

# **Fragile Democracy, Indications of Failed State and Lack of Good Governance: Perspective Bangladesh**

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## **Introduction:**

Bangladesh is one of the countries who follows the Westminster style of Democracy. People elect political party to rule themselves for five years. When the party comes to the power, they try to be more autocratic than the previous one. From the beginning of British rule in Bangladesh to the present era, people chose many governments. However, the government becomes more tyrannical after becoming rulers. This repressive attitudes brings another third power bypassing the democratic elected government. The inefficiency of government, enviousness makes easier the way for military coup. People regained the democracy but it become vulnerable facing different challenges. Ahamed (2004)<sup>1</sup> said,

*“It is evident from the findings that political institutions in Bangladesh are fragile in the absence of democratic political culture. Respondents showed considerable skepticism about significant changes without having political consensus. The lack of any consensual model of democracy and the political intolerance reinforce this fragility. ”*

The people of Bangladesh struggled for a strong democracy. Chaotic politics, struggle to go power and the politics of votings become more important. As a result the parliament becomes less important and inactive. The question is who is responsible for this failure? Is it for lack of trust or for discontinuity of democratic process. The study will try to focus on how the democracy of Bangladesh become endangered, how does the lack of good governance brings fragile democracy, how does the lack of trust brings third force to take the power.

## **Key words**

Good Governance • Fragile Democracy • Failed State • Military Power • Parliamentary Democracy • Rule of Law • Human Rights • Role of Civil Society • Awami League (AL) • Bangladesh Nationalist party (BNP) • Caretaker Government • Hefajot-e-Islam • Jammāt-e-Islam • Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman • Rakhi bahini (BAKSAL) • theism-atheism • Shahbagh Movement • Ziaur Rahman • Martial Law • Jama'atul Mujahedin Bangladesh (JMB) •

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### Objective of the Study:

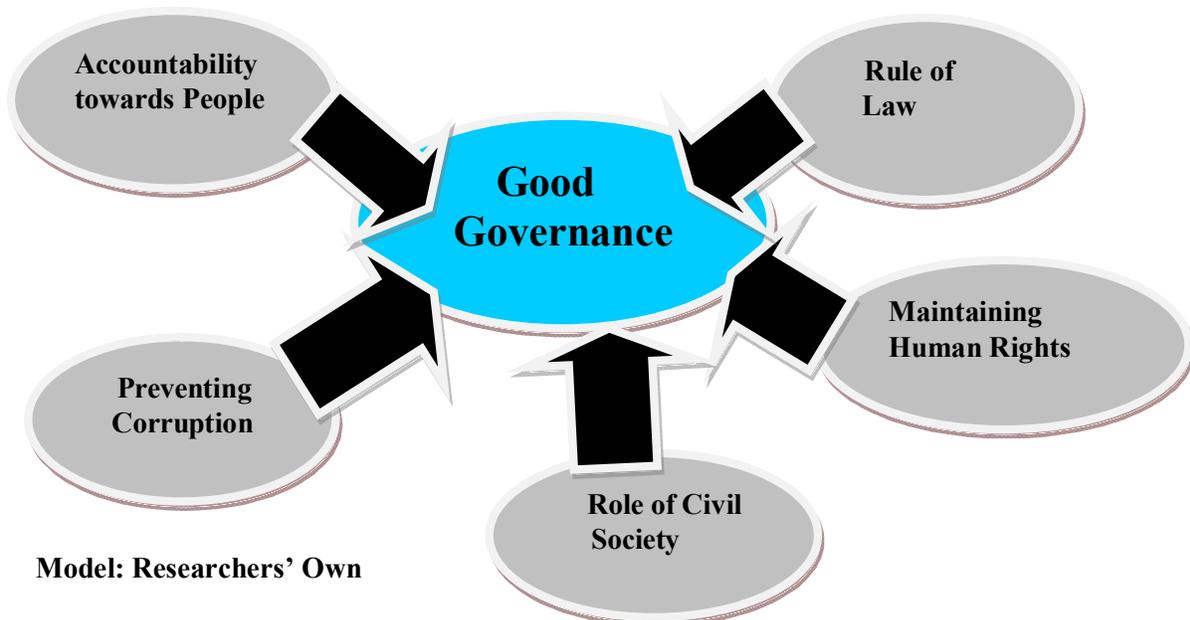
The main objective of the study is to discuss the undemocratic behaviour of the democratic government in terms of Bangladesh. Bangladesh is a democratic state by constitution. It is a matter of great regret the democracy of the country have stumbled several times. Democracy becomes inactive. Before election, political parties publicized the parliamentary democracy. When they come to the government, they try to repress the opposition parties. Opposition parties boycott the parliament and go for street protest. The people suffer for the clash and protest. The enviousness of the political party, lack of trust bring the third force to the power. From the perspective of that, the objectives of the study are:

- Why does democratic system fail?
- How does the economic framework fail?
- How does the present social structure bring social inequality?
- How does the military take power?
- To know the present scenario of good governance.

### Arrival of Third Force and Theoretical Framework:

The article covers the ‘Theory of Good Governance’, ‘Theory of Failed State’ as a theoretical background. Theory of Good Governance has a long history from the city state of Greece to present era . It is necessary to rule the country efficiently. World Bank, IMF and UNDP accepted the good governance formally. In spite of debates these organizations are agreed on few features of good governance. According to Drake et al. (2001) they are <sup>2</sup>-

- Accountability to the people
- Strengthening the rule of law
- Preventing the corruption
- Strengthening human rights
- Elaborating the role of civil society in development



Here the goal of the good governance is to make a relationship with the society to the state. The relationship moves the country towards social, economic and political prosperity. However, the rule of Bangladesh lacks of these elements. This lacking brings the third force more easily to the power. Masttor (2009) said <sup>3</sup>,

*“Since independence Bangladesh has been a victim of continual political turmoil. It got bogged down in the power struggle between three powerhouses — the army and the two dynastic political parties, Awami League (AL) and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) kept the country in the down whirl.”*

We can relate the 'Theory of Failed State' to the article. The theory has a long history of its own. But, academicians gave the importance to the theory after September 11 attacks on USA. A country can be failed for many reasons. One of them is when a state cannot give a positive politics for its people. For that reason, the state loses the legitimacy of the power. We can quote Rotberg (2002), who said <sup>4</sup>-

*“Nation-states fail because they can no longer deliver positive political goods to their people. Their governments lose legitimacy, and in the eyes and hearts of a growing plurality of its citizens, the nation-state itself becomes illegitimate.”*

Political clash, civil war and fragile law and order situation make the state failure. It also brings the failure in the working procedure of the state. Relating to this, John (2004) said <sup>5</sup>-

*“Onset of political violence, including civil war, does not necessarily imply state failure; the persistence of such violence certainly constitutes at least a failure in some basic sub-components of state functions like the provision of peace and security throughout the totality of a nation-state's territory.”*

Ncube et al (2012) also quoted that <sup>6</sup>-

*“Political clash moves the country towards the failed state. People loose their confidence on the ruler when the see the degradation of law and order situation and corruption. Another group tries to take the chance of that. And the group tries to gain the power.”*

After the independence, Bangladesh experienced a chaotic situation in different sectors. The law and order situation was getting worse. And at the same time supporters of ruling party Awami League engaged in corruption. After four years of liberation, a group of junior army killed the father of the nation 'Sheikh Mujibur Rahman'. His assassintaion brought the military force in power. After a long time Bangladesh statrted its journey to the democracy. After 31 years, in 2007 Army backed caretaker governmnet came to the power for the clash between Awami League and BNP. The people supported the caretaker government for the rivalry of two major prties and fragile situation of the country. We can relate this 'theory of failed state' in regrding to the article.

## **Research Methodology :**

The article is based on the case study section of the qualitative research method. Researchers try to discuss the event with the help of case study. Wimmer and Dominick (1987) defined the case study<sup>7</sup>-

“Empirical inquiry that uses multiple sources of data to investigate problem.”

The procedure which helps to find the causes of the problem is called case study. The article emphasizes on lackings of democracy in Bangladesh and reasons for the arrival of third force in politics. Researchers focuses on historical events of Bangladesh and used those as data.

## **Research Questions:**

The research questions of the study is placed on the below

- Why does the democracy of Bangladesh fail?
- How does the democratic failure brings crucial situation?
- How does the third force come into the power?

To find out the answers researchers discussed the important historical events from the British rule to present Bangladesh. At the same time researchers emphasized on the reasons for discontinuity of political stability.

## **British Rule:**

Nawab Alivardi Khan was the Nawab of Bengal. After his death, his grandchildren from daughters' side, Sirajuddaulah succeeded in throne. After the succession, Nawab Sirajuddaulah experienced a conspiracy from the British side. At last he lost the War of Plessey in 1757. The following reasons contributed to the outbreak of his significant war<sup>8</sup>-

(a) The English wanted to establish their political, administrative and economic supremacy over Bengal for which it was essential to wage war against the Nawab. So they wanted to dethrone the Nawab, Sirajuddaula and dethroned Mir Jafar their puppet in his place and fought the decisive battle of Plessey.

(b) The relatives of Sirajuddaula opposed him. The English supported Shaukat Jang but they failed to remove Sirajuddaula. As Sirajuddaula began to watch their activities very minutely, they decided to remove him from the throne by all means.

(c) The English never respected the Nawab, hence the feeling of hatred also developed in the heart of the Nawab for the English. However, the Nawab wanted to strike a compromise with them but he failed and war broke out between the two.

(d) The British knew that in spite of all power and efficiency, the army of Sirajuddaula would prove to be worthless because of the traitors. The English concluded a secret treaty with Mir Jafar on 4<sup>th</sup> June 1757. However, the army of Sirajuddaula was strong enough to defeat the English but

because of the traitor Mir Jaffar the army had to remain inactive. Which resulted in the defeat of Sirajuddaula. This event marked the beginning of distrusted and dirty politics.

In 1765 the British captured the tax collection power of Bangla, Bihar and Orissa. Permanent Settlement of 1793 dismissed the Nawab rule of Bengal. At the same time the suppression of the British was nobound. Realting to this Karl Marx (1979) said <sup>9</sup>-

*“England has broken down the entire framework of Indian society, without any symptoms of reconstitution yet appearing. This loss of his old world, with no gain of a new one, imparts a particular kind of melancholy to the present misery of the Hindoo, and separates Hindostan, ruled by Britain, from all its ancient traditions, and from the whole of its past history. ”*

We can say that the British took the power. They suppressed the mass people to keep the power untouched. However, mass people revolted several times. We see Sepoy Munity, Fakir Revolt, Indigo Revolt so on.

### **Suppression of the British and Partition of India:**

Not only British rulers forced the mass people to sustain the power, but they formulated a policy of Divide and Rule to rule smoothly. The policy brought the communalism in Indian subcontinent. The motive of the policy was to divide the Hindus and Muslims in terms of religion, caste and class. And the impact of the policy can be seen in the both society of Hindus and Muslims. In 1940, The Father of the Pakistan nation Mohammad Ali Jinnah said <sup>10</sup> -

*“Musalmans are not a minority... Musalmans are a nation according to any definition of a nation. ”*

The grievence of the people and communalism forced the British to hand over the power to the mass people. So they divided the subcontinent into two countries, India and Pakistan. The East Pakistan was 1200 kilometres far away from the West Pakistan. However, two countries were emerged in the map in terms of religion.

### **Birth of Pakistan and Aftermath:**

East Pakistan had the majority people in comparison to West Pakistan. There were differences between both parts. One question was emerged in both parts of the Pakistan about the state language. West Pakistan tried to impose the Urdu as the state language of Pakistan. Bengali encyclopedia stated that <sup>11</sup>-

*“ The students were determined to violate Section144 and held a student meeting at 11.00 am on 21 February on the Dhaka University campus, then located close to the Medical College Hospital. .... Thousands of students from different schools and colleges of Dhaka assembled on the university campus while armed police waited outside the gate. When the students emerged in groups, shouting slogans, the police resorted to baton charge; even the female students were not spared. The students then started throwing brickbats at the police, who retaliated with tear gas. Unable to control the agitated students, the police fired upon the crowd of students, who were proceeding towards the Assembly Hall (at*

*present, part of Jagannath Hall, University of Dhaka). Three young men, Rafiquddin Ahmed, Abdul Jabbar and Abul Barakat were fatally wounded. .... The language movement continued until 1956. The movement achieved its goal by forcing the Pakistan Constituent Assembly in adopting both Bangla and Urdu as the state languages of Pakistan. ”*

From the beginning of partition West Pakistan tried to exploitate East Pakistan. The exploitation of West Pakistan is placed on the below:

**State Leadership:** West Pakistanis gripped the state leadership of Pakistan. From 1947 to 1958 eight prime ministers ruled Pakistan. Only Hossain Shahid Sorwardy was from East Pakistan of them. At the same time all the state leaders were Urdu speakers.

**Economic Inequality:** After the partition, all the government organizations were established in West Pakistan. It was beneficiary for the people of West Pakistan. It also expedited the inequality and brought the revolution in East Pakistan. The table which was given by Asadullah (2006), placed on the below which will give more clear portrait of the inequalities <sup>12</sup>.

**1:Table  
Per capita income in East and West Pakistan (in Rupees)**

Year	East Pakistan	West Pakistan	Difference
1949-50	287	338	51
1959-60	278	366	88
1969-70	537	331	206

**Adminstrative Inequality:** There was an inequality in central adminstration of Pakistan. In 1955 there were 19 secretaries in different ministries, none of them were from East Pakistan. There were 908 officers in armed forces. Only 14 of them were from East Pakistan. The people of East Pakistan sought the freedom from the Indian Hindus. However, East Pakistan fell into the dominance of West Pakistan. The history of British period was repeated again.

**Internal Colonial Policy:** West Pakistan started quasi colonial rule after the partition. The government posted the Urdu spoken people in every administrative post. East Pakistan earned a good amount of money from exporting. West Pakistan spent the money for the sake of Urdu spoken people.

### **Birth of Bangladesh and Temporary Ending of Inequalities**

Though Pakistan was created in terms of religion. Bengali middle class hoped that they would be partner of the power. However, it was not fulfilled. Language Movement of 1952, Anti Auyb Khan Protest of 1962, Mass Uprising of 1969 and the Genocide of 25<sup>th</sup> March 1971 forced the East Pakistan to become a sovereign state. Pakistan created a story of military coup and the

failure of writing the constitution for a long time. East of Pakistan was the example of being repressed by the West Pakistan. Researchers Muhammad Ijaz Laif and Muhammad Amir Hamza said <sup>13</sup>,

*“The ruling classes of Pakistan neglected the social diversity and ignored the interests of ethnic and regional minorities. This gave the ultimate death blow to Pakistan. A majority of its people broke away to form a separate country Bangladesh. The remainder of Pakistan is under the siege of political instability, ethnic and sectarian conflicts, religious terrorism and economic inequality.”*

### **Rule of Bangabandhu Shikh Mujibur Rahman:**

Bangabandhu returned to the country after nine months. In that time all the parts of Bangladesh was war jeopardized. Communication sector was almost destroyed. Bangladesh faced a famine in 1974. Hossain (1999) argued that <sup>14</sup>-

*“It argues that this famine was not caused by a sudden decline in the aggregate availability of food by natural disasters; rather, the genesis of it can be traced to expansionary economic policies that the government of Bangladesh undertook immediately after the independence of the country. In fact the process of famine started in 1972 when inflation took off in an otherwise price stable country. By the time inflation exploded in 1974 a large section of the rural people belonging to the lower middle class had already slid downward into the poverty trap.”*

Bangladesh was established to resolve the economic inequality of the society. However, most of the goals of the independence was unachieved in that time. Rather, corruption of the activists of Awami League and downfall of law and order situation brought the famine of 1974. It is accused that Biasness of Bangabandhu towards the freedom fighters created a discontent among the returned army officers of Pakistan. US Library of Congress gave their opinion on the grievance of the army officers <sup>15</sup>-

*“Mujib had an unfailing attachment to those who participated in the struggle for independence. He showed favoritism toward those comrades by giving them appointments to the civil government and especially the military. This shortsighted practice proved fatal. Mujib denied himself the skill of many top-level officers formerly employed by the Pakistan Civil Service. Bengali military officers who did not manage to escape from West Pakistan during the war and those who remained at their posts in East Pakistan were discriminated against throughout the Mujib years.”*

This frustration was quickened by the formation of ‘Jatiya Rakkhi Bahini’. It was a para military force directly under the Prime Minister’s Office. The force was trained by the Indian Army. There was a complaint that ‘Rakkhi Bahini’ was being used by the ruling party to oppress the opponents. Journalist Anthony Mascarenhas (1986) argued that <sup>16</sup>:

*“The Jatiyo Rakkhi Bahini, which roughly translated means National Security Force, was a Para-military force whose members had to take oaths of personal*

*loyalty to Mujib. Despite its high-sounding name, it was a sort of private army of bully boys not far removed from Nazi Brown Shirts.”*

In the month of January 1975 Bangabndhu closed all the newspapers except four newspapers. He established a national party named Bangladesh Krishok Sromik Awami League ( BAKSAL). Bengali encyclopedia stated the impact of BAKSAL<sup>17</sup>-

*“The new system, in fact, created a lot of misgivings and revulsion amongst the bureaucracy, army, and the civil society. Many of the people, who had supported Bangabandhu for his role as a democratic activist, were unhappy to see him as the champion of an authoritarian single party system. However, before the BAKSAL system was put to full operation, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was brutally killed (15 August 1975) with other members of his family at his residence. BAKSAL was neither abrogated nor operational until April 1979 when it was removed from the Constitution and a multi-party system reintroduced.”*

As a result the political vacuum brought the military in power.

### **Rule of Ziaur Rahman and Democracy in the Mask of Military Rule:**

After the assassination of Bangabandhu, his close companion Khandoker Mushtak Ahmed became the president of the country. Brigadier General Khaled Mosharraf led a military coup on 3 November 1975. He disposed the Major General Ziaur Rahman and took the position of Chief of General Staff. On 7 November 1975 Major General Ziaur Rahman became the center of power with the sepy revolution. And Ziaur Rahman became the president of Bangladesh after the resignation of President Justice Abu Sadat Mohammad Saem.

After becoming president, Ziaur Rahman took many steps to legalize his military intervention. In 1977 he amended the constitution of Bangladesh. In the same year he organized a referendum and he got 99.88% vote. In 1979 Ziaur Rahman legitimated his power by the 5<sup>th</sup> Amendment of constitution. He took over a special power as a president. He exercised the power by nominating one fifth of his ministers from the outside of parliament. Ziaur Rahman often said, he will make the politics difficult for the politicians. He resettled the politicians who opposed the liberation war of 1971. He chose ‘Shah Aziz’ as a prime minister who opposed the liberation war. His several ministers were the allies of Pakistan Army on 1971. They were Abdul Halim, Mirza Golam Hafiz, Moshir Rahman, Safiul Azam and Shamsul Huda Chowdhury. He managed the procedure for the war criminal Golam Azam when he returned from Pakistan. Ziaur Rahman gave him a visa of three months and restored his nationality. At the same time Ziaur Rahman faced a challenge from the army and his allies. His close companion Barrister Moudud Ahmed discussed the challenges of Ziaur Rahman<sup>18</sup>-

*“The main opponent of Ziaur Rahman was inside the army. He was also to protect himself from them. Nearly 17 military coups were placed during his rule and he saved himself from all of them. Each and every time he took steps against the opponent military officers. There is a complaint that he hanged nearly 800 officers to death and forced officers to resign. Colonel Abu Taher saved his life. Ziaur Rahman hanged Colonel Taher to death.”*

However, Ziaur Rahman tried to demilitarize. He backed anti Bangladesh and pro Pakistan politicians. As a result his steps made the democracy more vulnerable. Ziaur Rahman was assassinated on 30<sup>th</sup> May 1981.

### **Rule of General Ershad and New Journey towards Democracy:**

Vice president Justice Abdus Sattar took the position of president after the assassination of Ziaur Rahman. He was elected as the president on 21 September of 1982. General H M Ershad disposed the Justice Abdus Sattar from the president post by military coup on 24<sup>th</sup> March of 1982. After the declaration of Martial Law he postponed the parliament and the cabinet. He said, he will go back to the barrack very soon. General Ershad also said, Martial Law was needed to restore the law and order situation. After few days of his taking power, it was clear that General Ershad was trying to capture the power for a long time. He took few tricks to hold the power. He mixed Islam with politics to remain in power permanently. Kabir (2013) said <sup>19</sup>-

*“Ershad took several steps towards Islamization. The new educational policy announced by Ershad government made Arabic a compulsory subject in elementary classes. He introduced the Arabic language and Islamic studies into the school curriculum. According to a policy statement this had been done keeping religious and cultural aspects of the life of people as well as the international needs of Bangladesh in view.”*

A referendum was held in 21<sup>st</sup> March of 1985 to confirm the Martial Law of General Ershad. In that referendum 94.5% of the people supported the military rule which was run by General Ershad. Political scientist Mollah (2012) said regarding the referendum <sup>20</sup> -

*“The voter turn out was not more than 15-20 percent 17 against 72 percent as claimed by the government controlled election commission. The regime's claim of 94 percent voters' support to Ershad's regime in the plebiscite testified how ridiculously Ershad started to manipulate electoral verdict to complete the ritual of political legitimization. ”*

To hold the power General Ershad organized a general election, permitted political activities and hold the local government election. He made a relationship with the civil administration. At the same time military generals who had the part of power during the Zia regime, they also took part in the power axis of General Ershad. However, the people of Bangladesh felt that Martial Law is not the ultimate solution. Public perception had been going in against the military government. So, respecting the perception, two main leaders of two parties, Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia led the mass upheaval of 1990. The Ershad government was disposed. BNP was voted by the majority of the public to rule the country.

The rule of Ershad did not portray the public perception. General Ershad tried to bring a false democracy under the hood of military uniform. People supported the protest of Awami League and BNP to dispose of him. It wrote a new history of Bangladesh.

### **Rule of Khaleda Zia and New Journey of Fragile Democracy:**

12<sup>th</sup> amendment of Bangladesh constitution brought the parliamentary democracy in the country. It was hoped that Bangladesh would go to a new direction of democracy after disposing the Ershad regime. However, the good relation between Awami League and BNP did not last for a long time. Unfortunately, the history of by-election of Bangladesh was not impressive. Of the by-

elections which were held in the past time, the Magura (held on March 20, 1994) one was marked for being most abusive. This election was grossly unfair and marked by widespread violence. Gain, (1995).<sup>21</sup> However, Awami League complained that there was a rigging in most of the seats.

Awami League and its allies strengthened the protest for holding a free and fair election under the caretaker government. 147 members of the parliament boycotted the parliamentary procedure for 10 months. BNP government carried out the parliament. Awami League led alliance carried out continuous strikes and other protests. BNP did not pay attention to the protest of Awami League. SO, it organized a general election on 15<sup>th</sup> February, 1996. BNP won 278 seats of the 300 seats. The new parliament was lasted only for 12 days. In March 1996, following the political turmoil, BNP brought a constitutional amendment to hold the election under free and fair caretaker government. Chief Justice Mohammad Habibur Rahman was nominated for the chief of caretaker government.

Bangladesh started its journey in 1991 towards the democracy. However, both major parties could not bring effective democracy. People nominated a party with their voting or democratic procedure. When a party came to the power in a democratic way, they became undemocratic. They tried to keep the power by oppressing the opposition parties. The behaviour of the government was nearly repressive. Opposition parties protested against the rage of the government. They called country wide protest or strikes for many times. Chief of Army Staff Lieutenant General Abu Saleh Mohammad Nasim attempted a military coup on 19<sup>th</sup> May, 1996; taking the advantage of intolerable political situation. But he failed. We can say, when the democratic government becomes weak, then the third force tries to come to power. The Same incident occurred after the liberation war. Military force came to the power several times in spite of weak democratic government. For the same reason, General Nasim tried to hold the power. The caretaker government faced the situation prudently.

### **Rule of Awami League and the Repetition of Violence:**

Awami League came to the power in 1996 after 21 years. The party came to the power after a free and fair election which was held under an interim caretaker government. At the same time the election divided the politics of Bangladesh into two parts. Begum (2000) said<sup>22</sup>,

*“Awami League could not manage to come out from the failure of previous government. The party committed to restrain the crime and corruption. Awami League failed broadly. Corruption of the party activists was no bound.”*

From 1996 to 2001, the law and order situation was deteriorated alarmingly. Lack of good governance was prevalent every part of the country. It is accused, deteriorating law and order situation was one of the main reason for the failure of Awami League in 2001 election. At the same time, a huge amount of money was taken away from the small investors in share market by market scamming. Thousands of small investors lost their investment for market rigging. Relating to the statement Journalist Zafar Sobhan said<sup>23</sup> -

*“Indeed, part of the problem is that a not inconsiderable proportion of crime is, in fact, committed by cadres associated with the party in power. It was extortion, looting, rape, and the like committed by AL party activists or their criminal affiliates (often the line between the two is blurry) that had been the biggest black*

*mark against the last AL government (1996-2001) and that had been a major contributory factor to its ignominious defeat in the 2001 election.”*

The period of Awami League led government from 1996 to 2001 was stormy because of degradation of law and order situation, corruption of the activists and the rise of extremism. The protest of the BNP led alliance was added to the situation. They observed 283 days of country wide protests from 1996 to 2001. Public support went against Awami League due to these failures. The reflection of this can be seen in the election of 2001. BNP led Four Party Alliance won in two third seats.

#### **Four Party Alliance : Rise of Violence, Partiality and Revenge**

After the election of 2001 BNP came to the power. Jamat-e-Islami was placed in the cabinet though they opposed the independence of Bangladesh. Aftermath of the election is one of the toughest moments for the Awami League supporters and minorities. Later in 2009 a judicial commission was formed to prove the 2001 post poll violence on minorities. A daily, Dhaka Tribune reported on January 24<sup>th</sup> of 2014. Where the daily said <sup>24</sup> -

*“The judicial body during its probe into the 2001 post-poll violence received 5,571 allegations of killing, rape, arson and looting by activists of the then ruling BNP-Jamaat alliance and it took into account 3,125 allegations.”*

At the same time after 2001 Islamic militant spread their networks more easily. The country saw the rise of extremism like ‘Jama’atul Mujahedin Bangladesh’ (JMB) and so on. Kumar (2012) said on the rise of JMB <sup>25</sup> -

*“The Jama’atul M ujaheedin Bangladesh (JMB) came into limelight on 13 February 2003 when a series of bomb blasts took place inside a tin shed in the Chhoto Gurgola area in Dinajpur town, leaving three persons injured. Besides arms and ammunition police also recovered subscription receipts and leaflets of this group. Among the arrested were two employees of Hazrat Aayisa Siddiqa Salafia Islamia Girls Madrassah. It was also revealed that the organisation had been doing its “underground work” in the region for more than a year and eight of its activists were arrested on 20 May of 2002.”*

And the JMB was backed by the Four Party Alliance government. In that time Nur Mohammad was the Deputy Inspector General or DIG of Bangladesh police of Rajshai. In June 21<sup>st</sup> of 2007 in a interview with the Daily Star, said <sup>26</sup> -

*“From whatever I could know, former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia had the consent to the JMB activities. Her son Tarique Rahman had been supporting the vigilante activities of the militants and and state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar never helped me to fight the JMB. ”*

A grenade attack was carried out on the then leader of the opposition Sheikh Hasina on 21<sup>st</sup> August of 2004. The attack killed at least 21 and injured many others. Police arrested Mufti Hannan the leader of an Islamist organization ‘Harkatul Jihad’. Not only killing attempt on

Sheikh Hasina, but two of the MPs of Awami League ‘Shah AMS Kibria’ and ‘Ahsanullah Master’ were assassinated. In one side Four Party Alliance tried to uproot the opposition parties, on the other side it encouraged corruption in different sectors of the government by misusing the power. The Senior Joint Secretary General of the BNP and the son of Khaleda Zia Tareq Rahman established another power house of the government, called Hawa Bhavan which was parallel to the government. Alamgir (2009) commented on the this <sup>27</sup>-

*“Throughout the 2001-2006 period, the opposition raised in both the parliament and other public forums issues about the non-representative and non accountable nature of decision-making within the government, claiming that Hawa Bhaban, the office of the Prime Minister’s son and his group, was the de facto seat of power in the country.”*

BNP led government brought 14<sup>th</sup> amendment of the constitution. Here the retirement age of the Supreme Court judges was increased from 65 to 57 years. The amendments brought the name of former chief justice K M Hasan as the chief of non party caretaker government in 2006. He was the International Affairs Secretary of BNP when Ziaur Rahman was in power. So, Awami League and its allies questioned the neutrality of him as a chief of non party caretaker government. Awami League and its allies decided not to attend the election under K M Hasan. Justice K M Hasan also denied becoming chief of caretaker government. After his denial Dr. Iajuddin Ahmed took the chief of caretaker government. He was nominated by the Four Party Alliance as a president. His succession was questioned by the Awami League for partisan activities. In a political violence Dr. Fakruddin Ahmed was nominated for the chief of caretaker government. And Dr. Fakruddin introduced a new system of army backed caretaker government. Relating to this Mastoor (2009) said <sup>28</sup>-

*“Since independence of Bangladesh, all these political parties have failed to honour the mandate given them in elections so far. Their tenures have always been marred by despotic rule, rampant corruption and mismanagement. Since 1991, with the inception of the democratic era, the urge for acquisition of power has led to a tug-of-war between the two Begums’ (Khaleda Zia of BNP and Sheikh Hasina of AL). Therefore, the political structure has always remained shaky.”*

### **Rule of Awami League led Grand Alliance and Repetition of Violence:**

When the alliance took the power, there was no sign of chaotic violence for first one year. However, the situation was changed suddenly. The alliance committed to build a corruption free ‘Digital Bangladesh.’ It also took the policy of oppress the opposition parties same as Four Party Alliance did. At the same time, one third force was introduced in the field of politics. ‘Shabagh Movement’ and the rise of ‘Hefajat-e-Islam’ brought a new dimension of political war among the government and ‘BNP’ led opposition parties. Pro ‘BNP’ and ‘Jamaat’ supported mass media played a role against the ‘Shabagh Movement’ and they also supported the claiming of ‘Hefajat-e-Islam’ on banning the movement. They organized a long march towards ‘Motijheel’ the commercial hub of the country on April 6<sup>th</sup> 2013. ‘Hefajat-e-Islam’ announced its supporters will blockade the capital Dhaka from other parts of the country on May 5<sup>th</sup>.

They gave ultimatum to the government and decided to stay in ‘Motijheel’ until their demands are not fulfilled. Law enforcers launched the operation to disperse ‘Hefajat’ activists at night. Nearly 15-27 people died in clashes between law enforcers and Hefajat activists all over the

country. The casualty figures of 'Hefajat' rally in 'Motijheel' became the talk of the country. Rumors spread out in the capital on death numbers. Law enforcers cracked down 'Hefajat' activists middle of the night. At least 10 people were killed and several others injured in the late-night action by the joint forces drawn from BGB, RAB and police to clear the commercial district, according to sources in different hospitals, including Dhaka Medical College Hospital. BNP and its allies took the advantage of the misconception on Hefajat killing. Relating to this Harrission (2013) said <sup>29-</sup>

*"Hefajat has received support from the BNP and the Jatiya Party of General Ershad for its anti-government rallies. BNP leaders attended the April grand rally by Hefajat and one reportedly said that he was "surprised how an 'atheist' like the slain blogger Rajib could survive for so long. "*

The failure of constitutional organizations made the situation more unbearable. The partial recruitment in Public Service Commission, Election Commission and Anti Corruption Commission brought anger among the opposition. The Grand Alliance Government erased the caretaker government system from the constitution by 15<sup>th</sup> amendments. With the participation of other parties 'all party government' ruled the country for three months after October 2013 to January 2014. The Four Party Alliance rejected to take part in the election. They called a country wide protest against the election. However, Election Commission held the election. 154 of 300 seats were remained uncontested. Awami League won 232 of the 300 seats. The average turnout was 39.8%.

After the election, attacks on the minorities were carried out on different parts of the country. Awami League and BNP blamed each other for the attacks. On January 25<sup>th</sup>, The Daily Star reported that <sup>30-</sup>

*"It has been a long period of 43 years. Yet Hindus in Bangladesh remain vulnerable to attacks by anti-liberation forces. Hundreds of Hindu families who fled their homes following post-poll violence in different districts on Sunday are scared to return as the administration could not ensure their security. As soon as the voting ended on Sunday afternoon, BNP and Jamaat-Shibir men looted, vandalised and burned Hindu houses in Thakurgaon, Dinajpur, Rangpur, Bogra, Lalmonirhat, Rajshahi, Chittagong and Jessore. The raids remind many of the atrocities by the Pakistani occupation forces and their collaborators in 1971."*

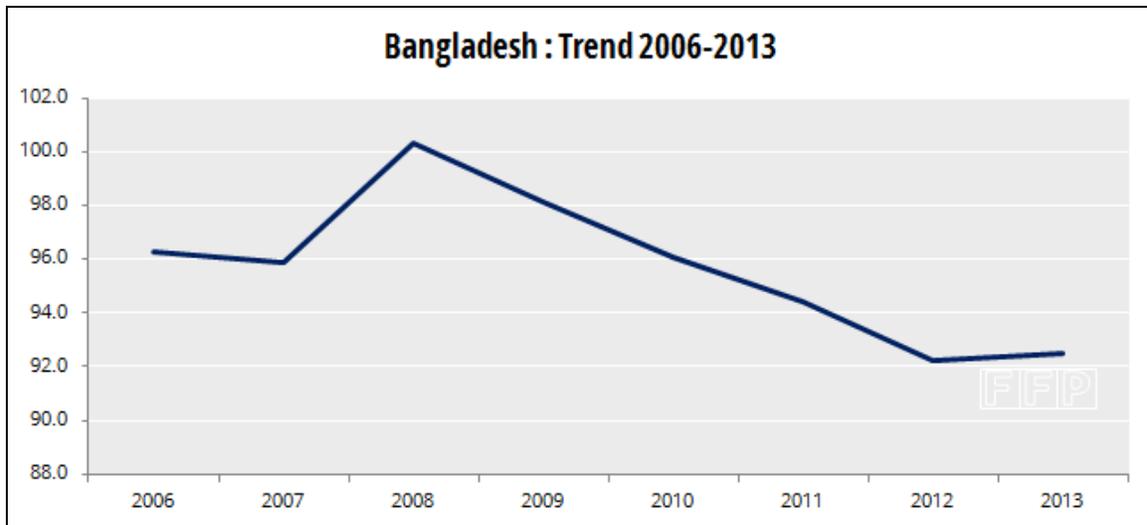
## **Discussion:**

The British ruled the subcontinent and smuggled the wealth to the West. After the partition of East Pakistan experienced military rule for a long time. For that reason, it was needed seven years to write the constitution of the Pakistan. After the birth of Pakistan, it also experienced several governments for a short time. It brought the anger of the people of East Pakistan. After nine months of bloodshed war, Bangladesh got independence. Three million people sacrificed their lives for the sake of a sovereign state. Creation of BAKSAL, famine, corruption and the oppression of 'Rakkhi Bahini' (a paramilitia force) brought frustration among the people, because, they dreamt about the equal and corruption free state. In 1975 Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was assassinated by the small portion of the junior officers of Bangladesh Army. The control of the power went to the hand of army officers after the assassination. Good governance cannot be found in a failed state. When country is being failed, third force took the power. Same thing was

happened in Bangladesh. Political turmoil and the failure of the ‘Sheikh Mujib’ government created a path for the military rule. And it was shaped after the assassination. We see the military rule of Ziaur Rahman and H M Ershad. They came to the power, when the country was fragile and weak. At the same time lack of good governance was also prevailed. When failed state and lack of good governance are in action at the same time, it brings the third force into the power. We can describe the function through the diagram of the below:

**Features of Failed State+ Lack of Good Governance = Bring Third Force in Power**

After the new journey towards the democracy in 1991, the country experienced a clash between two major political parties-Awami League and BNP. BNP came to the power in 1991. The government tried to capture all the seats in by election. BNP hold a general election bypassing Awami League and other parties to remain in power permanently. Awami League tried to protest against the BNP government. It observed 173 days of countrywide protest from 1991 to 1996. As a result, this protest forced the BNP to include the non party caretaker government to the constitution. The caretaker government is a reflection of distrust among the major political parties. When Awami League came to the power, BNP observed 59 days of countrywide protest. BNP tried to throw the Awami League from the government. Reaction of the BNP’s protest Awami League tried to politicize the constitutional bodies of the country. Bangladesh was becoming fragile for the clash of two political parties, which was severe in 2006. In 2006 Bangladesh was in number 19 of Failed State Index, in 2007 the position of Bangladesh was 19. Fund for Peace, the organization which produces the Failed State Index shows the failure of Bangladesh by following chart <sup>31</sup>:



The chart shows Bangladesh was severely failed from 2000 to 2008. We see the army backed caretaker government took the power in 2007. We can say, when the country is vulnerable, there will be a risk of being failure. Political vacuum and unrest brought the third force in power. After the general election of 2009, the index was decreasing till 2012. From 2012 it is going up for the clash of major parties and other variables. Like the political failure of the Afghan leaders brought the Taliban in power more easily. Bangladesh experienced the same thing. Failure of consensus between two parties brought the army backed government. The immediate past Awami League

government created the violent enmity by disposing the caretaker government from the constitution. Jammāt-e-Islami is creating violence all over the country to protect its leaders from the trial of war crime. One of its leaders was hanged to death for war crime of 1971. The issue of 'Hefajot-e-Islam' and 'theism-atheism' issue has been added to the politics. BNP led Eighteen Party Alliance refused to take part in election. BNP is demanding the interim caretaker government for the election. They had started protesting via showing examples of blockade, strikes. This had created violence all over the country. Awami League led alliance hold the election. Barka and Ncube (2012 ) said <sup>32</sup>-

*“The clash of power class and less power class is only for power. Mutual distrust and political violence will create the opportunity for third force taking the power.”*

### **Conclusion:**

The journey of democracy in Bangladesh was not smooth. Military rules and discontinuity of democracy brings the steps of third force. Army came to the power after the liberation taking the chance of political vacuum. It was lasted for 16 years. In 1991 Bangladesh started its journey towards the democracy. But the democracy stumbled for clash and distrust among the parties. The democratic government becomes undemocratic to hold the power for a long time. On the other hand opposition parties try to be in power by and hook and crook. The democracy of Bangladesh has become a transition to go power. It becomes a system for election. The political parties try to go power relentlessly. They also become arrogant in terms of power. We see that example in 2006, which brought a third force of army backed caretaker government. In 2014 Bangladesh is facing the same thing. The clash and rivalry of two major political parties are taking Bangladesh on the brink of being failure in near future.

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