

Bangladesh's Process of Democratization : A Rustowian View

Dr. Arun Kumar Goswami

Abstract

This paper attempts to enquire into the possibility of studying Bangladesh's process of democratization through Rustowian model. Intellectual father of transistology, Dankwart Alexander Rustow (1970) has attempted to create a model of democratization sufficiently flexible to serve as a foundation for the study of a wide range of empirical cases. The model that Rustow devises illustrates a sequence of four phases-national unity as background condition, preparatory phase, decision phase and habituation phase. The national unity of the people of Bangladesh has been demonstrated in the electoral results of 1970's election. That was actually formative phase for democratization in the country. Among many other effects, the election of 1970's had helped to forge "national unity" for democracy. This national unity led to the struggle for democracy against the military rule of Pakistan and ultimately turned into the war of liberation for Bangladesh in 1971. After independence, the making of constitution in 1972 and holding of first parliamentary general elections of independent Bangladesh in 1973 could be cited as significant achievements for democratization. This was actually the preparatory phase of democratization in the country. During the preparatory phase many things went wrong. The period between 1975 and 1990 could be termed as decision phase'. The decisions in favour of democracy results from the interplay of a number of forces. Since precise terms must be negotiated and heavy risks with regard to the future taken, a small circle of leaders is likely to play a disproportionate role. The essence of democracy is the habit of dissension and conciliation over ever-changing issues and amidst ever-changing alignments. During the habituation phase the country witnessed many things like accepting and rejecting the provision of caretaker government for general elections and issuance of national unity cards and holding of four parliamentary general election from 1991 to 2009. In terms of Rustowian point of view, the habituation phase remains 'inconclusive.

*Professor, Department of Political Science, Jagannath University.

Is it possible to examine the process of democratization in Bangladesh through Rustowian model? The processes of democratization in Bangladesh have been making advancement through the chequered route of history. The possibility to explore the process of democratization in Bangladesh through Rustowian model has yet to be examined by the researchers and academics. Intellectual father of *transitology*¹, Dankwart Alexander Rustow (1970)² attempts to create a model of democratization sufficiently flexible to serve as a foundation for the study of a wide range of empirical cases. This paper tries to explore the process of democratization in Bangladesh through Rustow's *dynamic model*. In contemporary world, democratization is considered as an inescapable process through which growing number of political systems are coming out of authoritarianism following the process of democratization. Consequently, voluminous studies have been coming up to study different aspects of this process including the causes, consequences and challenges of democratization in different parts of the world. Using Turkey and Sweden as his case studies, Rustow sketched a general route through which countries travel during democratization. The traditional scholarships of Bangladesh politics in general, identify different causes and challenges, responsible for democratization in the country. Language movement of 1952, Six-point movement of 1966, mass movement of 1969, Parliamentary elections of 1970 and war of liberation in 1971 are considered as the foundations of independent Bangladesh. Nevertheless, these movements have also helped advancing the causes of democratization that continued even after independence. The post-independence Bangladesh has witnessed, among others some remarkable advancement on the way of democratization. They are making of constitution in 1972 and first parliamentary election in 1973 alongside establishing law and order, disarming civilian freedom fighters, rehabilitating refugees reconstructing infrastructure, managing industries left by non-Bengali owners, negotiating with the international community for recognition and assistance, and so on' (Rounaq Jahan, 2002)³. The first parliament in independent Bangladesh had brought about the fourth amendment of the constitution. Apart from changing the form of government from parliamentary to presidential, this amendment (4th) attempted to make a single platform for all existing political parties and tried to exert control over mass-media of the country. Like many other steps of the first democratic government of independent Bangladesh, this amendment had ignited discourse and activities, often destructive, by the opposing political entities. At the same time, the authoritarian vices of the society i.e. the defeated forces in 1970's election and liberation war of 1971, had been

1. In political Science, international comparative law and economics, transitology is the name for the study of the process of change from one political regime to another, mainly from authoritarian regimes to democratic ones. Transitology tries to explain the processes of democratization in a variety of contexts, from bureaucratic authoritarianism and other forms of dictatorship in Latin America and southern Europe to post-communist developments in Eastern Europe. The debate has become something of an academic "turf-war" between comparative studies and area studies scholars, while highlighting several problematic features of social science methodology, including generalization, an overemphasis on elite attitudes and behaviour, Eurocentrism, the role of history in explaining causality and the inability to produce testable hypothesis.
2. Dankwart A. Rustow (1970). Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model" Comparative politics, 1970, Vol. 2, pp. 337-363.
3. Rounaq Jahan (2002). Political Development. In A.M. Chowdhury and Fakrul Alam (Eds.) (2002), Bangladesh on the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.

posing obstacles on the way of democratization. The tragic political change of 15 August 1975, that assassinated the father of nation along with his family members, had paved the way for military interventions. According to a Bangladeshi Political Scientist, 'the mistrust in the Bangladesh politics has been surfaced after the killing of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975 in a military putsch that was followed by more coups in the late 1970s (Talukder Maniruzzaman 2010)⁴. After 1975 there was another *coup de etat* in 1981, Associated with the assassination of the then President Gen. Ziaur Rahman. Afterwards, General H.M. Ershad captured the governmental power by removing Justice Sattar from Presidency. The military interventions of 1975 and 1981 by two generals have brought about the 5th and 7th Amendment to the Constitution that validated the Martial Law regimes. After a prolonged military and pseudo democratic rule from 1975 to 1990, the country had further demonstrated its adherence to the process of democratization in 1990's, through the victory in anti-autocratic movement. During this time, the democratic forces of the country agreed upon an outline for future and devised a caretaker government system-unique in the whole world-to run a credible election and return to the parliamentary system. Later on, the High Court division of supreme Court in its historic judgment declared the Fifth and Seventh Amendments illegal and ineffective. The judgments have also declared the martial law proclamations and all actions done under the martial law after 15th August, 1975 illegal and void (Waliur-ur-Rahaman 2010) However, forty years after independence in 1971 and 20 years after successful anti-autocratic movement in 1990, the country is still struggling to consolidate her democratic achievements.

In view of the above statement this paper attempts to explain the democratization in Bangladesh in terms of *Dankwart A. Rustow's model of democratization*.

Objectives:

The specific objectives of the study are

- 1) To investigate into the struggle for democratization in Bangladesh;
- 2) To inquire into the suitability of Rustow's theorization to explaining the case of Bangladesh;
- 3) To examine the performance of democratic institutions for consolidation of democracy.

Methodology and sources of data and information:

As the article seeks to examine Bangladesh's Process of democratization in terms of Rustowian model, its method would be mostly exploratory one. One the other hadn, it utilises the data and information extracted from different sources which are both secondary and primary.

Rustowian model of studying democratization:

A Professor of Political Science and Sociology, *Dankwart A. Rustow (1970)* challenged the prevailing schools of thought on how countries became democratic (?). He also disagreed with the heavy focus on necessary social and economic pre-conditions for

4. See the interview of Talukder Maniruzzaman mentioned in the report *Nascent democracy, illiberal democracy* by Nazrul Islam, Published in Daily Sun (English Daily Newspaper, Dhaka) 24 October, 2010, p. 115.

democracy and argued that only national unity was a necessary pre-condition for democracy.

The model that Rustow devises illustrates a sequence of four phases or conditions-national unity as a *background condition*, *preparatory phase*, *decision phase* and *habituation phase*. To begin with, a "background condition" of national unity must exist in which "the vast majority of citizens in a democracy-to-be must have no doubt or mental reservations as to which political community they belong to" (p. 350). If this condition is met, an ensuing "preparatory" phase features a protracted classh between polarized social forces. This conflict can take shape in different ways-rural versus urban, urban versus military, etc.-and for different reasons, by economic, political or religious. That the conflict be long in duration and inconclusive is a necessary precondition for democracy, as mutual agreement on fundamentals would obviate the need for compromise through establishment of democratic intuitions in the first place. It is critical that the protagonists sufficiently exhaust themselves so as to be willing to make the necessary concessions for peace through a democratic mechanism, though there is always the risk that the issues may simply subside temporarily with no long-term solution having been achieved. If one side wins decisively, the chances for compromise and thus democracy decline in turn. Rustow also observes that religious and ethnic divisions are generally more difficult to resolve than social/economic divisions and, that an "inclusive compromise" (p. 360) may actually institutionalize the differences.

The preparatory phase ends when the protagonists: accept the existence of diversity in unity and, to that end ... institutionalize some crucial aspect of democratic procedure" (p. 355). This "decision" phase is very complex and involves extensive cooperation and compromise between political leaders as well as certain degree of experimentation to find the best political formula. Naturally, this phase does not necessarily follow from the preceding conditions of unity and struggle, nor is it inevitable that a viable political solution will be found so as to move on the final "habituation" phase. During the concluding phase, the political agreement between the contending parties is rationalized within the whole society: the democratic political structure gains legitimacy by virtue of the enthusiasm of the politicians operating within it and the gradual acceptance by populace over time. "In short, the very process of democracy institutes a double process of Darwinian selectivity in favor of convinced democrats: one among parties in general elections and the other among politicians vying for leadership within these parties" (p. 358).

Rustowian model of democratic transition is impressive in its logic and its simplicity. It identifies the essential generative factors of democratization and, at the same time, is general enough to allow for a high degree of variability in political economic, and social factors in democratization. The model "deliberately highlights certain features of empirical reality and deliberately distorts, simplifies, or omits others" (p. 350).

Rustow is widely cited as the intellectual father of transitology'. In a later period, following the Rustowian model, some scholars have attempted to explain the process of democratization in different parts of the world. Studying the decline in authoritarianism in Latin America and Southern Europe in the 1970s and 1980s, scholars such as Lary Diamond,

Lawrence Whitehead, and Philip Schmitter explained transitions from authoritarianism not in terms of socio-economic or structural changes, but rather in terms of consensus and pacts between elites. The impetus for change comes not from international or socio-economic changes, but from splits within a ruling regime.

It may arguably be mentioned that Rustow's theorizing is built on a comparative study of the much earlier democratization processes of Sweden and Turkey. The relevance of its applicability for a newly democratizing country like Bangladesh may be contested. However, we are going to investigate into justification of this difficulty. On the other hand, while the more typical contribution to the recent transitions is quite *ahistorical* in style and substance, Rustow's argument is explicitly historical. A recently emerging body of literature has raised this important issue again opening it up for further discussion. Mark Thompson (1996), Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan (1996), for example, have highlighted the centrality of the national identity question (they use the term *stateness*) in their recent work. Henry Bienen and Jeffrey Herbst (1991) see the emergence of a sense of national identity as a prerequisite for democratization in Africa, thus confirming Rustow's idea of sequence. Ilter Turan (1997) supports Rustow's view on the role of national identity in his analysis of the cases of Iraq and Central Asian republics, while James Puzzle uses the macro variable of the national identity question to explain why democratic politics is more difficult in Indonesia, which faces the risk of difficult disintegration, and in the ethnically-divided Malaysia, with its weak national identity. As we mentioned earlier, the case of democratization in Bangladesh has not yet been examined in terms of Rustowian model. Accordingly, present study seeks to explore the process of democratization in Bangladesh through Rustowian model of studying democratisation.

Bangladesh Perspectives of Democratization *In view of Rustowian Model:*

Rustow points out; 'The advent' of democracy must not be understood as occurring in a single year. Since the emergence of new social groups and the formation of new habits are involved, one generation is probably the minimum period of transition... The study of democratic transitions will take the political scientist deeper into history than he has commonly been willing to go (p. 351)". However, in terms of Rustowian model we analyse below the process of democratization in Bangladesh.

(A) Background condition-National Unity:

According to Rustow national unity is listed as a background condition in the sense that it must precede all the other phases of democratization but that otherwise its timing is irrelevant. The background condition, however, is best fulfilled when national unity is accepted unthinkingly, is silently taken for granted. Any vocal consensus about national unity, in fact, should make us wary. To single out national unity as the sole background condition implies that no minimal level of economic development or social differentiation is necessary as a prerequisite to democracy. These social and economic factors enter the model only indirectly as one of several alternative bases for national unity or for entrenched conflict.

The existence of 'national unity' for democratization could be traced back in 1970

during Pakistan period. It was a gradual but certain development towards a democratic polity. Pakistan was created in 14 August 1947 on the basis of Muhammad Ali Jinnah's two-nation theory. Present Bangladesh had been included in Pakistan with the name of East Pakistan. Accordingly the period from 14 August 1947 to 16 December 1971 could be termed 'Pakistani period' in the history of Bangladesh. The majority of the people of East Pakistan belonged to the same language and cultural group. On the other hand, the West Pakistanis were a heterogeneous people. Geographically, the two wings of Pakistan were separated from each other by over 1000 miles of foreign territory. According to the official census of 1951 only 7.2 percent of the population of Pakistan spoke Urdu, while 54.6 percent spoke Bengali. However, the grievances among the Bengali people were centered on demand for Bengali as state language, economic disparities, political isolation and administrative and military hegemony of Punjabis etc. Election in Pakistan held in December, 1970 had put the Bengali political elite in a commanding position. Thus from the beginning there was division between the people, in general, of the then East Pakistan and the rulers of Pakistan. The common people of East Pakistan have become united under the leadership of opposition politicians. A Pakistani political scientist observed. Soon after the formation of Pakistan, the conflict between those who claimed to represent popular and more radical forces in Bengal and the more conservative element began (K.B. Sayeed 1980, 66).

Amidst such division the first constitution of Pakistan was declared in 1956. It may be mentioned that from the very beginning, the ruling politicians of Pakistan were not willing to democratize the country. In fact no single instance could be cited that would prove their inclination towards democracy. They were just following the path of Jinnah. The first governor general, Qaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, brought to the office his tremendous prestige as "Father of the Nation". So long as he lived, Jinnah was, whether he wished to be or not, the real head of the central government, presiding while his health permitted-over cabinet meetings and obliged by his ministers to make top-level decisions. The Qaid-i-Azam's instant successor, Khwaja Nazimuddin (1948-1951), a stretched leading Bengali politician was content to conform to the conventional image of the dominion governor general, leaving political leadership to Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan (1947-1951).

Governor General Ghulam Mohammad (1951-1955) and Iskander Mirza (1955-1958), on the other hand, were both professional administrators who followed Jinnah's example in regarding their office to have active responsibilities. Ghulam Mohammad dismissed Prime Minister Nazimuddin (1951-1953) in April 1953 and appointed Muhammad Ali of Bogra (1953-1955) in his stead without a significant political challenge, and eighteen months later invoked the inherent powers of the crown to dissolve the Constituent Assembly and recognize Muhammad Ali's cabinet. Iskander Mirza as governor general and for his first few months as provisional president was checked by Prime Minister Chaudhri Muhammad Ali (1955-1956), another former professional administrator, but did not hide his annoyance with politicians and the conviction that the executive should be independent of legislative majorities.

However, during the thirty months following the promulgation of the republican

constitution on March 23, 1956 viceregal tradition gradually outweighed the limitations on the President embodied in its letter and spirit. The result was the increasing involvement of President Mirza in the making and unmaking of the cabinets of Prime Ministers H. S. Suhrawardy (1956-1957), I.I. Chundrigar (October-December 1957), and Malik Feroz Khan Noon (1957-58). Three weeks later Mirza was forced to resign and was succeeded by General Ayub Khan (President, 1958-1969), the then commander in chief of the army and Chief Martial Law Administrator. The confusion of authority in the dual executive was then ended with the formal abolition of the office of Prime Minister. Ministers thereafter were appointed to advise the president in the discharge of his functions and were responsible solely to him. This arrangement was roughly comparable to the position of the viceroy and his council before 1946, although the latter always had to deal with a legislature while martial-law regime did not (Wheeler 1970, 161).

However, gradually the grievances among the Bengali people against the rulers of Pakistan had been making them united first for language, then for autonomy and at last for independence. Nevertheless, the united efforts of the people of the East Pakistan could be viewed as their efforts for democracy.

Thus a challenge to the bureaucratic authority of the Governor-General came in 1954 after the dramatic result of the East Pakistan provincial election (Hamza Alvi 1983, 82). The ruling party Muslim League, confident of victory, secured no more than 10 seats out of a total of 309. Troops and naval units were rushed to East Pakistan. General Iskander Mirza was sent to Dhaka to take charge of the situation. The newly-installed 'United Front' Government was dismissed from office and 'Governor's rule' was established under Mirza. A wave of repression and large scale arrests followed. Bengalis' deprivation from the benefits of 1954 election result further aggravated the situation. In course of time, lack of defense in the then East Pakistan during 1965 Indo-Pak war, six-point movement of 1966 and students' eleven-point movement of 1969 came to a climax during the elections of 1970. Bengalis' hopes and aspirations turned into waves. The national unity of the people of Bangladesh has been demonstrated in the electoral results of 1970's election. The election was held for 313 seats of Pakistan National Assembly. Out of this 313 seats, 169 seats were meant for the then East Pakistan. Awami League won 167 seats out of these 169 seats. On the other hand, there was election for 300 seats of East Pakistan Provincial Assembly. The Awami League won 288 seats in the provincial assembly elections rest 12 seats were won by some other political parties. Pakistan People's Party (PPP) led by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had won 88 seats out of 144 seats of West Pakistan in the Pakistan National Assembly. The two main parties-Awami League and PPP were majority parties in two regions. None of them had any seats in other part of the country i.e. Awami League had not got any in West Pakistan and PPP and no seats in East Pakistan.

The military ruler of Pakistan unexpectedly deferred the convening of the National Assembly that was scheduled to meet in Dhaka on March 3, Mujib himself was a firm believer in democratic and constitutional process as the way to secure the rights of the people of Bangladesh. But facing the fraudulence of the regime, Mujib took a revolutionary

step on March 7, when with wonderful oratorio, and in front of teeming millions in the Dhaka Racecourse, he issued a clarion call to the people: our struggle today, he declared, is for independence, and freedom. Actually, people's dream for an independent and democratic polity has been reflected through his powerful declaration. However, the Yahiya-Bhutto clique, in collusion with microscopic number of political cohorts, took advantage of Mujib's good faith and started to bring fresh military reinforcements from West Pakistan. Once they felt assured of their numerical strength and had the requisite firepower to overwhelm the frail Bangali resistance, they launched their vicious campaign of indiscriminate death, destruction, and barbaric violence on the people. The result was one of the worst genocides in history. In the early hours of March 26, 1971 Mujib was locked up on charges of high treason, and the Awami League was declared unlawful.

Thus the decisive election of 1970 could be termed as the final take-off signal of journey for democratization in Bangladesh. Nevertheless, it was first and last parliamentary general election of Pakistan National Assembly during Bangladesh's co-habitation with Pakistan. Democratic forces of the country had become vibrant surrounding this election. It should be mentioned that the 'democratic elections' of 1970's was an attempt of departure from authoritarianism towards democracy. That was actually the formative phase for democratization in the country. In fact the struggle for democracy against the military rule of Pakistan had turned into the war of liberation for Bangladesh in 1971. The struggle became acute when the military junta along with their 'political cohorts' has not agreed to honour the result of 1970's election. The Pakistani rulers were not ready to relinquish their inherent values of authoritarianism. Thus the victory of struggle for democracy has ultimately ended with the struggle for independent Bangladesh.

(B) *Preparatory phase:* Rustow hypothesizes that, 'against the background condition, the dynamic process of democratization is set off by a prolonged and inconclusive political struggle. ...Such a struggle is likely to begin as the result of the emergence of new elite that arouses a depressed and previously leaderless social group into concerted action' (p. 355). However, the independent Bangladesh could not find any institutional base to create a viable political order, rather than a spirit of liberation, scattered know-how of parliamentary democracy without and experience at all, a homogenous political people or population, and an expected to be Political community. All other syndrome of under development like poverty, illiteracy, ignorance, religious-fanaticism, superstition and low-productivity was absolutely present. In such a situation the charisma of Bangabandhu helped to deliberate the process of building a political structure, and he put all his charisma behind this effort. From the beginning the Awami League regime put priority on the political process. Nevertheless, the achievements of the Mujib regime were also noteworthy, for which it is argued that the regime won of confidence of the people.

The making of constitution in 1972 and holding of first parliamentary general elections of independent Bangladesh in 1973 could be cited as significant achievements for democratization in post-independent Bangladesh. This was actually the *preparatory phase* of democratization in the country.

After the independence, the first President of Bangladesh Bangabandhu Sheikh

Mujibur Rahman announced the provisional constitutional order in January 1972. With this step the country opted for parliamentary form of government after abandoning the presidential form inherited from Pakistani regime. The political system outlined in the Provisional Constitutional Order was modelled as per Westminster type. Under the terms of the order, a cabinet was formed. After announcing the Provisional Constitutional Order, and just one year after the Pakistani army laid down their arm, the Constitutional Assembly adopted a Constitution on November 4, 1972.

Apart from the making of constitution and initiatives to build a political process, the regime of *Bangabandhu* had many successes, They are,

1. Immediately after liberation, the regime was confirmed with a gigantic task of rehabilitation of ten million people without shelter. With the help of UNROB and generous assistance of many foreign countries the government was able to rehabilitate these shelter-less people. Thus the regime averted the predicted famine in the country.
2. While Pakistan took 9 years to frame its Constitution, the Constituent Assembly of Bangladesh adopted the constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh within a year.
3. Bangladesh was recognized by 131 countries of the world and it established diplomatic relations with 40 countries.
4. In pursuance of the government's declared policy of socialism all banks, insurance companies, industries, factories and foreign trade of jute were nationalized.
5. Planning Commission was set up which formulated the First Five Year Plan within one and a half years.
6. The regime restored the communication network by repairing 300 railway bridges, 274 culverts and six airports.
7. As the opposition demands, the regime gave general elections to the Jatiya Sangsad within a year.

Apart from these tasks the post-independent government had also accomplished the task of holding first ever parliamentary general elections in independent Bangladesh in 1973. The election at that time was inevitable because the elected representatives were elected for the (then) East Pakistan Legislative Assembly, and Pakistan National Assembly. Thus for an independent country to be conducted a separate elected body was a must. The election of 1973 brought back the Bangladesh Awami League (AL) in to power. The country started with independent and democratic governance. The form of government was parliamentary. The constitutional means was about to start properly. But the war-ravaged country was actually in horns of dilemma.

During this time, as Rustow pointed out, 'many things can go wrong during the preparatory phase' (p. 357). We find the relevance of it in the case of Bangladesh during

the preparatory phase. However, after being free from the enemy soldiers of Pakistani religious colony when Bangladesh had been aspiring to make progress from the devastation of war just then the bloody coup d'état of 1975 occurred. Thereafter getting down from the olive-coloured vehicle with heavy boot on foot and following the Pakistani tradition the 'army' settled firmly on the chest of Bangladesh.

(C) Decision Phase:

From August 1975 to 1990 the country was ruled by military and pseudo-democratic type of government. Afterward the political parties with different ideological orientations had come together and decided to forge agreement for pro-democratic movement in 1990's. It was a careful decision of the political parties of the country. As Rustow has mentioned that the decision for democratic dispensation does not 'suggest that a country ever becomes a democracy in a fit of absentmindedness'. 'On the contrary what concludes the preparatory phase is a deliberate decision on the part of political leaders to accept the existence of diversity in unity and, to that end, to institutionalize some crucial aspect of democratic procedure'. Such was the decision in 1990, when the three alliances of Bangladesh political parties have compelled the then President General H.M Ershad to resign and handover the power to someone decided through consensus among the parties of the movement. In the wake of anti-autocratic movement, the three alliances of political parties made a joint declaration on November 19, 1990. Among others, it declared its commitment to, "...4. Establish the accountable democratic system in the country permanently. Establish the trend of elected representative government through periodic, free, fair and neutral elections according to the constitution.

Despite their sheer disagreement, to ascertain the advancement of democratic process, government and opposition political parties must be strictly committed to the people in some common matters...

(a) with a view to establish common norms and culture of democracy, political behavior would be firmly rooted in the light of deep tolerance and patience."

(b) Independence and neutrality of judiciary and rule of law would be ensured;

(c) The parliament constituted with the people's representatives, who are elected on the basis of free and fair elections, would be the constitutionally sovereign. The decision-making and functions would be conducted on the basis of majority, and at the same time the enhancement of democratic norms would be accomplished with due respect to minority's opinion and position. The authority of people's sovereignty would be exercised on the government through people's vote....

In terms of this declaration the parliamentary general elections for 5th Jatiya Sangsad (JS/National Assembly) was held in 1991 under the non-party and neutral caretaker government. Later on the provision of caretaker government for holding of general elections was incorporated in the constitution through 13th amendment of 1996. The 7th and 8th parliamentary general elections were held accordingly. However, amidst the continuation of periodic democratic elections there were some severe challenges regarding the governance

of the country.

(D) *Habituation Phase*: During the habituation phase, as Rustow has pointed out, the political accord between the competing parties is streamlined within the entire of society: the democratic political structure gains legitimacy by virtue of the enthusiasm of the politicians operation within it and the gradual acceptance by populace over time. "In short, they very process of democracy institutes a double process of Darwinian selectivity in favour of convinced democrats: one among parties in general elections and the other among politicians vying for leadership within these parties".

In terms of Rustow's model we can trace the habituation phase of democratisation in Bangladesh, particularly after the success of democratic movement in 1990's. For being habituated with democratisation process the role playing parties, as has been mentioned, had concluded an agreement-declaration of the three alliances of political parties'. This declaration could be viewed as the basis to foster 'unity in diversity'. Nevertheless, it contains all other necessary things for democracy.

In the height of intolerance, even after the decision for democratic tolerance, the habituation phases of democratisation in Bangladesh has to face another wave of tension. It has been observed that during the habituation phase, even though the '....leaders are democratically elected: citizens are regularly being deprived of fundamental rights and freedom' (Rustow 1970). Since 1990s when Bangladesh has reached the firm 'decision' for a democratic polity, she had been suffering from the same sort of problems.

In this phase we can further mention that 'democracy rises from the bottom to the top, it does not come down from the top. Accordingly there are some safeguarding amulets that can protect democracy from being perverted. They are Jatiya Sangsad, President, Judiciary, and Mass media.

(i) *Jatiya Sangsad*: One of the safeguards of democracy is opposition in Parliament. Here opposition party or parties can criticize the steps of the government. If the criticism is logical, government must restrain to take that the step or make necessary revision to that step. However the process of such safeguard has not been working properly. Because, the opposition' voice could be heard outside on the street, rather than in the House. They do not attend the sessions of Jatiya Sangsad (JS). According to an estimate, the opposition parties had abstained 163 days out of 382 working days of the 7th Js, 223 days out of 372 in the 8th JS, and 123 days out of the 169 working days until the sixth session of the 9th JS (Nizam Ahmed 2010). Whether it is logical to receive the allowance without attending the Sangsad, that is not important, the more important things are (a) as elected representatives they are abstaining from presenting people's will in the Jatiya Sangsad. (b) Whether they are criticising (the government) for the sake of criticism only, or acclaiming the laudable works of the government and criticising the works that should be criticised. There must be a reversal if opposition is meant for only opposition. On the whole, the role of Jatiya Sangsad to safeguard democracy has been properly played in

absence of the opposition.

(ii) *President*: President of the country can act as a safeguard of democracy. However, in the previous terms more than one former Presidents of Bangladesh have crumbled as they attempted to apply their personal prodence.

(iii) *Judiciary*: Independence of judiciary might thrive to protect democracy. An independent judiciary could render verdict against any unlawful act of the government. Nevertheless, the government also must abide by the verdict. Researchers of Bangladesh politics are not in a consensus about the independence of Bangladesh judiciary. A strong and real independent judicial system could play the role of safeguarding democracy. Even in this respect the situation of Bangladesh is not up to the mark. Recently the Bangladesh Supreme Court rendered the verdict that the 5th and the 7th amendments to the constitution were illegal.

(iv) *Mass media*: Public opinion is reflected through mass media. Media may not be substituting politicians and political parties but it can help the people see things as they are, enrich their minds and enlighten them to think for themselves instead of leaving everything to be thought of and taken care of by politicians, bureaucrats and businessmen. Media can make the listeners and readers feel the power and fun of thinking.

Conclusion:

After the exercise to explore the democratisation in Bangladesh through Rustow's dynamic model it has become apparent that the people of Bangladesh have taken unified preparation to decide for habituation with democracy. Although the chequered journey towards democracy could not be termed as fully a success it is no failed case either. However, the main problem to become habituated with the democratization process is the 'mistrust' among the role players of Bangladesh politics. It goes without saying during long army rule the principle of Matsyanya⁵ has incessantly happened in this country. The army rule had ended in 1990. However the acquiescent of ruling BNP in 1991 to change the form of government from presidential to parliamentary could be cited as a glaring example of changing the attitude for habituation. One political observer has termed first three years of 5th Jatiya Sangsad (JS) as "Golden Age". He observed, many decision were taken on the basis of consensus between the ruling and the opposition parties-reintroduction of parliamentary government, establishment of independent parliamentary secretariat, and increasing the power of parliament and parliamentary committees by revising the rules of

5 The principle according to which larger fishers swallow up smaller ones. See Anupam Hasan (2019). Mahadev Shah, Ahingsabad O Prem-chetana (Mahadev Shah, Non-violence and sense of love). In The Daily Ittefaq (Bengali Daily Newspaper, Dhaka, Nov. 5, p. 21, 24.

6 See Nizun Ahmed (2010). Sangsad Kno Karjaker Hote parche Na (Why Parliament could not be effective?), in prothom Alo (Bengali Daily Newspaper, Dhaka, 4 November 2010, p. 38.

Business of JS⁶.

It was hoped that the country would go ahead with the democratic ways and the adverse conditions for the common people would change. But partisan-jugglery, toll-jugglery and a fiesta of plundering the wealth of state had been going on the guise of democracy. Amidst the decaying of democratic achievements, terrorism appeared like a trail of horror. The country is not yet protected from the violent excitement of religious fanatics. On the other hand, a noted Bangladeshi political scientist⁷ has acclaimed and become highly hopeful about the future of democratisation in Bangladesh. She found three recent achievements that have advanced her optimism- (i) peaceful transition to democracy in 2009; (ii) most free and fair election in the history of Bangladesh was held in December 2008; (iii) at least one major political party of the country has pledged to change the political and constitutional practices that have stayed the course of democracy.

After continuing in power for five years, the Awami League led grand alliance had completed its five-year term. However, in this election (December 2008) the people's verdict has gone in favour of change of the day. The Bangladesh Awami League (AL) has got 230 seats and 49 percent of cast votes. Its main opponent Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has got 30 seats and 33 percent of cast votes. One of the partners of AL led alliance Jatiya Party (JP) has obtained 27 seats and 7 percent of cast votes. Many observers found the young voters have cast votes, in large number, in favour of change of the day. The elements of the 'change of the day' as manifested in the election manifesto of the winning alliance could be seen as the continuing attempt to be 'habituated' with the process of democratisation.

7 Rounaq Jahan (4 November, 2010), *Atiter Punarabritti Theke Uttaran (Transition from Repetition of the Past)*, In *Prothom Alo* (Bengali Daily Newspaper, Dhaka). Twelve years of Publication, 04 November 2010, p. 48, 30.

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