagong-sea-port-bridge-to-be-funded-by-Centre/articleshow/52037052.cms>. accessed on 09.10.2022.

³⁷ "Cabinet okays draft of deal on coastal shipping with India", **The Daily Star**, 5th May 2015, <http://www.thedailystar.net/city/cabinet-okays-draft-deal-coastal-shipping-india-80551>, accessed on 1st October, 2022.

grows rapidly. Saving money on typically expensive procedures is the primary draw for these medical tourists. As a medical tourism destination, India maintains not only a strong accreditation system but also a large number of accredited facilities. Expert physicians and specialists with national and international experience, use of cutting-edge technology that matches global benchmarks, highly trained nurses/paramedics and assistant staff, low or no waiting period rejuvenation and recreational programs for patients, huge costs benefits, therefore, India is unquestionably the best option if a complicated procedure or other treatment has been recommended to the patient or someone who care about. India is a very lucrative destination due to its world-class medical facilities.

India and Bangladesh will work together to promote cruise tourism by using the various transboundary rivers that run between the two countries. As a means of connecting tourist destinations along the Ganga, Brahmaputra, and other transboundary rivers, 'river cruise tourism' on the India-Bangladesh Protocol (IBP) route is being promoted.³⁸ Tourism is an important metric of a country's soft power potential, marked by an increase in movement of people and enabling people-to-people connectivity.

The cultural connectivity between India and Bangladesh was first signed in December 1972, in Dhaka. There are strong cultural, ethnic, and historical ties between the two countries from time immemorial. Art and culture, mass media, including television, radio, films, and the press, sports and youth activities, archaeology, museums, libraries, and archives, and education activities are all covered by this Cultural Agreement of 1972. The Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP) helps India and Bangladesh achieve the goals outlined in the 1972 Cultural Agreement. On 11th January, 2010, during Sheikh Hasina's Visit to India, the current Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP) was renewed in New Delhi in the presence of the Prime Ministers of the two countries.³⁹

³⁸ In 1972, the India-Bangladesh Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade (PIWTT) was first signed to restore trade and transit through the river. In April 2015, the two countries decided to renew the Protocol automatically after five years. In October 2018, the SoP and MoU on Passenger and Cruise Services on Coastal and Protocol routes were signed. Its purpose is to enhance the bilateral movement of passengers, tourists and cruise; improve creditability, accuracy, efficiency and transparency; and minimizes hindrances in service and operation.

³⁹ Press Information Bureau, Government of India, Ministry of Culture, 7th April, 2011, Delhi.

Regarding infrastructure India–Bangladesh bilateral relation and the scale of cooperation is equally wide and touches every aspect—be it digital infrastructure, disaster management, education of students and other aspects of human resource development, training and capacity building, defence cooperation, rail infrastructure, border hatt infrastructure, pipe line project, space technology, nuclear cooperation etc. Infrastructure is the prime factor which determines the connectivity between the two countries. It is the first development parameter of the two countries. In pursuance of the Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) agreement the two countries have also began to cooperate in the sectors like rail, bus, bridge, space and nuclear technology, IT, shipping, electronics, energy, tourism and the civil nuclear programme. Infrastructure is the services and facilities that a country, city, or other area’s economy, households, and businesses require to function. Infrastructure is the collection of facilities and systems that serve that area. Till March 2022 India had funded 68 High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs) in Bangladesh such as construction of student hostels, academic buildings, skill development and training institutes, cultural centres, and orphanages etc.⁴⁰ At the invitation of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of Peoples’ Republic of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina attended the Leaders of SAARC Countries’ video conference on 15th March, 2020, to share assessments of the current situation pertaining to this pandemic, consider best practices, and identify cooperative steps to minimize and mitigate the spread of the disease. In order to assist Bangladesh and develop infrastructure in its fight against the covid-19 pandemic, the Indian government has provided it with three tranches of medical assistance as part of bilateral cooperation for the welfare and collective prosperity of their peoples.

Under this perspective of the dimensions of bilateral relations between India and Bangladesh the proposed research intend to involve with the study of numerous literatures in the form of governments documents, treaties, agreements annual reports, books, articles from different journal, interviews of some prominent personalities and local people to reach out the objectives of the research. I propose to carry out my research work on this following objectives.

⁴⁰ CLAWS Journal I Vol. 15, No. 1. Summer 2022.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the impact of rising Islamic fundamentalism as a security challenges in Indo-Bangladesh bilateral relationship.
- To study as to how the sharing of water shapes the nature and interest of bilateral relationship.
- To examine the root of insurgency in north eastern region of india as well as its impact on Indo-Bangladesh relations?
 - To analyze evolution and development of political, economic, military, technological cooperation between the two countries
 - To highlight the relationships based on cultural connectivity.
 - To analyze the effect of infrastructure in India's relation with Bangladesh.
 - To scrutinize the people to people connectivity over the Indo-Bangladesh relationship
 - To focus on the geo-strategic location of Bangladesh and its implications for Delhi-Dhaka relationship
 - To study Indo-Bangladesh relations over the issue of illegal immigration.
 - To analyze India's economic assistance to Bangladesh in difference phases.

Research Methodology

In the study, both primary and secondary source materials are used. The study has attempted to analyze and show how different factors combine in particular way to deal with various aspects of India-Bangladesh bilateral relations. The study will be based on textual reading of primary sources on the subject. The study will also highlight the effect of India-Bangladesh bilateral relations (1991-2023) not only at the regional level, but also in the outside world.

The methodology applied to the proposed research has been based on historical, comparative, analytical and survey methods. Application of historical method is necessary as it helps the researcher to approach the past socio-political-cultural and economic dimensions of the two countries. As the historical method is descriptive in nature, it would help in describing different dimensions of past events. The use of

comparative method is essential because it helps in comparing institutional and political development of the two countries in a comparative fashion. Analytical method is useful to have an analytical narrative of the development of the relationship between the two countries. Use of tools of survey method is useful to have more a democratic and participatory research on different aspects of their relations. Further, an attempt has been made to approach both primary and secondary source of collection of data and information. To make this research work imperative, I have adopted interview method where cross examination of different political leaders, intellectuals, government officials and other stake holders of both India and Bangladesh have been made. For this purpose, questionnaire both open ended and close ended has been made after preliminary visit of the concerned states. The data collected on the basis of interview have been analyzed in details.

Research questions

- What are the major impediments in the development of consensus regarding the issues of border security?
- How far Infrastructural development has enhanced dynamics of India-Bangladesh bilateral relation ?
- Under what circumstances both the countries are engaged for solving the problem of terrorism ?
- What are the major irritants in the way of solving the teesta water crisis ?
- What will be the future perspectives of ‘Indo-Bangladesh Ganges water treaty?’
- How far the present political regime in India has involved with the issues of illegal immigration with Bangladesh?
- How far the rail, road air and water connectivity shape the future direction of Indo-Bangladesh relation?
- What is the impact of the ongoing process of Islamisation of Bangladesh on her bilateral relations with India?

Proposed chapterisations of the theme

On the basis of the Research questions this dissertation contains five substantive chapters. The chapters of the thesis would be arranged as follows-

Introduction.

Chapter:I-Historical background of the creation of Bangladesh.(1947-1971)

Chapter:II-Evolution and development of India's bilateral relations with Bangladesh.(1971-1990)

Chapter:III-Issue of border security to Indo-Bangladesh relations.

Chapter: IV-Issue of connectivity as a determinant of Indo-Bangladesh relations.

Chapter:V-Issue of infrastructure in India's relations with Bangladesh.

Conclusion.

Summary of the Proposed chapters

Introduction: This chapter would seek to introduce the research work by highlighting the objectives and plan of work, literature of review, methodology etc.

Chapter: I-Historical background of the creation of Bangladesh (1947-1971)

Chapter: I titled as 'Historical background of the creation of Bangladesh (1947-1971)' highlights the historical perspective of the break up of undivided India as well as the emergence of Bangladesh from united Pakistan on 16th December, 1971. India and Bangladesh share a lot in common, including a shared history and heritage, linguistic and cultural ties, a passion for music, literature, and the arts, ethnic compliance, lingual harmony, India's role in the Liberation War, geographical contiguity, cultural and linguistic affinity, and geographical dependency etc. They have a shared history of fighting for freedom and liberation as well as enduring feelings of fraternal and familial ties. The emergence of Bangladesh in South Asia on 16th December 1971 was the culmination of the struggle of Bengali nationalism to establish a separate identity of its own to secure the rights and identity of Bengalee against the political and economic exploitation of West Pakistan towards the East. This chapter also deals with the first

constituent assembly of Pakistan over the issue of Bengali language, the eight point agreement, formations of Awami League, Bengali language movement of 1952, Formation of Jukto Front before 1954 general election, framing Constituent Assembly for Pakistan, the role of military Government of Iskandar Mirza and Ayub Khan, 1962 constitutional development and 1962 presidential Election, The seventeen-day Indo-Pak war of 1965 over Kashmir, the Agartala Conspiracy Case (Agartala Shoojontro Mamla), 1970 general election in Pakistan and Awami League's landslide victory, Demand for full autonomy of East Pakistan, Operation Searchlight' by Pakistani Army, Role of Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on civil war, India's military assistance to East Pakistan, The Pakistani Instrument of Surrender at Dacca, India's recognition as a first country to Bangladesh's Government on 6th December, 1971 etc are broadly mentioned in this chapter.

Chapter: II-Evolution and development of India's bilateral relations with Bangladesh(1971-1990) :The 2nd chapter entitled 'Evolution and development of India's bilateral relations with Bangladesh.(1971-1990)' focus on the first phase of bilateral relations from 1972-1975 which centered on Bangladesh's Government parliamentary structure. During the initial phase Indo-Bangladesh relations were healthy, robust, and amicable at the outset of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's introduction of the parliamentary form of Government in Bangladesh. The chapter describes Sheikh Mujibur's formation of the first government after independence with a clear pro-Indian foreign policy. Different contradictory issues like military rule, democratic transition, free and fair election, role of first caretaker Government, national identity crisis etc. are also elaborately discussed in this chapter. Here, I have also highlighted evolution and development of India's bilateral relations with different political regimes of Bangladesh from 1971-1990 such as first parliamentary era of Sheikh mujibur rahman's from 1971-1975, General Ziaur Rahman's assassination on 30th May 1981, Lieutenant general Ziaur Rahman's tenure (1975-1980), Indian Prime Minister Morarji Ranchhodji Desai's regime (1977-1979), Indra Gandhi's resurgence phase, the tenure of General Hussain Muhammad Ershad (1983-1990), the tenure of Rajiv Gandhi, tenure of Vishwanath Pratap Sing (1989-1990), the tenure of Begum Khaleda Zia etc. Here, special emphasis has been given on Ganges water dispute popularly known as the Farakka barrage issue raised at the conference of Islamic foreign ministers in Istanbul in May 1976. Bangladesh later made the decision to bring this faraka matter up at the 31st General Assembly Session of the United Nations Organization (UNO). The

military coup led by Husain Muhammad Ershad in March 1982, the border forces of the two countries engaged in occasional firefights at Hili, Belonia points, and across the Mahuri River, the dispute over Exchange of Enclaves, South Talpatti Land Issue etc, are also mentioned in this chapter. The political history of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh in the 21st century reveals that the country was swinging between democracy and dictatorship, despair and hope, mass apathy and violent. The country was passing through a new phase of democratic transition. In 1990, parliamentary democracy was restored under the tremendous pressure of the people of Bangladesh and the joint leadership of all political parties.

Chapter: III-Issue of border security to Indo-Bangladesh relations: The 3rd chapter titled as 'Issue of border security to Indo-Bangladesh relations' implies protecting borderland from the illegal movement of weapons, drugs, contraband and people in indo Bangladesh border. Due to its central geographic location in the South Asian region and to protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity the chapter highlights India's, aspiration to have proper demarcation and protection of its borders. India shares its 4096.7 km borderland with Bangladesh which is porous in nature. The 4096.7 km long India-Bangladesh Border (IBB) is the longest border, covering the states of West Bengal (2,216.7 km), Assam (263 km), Meghalaya (443 km), Tripura (856 km), and Mizoram (318 km). The border traverses a range of natural and cultural landscapes, which pose a challenge to its effective border security management. The terrain along the border is a mix of hilly and jungle tracks, plains, riverside, and low-lying land. This diverse mix of topographical features makes the border extremely porous. It highlights that the Indo-Bangladesh border is generally marked by three different topographies: 1) flat/plain, 2) riverine, and 3) hilly/jungle with practically no natural obstacles. In the era of globalization and technological innovation, the relevance of military borders have significantly increased with the growing vulnerability and trans-national illegal activities in long India-Bangladesh Border (IBB). Here, an attempt has been made to find out the definition and purpose of border management. Three words in common use, namely, 'frontier', 'boundary' and 'border', are technically different although often used interchangeably but modern sense of borders tended to proceed in three stages: 1) establishment, 2) demarcation and 3) control of the border. There are three types of Indian borders according to their vulnerability and the manner in which they have been delineated. History, culture, and religions played a significant role in defining the Indian borders. 1) The first category gendered from the separation movements because

of cultural and religious reasons like Indo-Bangladesh and Indo-Pakistan borders. Some important parts of those borders are still disputed. 2) The second category resulted from reciprocal invasions and reflect regional competition for influence and power like Sino-India borders. 3) The third inherited from the colonial period like the Indian Border with Myanmar, Bhutan and Nepal. The latter was demarcated by bilateral agreements or, at least, are quiet and stable until till now. The chapter broadly discussed two major objectives of the Indian Border management– firstly, to facilitate the movement of legitimate goods and people across the border between two sovereign countries. Secondly to ensure the security of the country by restricting entry of illegal goods and those individuals across the border .The chapter also deals with the origin of border management. Following the Kargil conflict between India and Pakistan in 1999, the border management issue was brought to the force, and a report was provided by the Kargil Review Committee. On the basis of the report the Indian government established a ‘Task Force’ on Border Management in April 2000 under Madhav Godbole’s leadership. Later the Group of Ministers (GoM) broadly recommended that concerted efforts be made to settle border disputes and demarcate the limits at the earliest opportunity and proposed a ‘Department of Border Management’ be created under the Ministry of Home Affairs, which would focus on border issues. State-wise Status of Border Fencing on Indo-Bangladesh Border, Fencing off Indian Borders, ‘One border one force Policy’, Obstacles for fencing in India–Bangladesh border, Some major problematic Issues that affected India–Bangladesh Border security, are also elaborately mentioned here.

Chapter: IV-Issue of connectivity as a determinant of Indo-Bangladesh relations:

Chapter: IV titled as ‘Issue of connectivity as a determinant of Indo-Bangladesh relations’ gives an important aspect of Indo-Bangladesh relations emerges from the level of development between these two countries particularly in respect of Rail, road, Air, and bus. Here, attempt has been made to highlight the connectivity issue between India and Bangladesh since 1991. Connectivity for greater understanding, can be divided in the following heads A) Physical Connectivity. B) people to people Connectivity C) cultural Connectivity.

Some of the major obstacles of the infrastructural connectivity in the border regions of the two neighbouring countries include poor roads, and customs offices, poor electricity

and internet connections, low cross border agency, lack of co-ordination and complex regulatory procedures etc. have been well discussed here.

Physical connectivity comprises land through road and rail networks, water through sea, port and inland water ways. Additionally, this chapter highlights collaboration in the field of energy, gas, electricity, hydropower; coordination in border management to facilitate movement of people across the border states through tourism, local trade, opening border haats, etc. and also the institutional and administrative mechanisms necessary for coordination among various agencies and stakeholders between the two countries. Road networks and railways connectivity constitute an essential means of communication for the purpose of trade and commerce. At present, rail links between the two countries are not central in terms of their use. They require substantial enhancement in order to link the region more successfully. Road networks, which are more in use, are highly inadequate to reach the level of connectivity-all are highlighted here.

Steps for establishing enhanced connectivity links through railways, roads, inland waterways and ports were officially discussed in 2010 and 2011 joint communiqués. Here, the problems were highlighted and chalked out the ways to remove them.

Chapter:V-Issue of infrastructure in India's relations with Bangladesh:Chapter: V titled as 'Issue of infrastructure in India's relations with Bangladesh' highlights meaning and definition of infrastructures. It is the collection of facilities and systems that serve that area. Public and private infrastructures like roads, railways, bridges, tunnels, water supply systems, sewers, electrical grids, and telecommunications make up infrastructure. The chapter also deals with sustainable infrastructure in light of the enormous societal transformations that required to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Infrastructure divided into two distinct categories, such as 1) hard infrastructure and 2) soft infrastructure. Hard infrastructure is the physical networks that a modern industry needs to work. Hard infrastructure includes roads, bridges, ports and railways etc. All institutions that uphold a country's economic, health, social, environmental, and cultural standards are considered to be part of the country's soft infrastructure. These institutions include educational programmes, official statistics, parks and recreational facilities, law enforcement agencies, and emergency services etc. Infrastructure further divided into following distinct categories. 1) Sustainable infrastructure, 2) Material infrastructure. The chapter gives idea of Sustainable

infrastructure that refers to the processes of design and construction that take into consideration their environmental, economic, and social impact. Sustainable infrastructure included water, energy, transportation, and waste management. Renewable energy, power plant types and the means of exchange between them and the homes and businesses that use them are all part of sustainable energy infrastructure. Wind, solar, and hydraulic power are examples of well-researched and widely used renewable energy sources, as are more recent and less utilized forms of power generation like fusion energy. In order to be taken into account sustainable, energy infrastructure must not only maintain sufficiently low prices for consumers but also maintain a strong supply in relation to demand. India–Bangladesh bilateral relation and the scale of cooperation is equally wide and touches every aspect—be it digital infrastructure, disaster management, education of students and other aspects of human resource development, training and capacity building, defense cooperation, rail infrastructure, border hatt infrastructure, pipe line project, space technology, nuclear cooperation etc all are discussed in this chapter.

CONCLUSION

The study of ‘Dynamics of India-Bangladesh relations since 1991: border security, connectivity and infrastructure’ clearly state that dynamics of India-Bangladesh relations has gone through several ups and downs. The relationship between India and Bangladesh has witnessed their share of positive and difficult phases between this particular span of time (1991-2023). There are some areas where there have been cordial cooperation between the two next door neighbours, like the Ganges water distribution treaty, successful repatriation of the chakma refugee, the settlement of the long standing boundary dispute in 2014, the ratification of the Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) have been major developments in their relationship in recent decade. Besides in the field of energy, gas, electricity, hydropower; coordination in border management to facilitate movement of people across the border, local trade, opening border haats, introduction of passenger and freights train, Kolkata-Dhaka, Kolkata-Agartala-Dhaka bus service, inland water connectivity etc. are fully solved issues. All these issues have been negotiated and settled to some extent. In pursuance of several bilateral agreements the two countries have began to cooperate in the sectors like rail, bus, bridge, space and nuclear technology, Information Technology, shipping, electronics, energy, medical tourism, medical assistance of Covid 19 pandemic, cruise

tourism and the civil nuclear programme. In the field of disaster management, education of students and other aspects of human resource development, training and capacity building, defence cooperation, rail infrastructure, community development projects, development of visa application centres, border hatts infrastructure, friendship pipe line project, space technology and scientific cooperation, nuclear cooperation, bilateral trade and investment, dredging project, thermal power project, broadcasting cooperation, land and customs station, check posts infrastructure etc. both the countries are working in a positive way.

But apart from these issues in the dynamics of their relationship there are a large number of areas where conflict and confrontation still persist. There have some major thorny issues that persisted over the decades. During Khaleda Zia's tenure several state actors and non state actors like ISI, religious fundamentalist, religious political parties, foreign policymakers and pro Pakistani Bangladeshi army contributed to the Islamisation process in Bangladesh. During her second tenure from 2001-2006 the four party coalition government namely BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh Jatio Party, Islami Oikya Jote, led by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), largely ignored Indian security concerns, border infiltration and sheltered Pakistani Inter Service Intelligence (ISI) based insurgent groups like National Democratic Front of Bodoland, National socialist council of Nagaland, National Liberation Front of Tripura, People's Liberation Army of Manipur, United Liberation Front of Assam, Muslim United Liberation Tigers of Assam, Kamtapur Liberation Organisation, People's United Liberation Front (PULF), Zomi Re-unification Organisation (ZRO), Thadou People's Liberation Army (TPLA), Manipur Naga People's Front (MNPf), Manipur Naga Revolutionary Front (MNRf), People's Liberation Army (PLA) and its political wing the Revolutionary People's Front (RPF), United National Liberation Front (UNLF) and its Armed wing the Manipur People's Army (MPA), Kuki Independent Army (KIA), Zomi Revolutionary Front (ZRF), Hynniewtre National Liberation Council (HNLC), Garo National Liberation Army (GNLA), The National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khaplang) [NSCN/K], Adibasi Kobra Force (Assam) etc. in Indian North Eastern Region to spread terror and hamper Peace and prosperity in the country. Nevertheless, the demand of self-determination by those above mentioned separatists and insurgent groups with the support of external actors such as ISI of Pakistan, Joish-e-Mohammad, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Lashkar-e-Omar, Jammāt-e-Islami, Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh, Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, Taliban, Harkat-ul-Jehad-al-Islami Bangladesh,

Al-Qaeda, Hizb-ut-Tohid in Bangladesh have consolidated and expanded their institutional transnational networks with the help of Begum Khaleda Zia Government's support in the past decades.

Bilateral relations between the two countries since 1971 are in turmoil. There are some obvious reasons for this. The majority people of Bangladesh have been likely to be in the mindset of conceiving India as a constant threat to Bangladesh integrity and prosperity. There has been a phenomenon among the big countries to dominate small countries by hook or by crook in order to make their influence upon the smaller countries for the sake of their dominance upon the smaller one. Since the creation of Bangladesh in 1971 this country faced several tremendous problems to make her economy stable and politically strong to face outside challenges. The main reason behind this has been the fundamental attitude of regionalism among them which make this country to expand its wider vision of statism beyond its periphery. It is argued that the people of today's Bangladesh did not belong to the genesis of the creation of Bangladesh and they thought that Bangladesh is nothing but a territory entirely dominated by successive Indian governments' hegemony. Bilateral relations between India and Bangladesh in the South Asian region in general, would always be affected by this geo-political factor. This psychological fear factor working in the mind of majority Bangladeshi people that perceives India as a threat. Bangladesh, on account of being small in size and deficient in resources, was run by this kind of psychopathological phenomenon. A latent fear prevails upon the majority people of Bangladesh by Bangladeshi government controlled media that an Indian hegemony encompasses Bangladesh and Bangladesh will act as a satellite state of India. In Bangladesh domestic politics, during four party coalition government's tenure from 2001-2006, Bangladesh branded India as an 'enemy country' and as a result, during the BNP coalition tenure from 2001-2006 the bilateral ties were at low ebb. Recently, Indian Government's decision to construct the barbed wire fence on Indo-Bangladesh border as a 'protective device' to prevent the influx of illegal migrants and cross border terrorism across the border but the Bangladesh government has strongly rejected it, described the fence as the psychological expression of India's 'hegemony' in south Asian region. Besides, India's indifference to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh and India's strategic closeness with Myanmar is another bone of contention between the two countries that hampers the depth of bilateral relations. There was enough evidence available of illegal arms from China, arriving in Cox's Bazar and Chittagong, and being

distributed to different destinations in the North East India to separate it from mainland India.⁴¹ Small states insecurity-syndrome of India's predominance in South Asian region is paramount reason for People's Republic of Bangladesh to develop geo-economic-defensive-strategic relations with People's Republic of China. The friendly relation between China and Bangladesh in regional and international affairs is also a cause of concern in the growing bilateral relations between India and Bangladesh. During Begum Khaleda Zia term of office (1991-1996, 2001-2006) China's 'encirclement policy', 'strategic defense closeness' with Bangladesh, extreme Islamic fanatic fundamentalism and Zia's friendly relation with China and Pakistan were a matter of security concern for Indian Government. At the conclusion of Chinese Prime Minister Zhu Rongji's visit to Bangladesh, Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre (BCFCC) built at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in Dhaka. In December 2002 Khaleda Zia paid a five-day official visit to China when China agreed to provide Bangladesh with a grant of about US \$ 7.25 million for the construction of the sixth Bangladesh-China Friendship Bridge over the Dhaleswari River for the betterment of rural development. China's efforts to develop strategic depth in Bangladesh, as part of its foreign policy of encircling India have raised eyebrows in India. The proposed highway from Kunming in China to Chittagong via Myanmar would facilitate strategic connectivity between the two countries. These were great blow to India for geo-economic safety and geo-strategic security. Not only that, Bangladesh's proximity with China and Pakistan was a matter of concern for Indian foreign policy during that time to till date. In October 2016, Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Bangladesh. In July, 2019 Bangladesh Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina officially visited China and attended at the 13th Summer Davos Forum. Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang, chairman of the standing committee of People's Republic of China Li Zhanshu met Hasina respectively for upgrading fruitful coordination and cooperation in the various fields of politics, economy, military and culture. China is Bangladesh largest trading partner and Bangladesh is also China's third largest trading partner in South Asia. On 15th June, 2020 at patrolling point 14, Indian and Chinese troops clashed for six hours in a steep section of a mountainous region in the Galwan Valley was a great threat to Indian security and proved Chinese territorial expansionism policy. China's proposed 'One Belt-One Road' project through Pakistan and India's proposed 'Rail and Shipping Corridor' through

⁴¹ Op.cit, BGB Darpan 2012-2016', Border Guard Bangladesh, at www.bgb.gov.bd, accessed on 28.07.2022

Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Jordan excluding Pakistan to connect European Union is a counter pressure to China to stop Chinese territorial expansion and hegemony in South East Asia and South China sea. In response to media queries on the so called 2023 “standard map” of China, the Official Spokesperson, Shri Arindam Bagchi said: “We have today lodged a strong protest through diplomatic channels with the Chinese side on the so called 2023 ‘standard map’ of China that lays claim to India’s Arunachal Pradesh as Chinese territory. We reject these claims as they have no basis.” Such steps by the Chinese side only complicate the resolution of the boundary question.⁴² The BRICS expansion process and the decision on inviting the Argentine Republic, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to become full members of BRICS from 1st January 2024 once again proved Chinese hegemonic strategic control over the new member countries⁴³ in order to expand its power, position and influence in those regions to accommodate its long term interest. On 13th May 2023 at Indo-Bangladesh 6th oceanic conference Indian foreign minister S. Jayshanker told about the Chinese hegemony in South Asian region.

The conclusion that have been derived from my PhD study that there are a large number of long standing bilateral disputes between the two countries that have not been resolved due to lack of genuine political will on the part of Bangladesh and to some extent India as well. It can be pointed out that the issues of confrontation between India and Bangladesh so far as the regimes changes in both the countries are concerned. Here in lies the episode that the two contending parties the Awami League or the BNP on the Bangladesh side and the U.P.A led by the Indian National Congress and the N.D.A led by Bharatiya Janata Party (B.J.P) on the Indian side made the paradox of the growing relations complicated. In the era of globalization and liberalization common awareness among the common masses of Bangladesh as well as media, intelligentsia, politicians irrespective of caste, creed, religion and community must realize that the real enemies of the country are not the small states insecurity-syndrome of India’s predominance, or psychological fear of Indian hegemony or blind anti-Indianism but poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition, natural calamities and unequal distribution of the social resources along with communalism, terrorism or religious fundamentalism in Bangladesh. India, a next door neighbouring country of Bangladesh, always plays a vital role in the global

⁴² Press conference, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 29th August, 2023, New Delhi.

⁴³ Ananda Bazar Patrika, (Kolkata), 19th August, 2023, p-9

politics and international affairs. In the era of globalization and liberalization the bilateral relations between the two countries are more economic in nature. However there are number of socio-cultural and political issues which have potentiality to influence the nature of course of their bilateral relations. Bangladesh should avoid vacillating attitude and adopt the pragmatism, positive and realistic approach to deal with all the matters for its national interest. Bangladesh has become a significant partner to India in regional politics and development over the past twenty years. Besides, though Bangladesh is not the member of Group 20 countries, India has shown her genuine solidarity by inviting Bangladesh as guest country in the global G-20 Leaders Summit on 9-10 September, 2023 held in New Delhi under the Indian Presidency. Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a bilateral meeting with his Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina, a day before the G-20 Leaders Summit begins in Delhi. The two leaders discussed the entire gamut of bilateral cooperation including political and security cooperation, border management, trade and connectivity, water resources, power and energy, development cooperation, cultural and people to people ties. Current developments in the region and cooperation in the multilateral fora were also discussed to strengthen the multifaceted relationship between the two countries based on strong historical and cultural ties and mutual trust and understanding.

BK Das

Countersigned by the supervisor:

PROFESSOR
Dept. of International Relations
Jadavpur University
Kolkata - 700 032

Date: 30.11.2023

Siddhartha Naskar

Candidate:

Date: 30/11/2023

THE END