

## Leadership and Political Culture: An Explanation of its Inter Relationships in the Context of Bangladesh

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**Abstract:** The present study is an effort to analyze the relationship between political culture and leadership in the context of Bangladesh. The study is basically based on analysis from various secondary data. In the analysis it has been found that leadership and political culture are the most important issue that can help the country to reach the pick of development. These are like the sailor of a ship and the wide sea. The fate of a ship in the wide sea depends on the efficiency of its sailor. Like that, the development of a country depends on the honesty and efficiency of its political leadership and the fairness of its political culture. In Bangladesh, dishonesty, autocracy and corruption characterize the political leaders and the political culture of 'tit-for-tat game' is like a common practice for the leaders of major parties of all vistas which is not at all desirable for the institutionalization of democracy and development.

**Key words:** Leadership, political culture and Bangladesh

### INTRODUCTION

Leadership is the most significant factor-determining destiny in Bangladeshi politics. Because institutionalization is incomplete and democratization is still in process, leadership cannot but play an important role in deciding major national policies. Along with the leadership, the concept of political culture is also an important factor. Because, political culture determines what type of leadership will emerge and govern the country. This study attempts to explore: To what extent political culture affects the development of political leadership in Bangladesh?

This study is divided into six parts: In the first part study, I will discuss the conceptual framework shedding light on a) study Concept of Leadership b) study Leadership Style c) study Concept of Political Culture. The second part study will consist of discussion on political leadership of Bangladesh. The third part study elucidates study a comparative discussion about Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia. In the Fourth part study I will discuss the general features of Political Culture of Bangladesh. In the fifth part, study discussion will be about inter- relationship of political culture and political leadership in Bangladesh. In the sixth part study, I will draw the conclusion.

The analysis will be based on secondary information collected mainly from books, articles, news study and Internet.

### Conceptual Framework

**Concept of Leadership:** Anyone who is interested in understanding the problems of managing organizations

has to contend, sooner or later, with the vexed question of leadership. Although it is a subject that has attracted a great deal of attention and which has spawned a voluminous literature, it remains one of the most confused and confusing areas in the whole field of management. One thing that is generally agreed is that leadership is a topic of substantial significance<sup>[1]</sup>.

One of the problems that have bedeviled the study of leadership is of definition. Stodgill<sup>[2]</sup> may have been overstating the case when he suggested that there were as many definitions of leadership as there were writers on the subjects, but the concept is nonetheless notorious for its ambiguity and vagueness.

According to Bryman<sup>[3]</sup> a widely used working definition of leadership is that it involves a social influence process in which a person steers members of the group towards a goal. As he notes, this definition has several drawbacks. In particular, the notion of a social influence process is extremely broad and includes certain kinds of actions, which are not normally regarded as acts of leadership<sup>[1]</sup>.

Katz and Kahn<sup>[4]</sup> defined leadership as the exertion of influence on organizationally relevant matters by any member of the organization indicates just that. Similarly, Mintzberg<sup>[5]</sup> includes leadership as one of his managerial roles and, as we have seen, these roles are held to characterize all forms of managerial work. But this approach to leadership has the disadvantage of being so broad as to define the concept of a leader almost out of existence.

Thus, leadership has been defined in many ways over the years. Most definitions reflect the assumption that leadership involves a social influence process

whereby one over other people to structure the activities and relationships in a group or organization exerts intentional influence. Otherwise, the definitions differ in many respects, including who exerts influence, the intended purpose of the influence, the manner in which influence is exerted, and the outcome of the influence attempt. In sum, there is not only one definition of leadership and, also, there is no correct definition<sup>[1,6]</sup>.

Based on the above discussion, it is possible to undermine different kind of functions that implicitly or explicitly assume almost every definition of leadership. In general, Western authors imply that leadership work means: 1) organize and structure a group or the organization as a whole in order to accomplish its tasks efficiently; 2) maintain harmonious, cooperative relationships among members who must work together in order to accomplish the task; 3) maintaining an optimal level of motivation in the members of the organization; 4) help the organization adapt to its environment and maintain a favourable ratio of inputs to outputs of the organization process; 5) gathering and interpreting information as a whole, influencing outsiders to have a favourable impression of the organizations and its products, gaining cooperation and support from outsiders upon whom the organization is dependent, and resources, and personnel and 7) to find the appropriate amount and form of structure and control, which will depend on the type of work performed by the organization and the type of people who do the work. In sum, the major goal of the leadership is to keep the order system and improve the performance of the organization through the motivation, planning, directing, and so on<sup>[3,6]</sup>.

**Leadership style:** The role of leadership in management is largely determined by the organizational culture. It has been argued that leaders beliefs, values and assumptions are of critical importance to the overall style of leadership that they adopt. There are several different leadership styles that can be identified within each of the following techniques. Each technique has its own set of good and not-so-good characteristics, and each uses leadership in a different way.

**The autocratic leadership:** The autocratic leader dominates team-members, using unilateralism to achieve a singular objective. This approach to leadership generally results in passive resistance from team-members and requires continual pressure and direction from the leader in order to get things done. Generally, an authoritarian approach is not a good way to get the best performance from a team.

There are, however, some instances where an autocratic style of leadership may not be inappropriate. Some situations may call for urgent action, and in these

cases an autocratic style of leadership may be best. In addition, most people are familiar with autocratic leadership and therefore have less trouble adopting that style. Furthermore, in some situations, sub-ordinates may actually prefer an autocratic style.

**The Laissez-Faire Leadership:** The Laissez-Faire leader exercises little control over his group, leaving them to sort out their roles and tackle their work, without participating in this process himself. In general, this approach leaves the team floundering with little direction or motivation.

Again, there are situations where the Laissez-Faire approach can be effective. The Laissez-Faire technique is usually only appropriate when leading a team of highly motivated and skilled people, who have produced excellent work in the past. Once a leader has established that his team is confident, capable and motivated, it is often best to step back and let them get on with the task, since interfering can generate resentment and detract from their effectiveness. By handing over ownership, a leader can empower his group to achieve their goals.

**The democratic leadership:** The democratic leadership style is also called the participative style as it encourages employees to be a part of the decision making. The democratic leader makes decisions by consulting his team, whilst still maintaining control of the group. The democratic leader allows his team to decide how the task will be tackled and who will perform which task.

The democratic leader can be seen in two lights:

A good democratic leader encourages participation and delegates wisely, but never loses sight of the fact that he bears the crucial responsibility of leadership. He values group discussion and input from his team and can be seen as drawing from a pool of his team members' strong points in order to obtain the best performance from his team.

However, the democrat can also be seen as being so unsure of himself and his relationship with his sub-ordinates that everything is a matter for group discussion and decision. Clearly, this type of leader is not really leading at all.

**Bureaucratic leadership:** Bureaucratic leadership is where the leader manages by the book. Everything must be done according to procedure or policy. If the book doesn't cover it, the manager refers to the next level above him or her. This manager is really more of a police officer than a leader. He or she enforces the rules.

This style can be effective when: employees are performing routine tasks over and over, employees need to understand certain standards or procedures, they are working with dangerous or delicate equipment that requires a definite set of procedures to operate, safety or security training is being conducted and employees are

performing tasks that require handling cash. This style is ineffective when: work habits form that are hard to break, especially if they are no longer useful, employees lose their interest in their jobs and in their fellow workers and they do only what is expected of them and no more.

**Charismatic leadership:** Charisma is said to be the compelling quality of an individual that makes others want to be lead by him or her. There is some agreement that charisma comes from an interaction of leader attributes (traits and behavior), situational conditions, and follower needs.

Charismatic leaders possess specific personality traits (or their combination), and display unique behavioral patterns. They are strong role models for the beliefs and values they declare; they appear competent; they focus on ideological and moral goals; they communicate high expectations for followers and exhibit confidence in followers abilities to meet these expectations<sup>[7]</sup>.

**Concept of political culture:** Political Culture, it has been observed, is one of the most popular and seductive concepts in political science; it is also one of the most controversial and confused<sup>[4,8]</sup>. Lenin<sup>[9]</sup> first employed the term and its first use in English can be traced to Sidney and Beatrice Webb in the middle of 1930s. They used the term to refer to the role of political education and mass media in the (former) Soviet Union<sup>[10]</sup>.

Political scientists conceptualize political culture in terms of values, norms, beliefs, symbols etc. Almond<sup>[11]</sup> wrote, every political system is embedded in a particular pattern of orientations to political actions. Sidney Verba, perhaps, in his most widely used definition of political culture, has argued that it should be regarded as a system of empirical beliefs, expressive symbols and values which defines the situation in which political action takes place. It provides the subjective orientation to politics<sup>[12,13]</sup>. The basic focus of attention, for Verba, is upon basic values, cognitions and emotional commitments, but not the formal and informal process of interaction among political actors.

Similarly, Lucian Pye argues that political culture is a set of attitudes, beliefs and sentiments which give order and meaning to a political process and which provide the underlying assumptions and rules that govern behaviour in the political system, or the manifestation in aggregate form of the psychology and subjective dimension of politics<sup>[12]</sup>. There is a danger, Pye notes, that if political culture is taken to comprehend behaviour, as well as, beliefs. Most authors appear to concede that political culture may have, at least, a behavioural aspect. Political beliefs, Verba argues, affect and are affected by the way in which the structures operate, there is a close circle of relationships between culture and structure<sup>[12]</sup>. Pye goes

somewhat further in referring to political culture as embracing the political ideals and operating norms of a polity, a definition which would appear at once, to concede that the concept should have a behavioural as well as, an attitudinal dimension, and writing more recently, as well as, beliefs and sentiments, within his definition of political culture<sup>[14]</sup>.

Infact, the concept of political culture emphasizes that each individual has some sort of orientation to the political world. So the basic concept of the political culture approach is orientation. This orientation may be of three types: a) Cognitive orientation, b) Affective orientation and c) Evaluation orientation<sup>[13]</sup>. On this basis, Almond and Verba have constructed three ideal types of political culture, Such as the parochial, the subject and the participant.

The three political cultures mentioned above represent a cumulative extension of orientation. One does not replace the other, but is combined with it. Even the classification of political culture into parochial, subject and participation does not suggest homogeneity or uniformity. In empirical reality, every political culture is a mixed political culture which Almond and Verba calls The Civic Culture. This means that in every political system many individuals are found to be active in politics and some remain inactive or passive. This concept of civic culture is generally appropriate for a democratic polity.

Based on the above theoretical discussion, we will try to identify what type of political leadership is existed in Bangladesh and to what extent the political culture affects the leadership style.

**Political leadership in Bangladesh:** Emergence in 1971 as a sovereign nation, since then, Bangladesh has been grasped under power politics mostly based on the undemocratic and unconstitutional means, military coup as a common form. Based on the above theoretical discussion, I will discuss the leadership pattern of Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia who are the chief of the two major dominant political parties namely Awami League (AL) and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and are sharing power alternatively since 1991. But before going through the discussion it is better to have a brief discussion about the dominant political leaders who ruled Bangladesh after the independence till 1990s. They are Shiekh Mujibur Rahman, Ziaur Rahman and Hussain Mohammad Ershad.

**Sheikh Mujibur Rahman: (1972-75)** Mujib was a democratically elected leader with immense charismatic power. He was able to influence the people with his voice during the liberation period and after the independence. But he had a tendency of concentration power in his hands. He started with parliamentary form of government, but when he felt difficulty in imparting control over the

administration, he changed the form of government from parliamentary to presidential. As a result all the powers were shifted in his hands. Although all the powers were centered into Mujib, but his leadership was not challenged by general public.

In case of decision making within the party, democratic culture was not existed. As a result, there were some sort of opposition was growing within his party, like Khondokar Mostaq Ahemed. Mujibs motive behind the creation of BAKSAL was to impose band on other political parties. This type of decision proved his authoritarian tendency. Besides, in the party leadership, there was a tendency of allowing patrimonialism. Some keen relations of Mujib were given high position in the Awami League.

**General Ziaur Rahman: (1977-81):** Ziaur Rahman came into the power after a series of coup and counter coup. He was also a charismatic leader. He used to rule the country based on rules and regulations. That is why, he gained popularity. One of the basic characteristics of Zias leadership was to involve the military in the civil administration. The army men occupied 30 % of the posts of secretaries in the ministries, 70% of the police superintendents and 50% of the public corporations directorships. The diplomatic crops were also not untouched as several key assignments including ambassadorial positions went to the army personnel<sup>[15]</sup>. He was heavily dependent on the military.

As 90% of the people of Bangladesh was Muslim, with a view to receive their support, Zia exhibits the Islamization in his political ideology and incorporated absolute trust and faith in the Almighty in place of Secularism in the constitution.

Zia was also very keen to concentrate all the powers into his hands. In order to give his rule civilian shape, he established the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and picked some of the retired military bureaucrats and veteran politicians in his party. As a leader, Zia was partially successful to regenerate morality of the public officials specially by abrogating the President Order No. 9 of 1972. Civil- military bureaucrats enjoyed particular privileges under his leadership by occupying all key positions in the civil arena. Patrimonial system of patronage of party activities through the state property was also active in his period too<sup>[16]</sup>.

**Hussaian Mohammad Ershad: (1982-90):** Ershad also assumed power through a bloodless coup in 1982. Like his predecessors, Ershad was not so charismatic, but he was very clever. President Ershad created an authoritarian military-bureaucratic state dominated by an all- powerful

president supported by the military. He totally dominated the decision-making process in Bangladesh and built an elaborate system of patronage to ensure the support of the military officers crops<sup>[17]</sup>. Ershad provided a wide array of civilian jobs to the military officers. Military officers held 28 senior positions of all secretariat, headed 14 of 22 large public sector corporations and received one third of all diplomatic posts abroad. At the political level 40 % of Ershads minister were military or former military officers<sup>[15,16]</sup>.

During his rule he was engaged in the play of buying politicians and bureaucrats. Concentration of power into his hands was a main feature of his leadership. President Ershads leadership had been severely suffering from legitimacy crisis since its inception in 1982. During his tenure of rule, no effective measures were adopted to hold the bureaucrats accountable. Corruption became institutionalized during his tenure<sup>[18]</sup>. Kochanek refers that Bangladeshi patrimonial politics under the leadership of president Ershad were not only dominated by the military but were also the most centralized and corrupt in Bangladeshs history. A mass student-led movement in December 1990 toppled his government<sup>[15,16]</sup>.

**Begum Khaleda Zia: (1991-96, 2001-till date):** Begum Khaleda Zia came in politics and became the chief leaders of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) after the death of President Ziaur Rahman in 1981. In the general election of 1991 under the Caretaker Government led by Justice Sahabuddin Ahmed, the center-right BNP won a plurality of seats and formed a coalition government with the Islamic fundamentalist party Jamaat-I-Islami, with Khaleda Zia, widow of Ziaur Rahman, obtaining the post of Prime Minister.

Khaleda Zias leadership as Prime Minister continued to be marked by a slow, highly centralized and highly personalized decision-making style led to the poor political management, ineffective coordination and an inability to control the complex Bangladeshi bureaucratic machine which led to administrative paralysis and slow implementation of development projects<sup>[17]</sup>. Some bureaucrats, violating the civil service code of ethics and provisions of services rules, arranged and participated in demonstrations against the government and thus engineered administrative paralysis. Such an involvement in political activities by the civil servant is a punishable offence under the government service rules<sup>[16]</sup>.

During the regime of prime minister Khaleda (1991-96), politicization of administration assumed numerous modes: placement of party loyalties in the crucial positions in civil service, appointment of diehard supporters as chairman and member(s) of the BPSC, the constitutional watchdog to supervise, conduct and recommend all aspects of public personnel administration

Table 1: A comparative discussion of the leadership of Hasina and Khaleda

Unit of Analysis	Candidates	Points
Educational Background	<b>Shiekh Hasina :</b> <b>Khaleda Zia:</b>	Shiekh Hasina obtained her graduation from the University of Dhaka in 1973. There are lots of debates about Khaleda Zias educational background. But few sources said that she passed the Secondary School Certificate.
Political Background	<b>Shiekh Hasina:</b>  <b>Khaleda Zia:</b>	Hasina had previous political background. Scion of a political family, she was actively involved in student politics in her college and university days. Always popular among the students, Sheikh Hasina was elected as the chief of the Student's Union of Eden Girls College, the leading women's college in Bangladesh. She was a member of student's League (Chattra League) of Dhaka University and Secretary of the Chattra League unit in Rokeya Hall. She was also the President of Eden Intermediate Girls College Chattra League. But Khaleda Zia did not have any previous political background. She was a housewife. After Ziaur Rahman was assassinated by a group of military, there was a political vacuum in BNP. Then she was elected the party president.
Charisma	<b>Shiekh Hasina:</b>  <b>Khaleda Zia:</b>	She possesses some type of charisma. It is not because of her, but it is because of the sheikh Mujibur Rahmans daughter. She has more charisma than Hasina. This is accounted for two reasons. First, she was the wife of President Ziaur Rahman and Secondly she is more beautiful than Sheikh Hasina to look at.
Concentration of power	<b>Shiekh Hasina:</b> <b>Khaleda Zia:</b>	Total power of the party is concentrated in her. Total power of the party is concentrated in her.
Source of Leadership	<b>Shiekh Hasina:</b> <b>Khaleda Zia:</b>	Hasina became leader due to her fathers death. Khaleda became the leader due to her husbands death.
Motive to allow democracy within Party	<b>Shiekh Hasina:</b>  <b>Khaleda Zia:</b>	She does not allow the culture of democracy within her party. If somebody raises voice against, she handles this with strict hands. She also does not allow the culture of democracy within her party. She gives every decision arbitrarily.
Pattern of Leadership.	<b>Shiekh Hasina:</b> <b>Khaleda Zia:</b>	Authoritarian Authoritarian
Political Ideology	<b>Shiekh Hasina:</b> <b>Khaleda Zia:</b>	Her political ideology is based on secularism and Bengali nationalism. Her political ideology is based on preference of Islamization and Bangladeshi nationalism.
Basis of Administration	<b>Shiekh Hasina:</b> <b>Khaleda Zia:</b>	Nepotism, favouritism, corruption, politicization of administration and suppression of opposition. Nepotism, favouritism, corruption, politicization of administration and suppression of opposition.

including the initial entry to all the gazetted posts of the civil service. Thus the civil service recruitment process was allegedly manipulated in favour of the candidates having linked with the ruling party and mass in- service promotion of officers apparently submissive to the ruling regime<sup>[16-19]</sup>.

In sum, civil-military bureaucrats dominated leadership under Khaleda Zia regime. Politicization of civil service was end-less and relationship with the opposition political parties was not based on mutual trust and interests. Only a few democratic initiatives have taken place during this period and of these the prominent ones are: the reintroduction of parliamentary form of democracy and the non-partisan Caretaker Government<sup>[16]</sup>. Khaleda Zia became the prime minister for the second term after the general election of October 2001. But the pattern of leadership has not changed. She is running her administration in the same way as before.

**Sheikh Hasina (1996-2001):** Sheikh Hasina joined in the politics and became the chief of Bangladesh Awamin League (AL) in 1981 when AL was suffering from a leadership crisis after the death of Shiekh Mujibur Rahman in 1975. Hasina the eldest daughter of the late president Mujib, formed what she called a "Government of National Consensus" in June 1996, which included one minister from the Jatiya Party and another from the Jatiyo Samajtantric Dal, a very small leftist party. The basic characteristics of the leadership under Haisna regime,

however, resembles the earlier AL regime (1972-75), i.e. personalized and centralized style of governance, strong sense of partisanship, AL factionalism and the patronage preoccupations of party members<sup>[17]</sup>. These characteristics have created serious problems in keeping a working relationship with political oppositions<sup>[16]</sup>.

In available sources,<sup>[17,20,21]</sup> it was reported that like her fathers regime, corruption was rampant and the nature of harassment to the opposition parties or critics of her activities is critical. Politicization of administration through manipulating the recruitment procedure was alarming.

Based on the above discussion, it can be said that personal charisma and kinship ties play an influential role in politics of Bangladesh. The country has frequently faced a leadership vacuum after the demise of charismatic political personalities. The leaders in independent Bangladesh were successful in utilizing their charisma to obtain some degree of legitimacy. The blind acceptance by citizens of charismatic leaders has been a key factor in restricting democratic discipline within party organization. Hereditary politics has gripped this country since 1980s. After Zias assassination, his wife, Khaleda, a politically uninformed housewife, was catapulted to BNPs top position while Hasina, President Mujibs daughter, a political amateur, was given the mantle of the ALs presidency when the party faced a leadership crisis in the seventies. Such undemocratic political recruitment at the highest levels of party hierarchies has had a debilitating

effect on internal democracy in the two major parties in Bangladesh and has blocked avenues for normal leadership succession. Indeed, the electoral campaigns of the two parties have always taken the form of making political capital from the greatness and achievements of their slain charismatic leaders<sup>[22]</sup>.

**A Comparative Discussion of the Leadership of Hasina and Khelada:** In the context of Bangladesh, it is very difficult to compare both the leaders of the dominant political parties. Because both of them are like the opposite of a same coin. In the present essay I will try to make a comparative discussion basing on identifying some unit of analysis. The following table presents a comparative discussion.

From the Table it is evident that there is little scope to make any differentiation among those leaders. Although there are some difference, but they are not enough to make any comment about who is good and who is bad. In the state power, both of them have elected democratically, but the way they are running the administration and concentrating all the powers in their hands, they can not be called as democratic. Besides, they do not allow any sort of democracy within their party. Even they are not elected as the party president democratically. So, it is better to call the present political leadership as authoritative.

#### **POLITICAL CULTURE OF BANGLADESH: GENERAL FEATURES**

The political culture of a nation consists of the characteristic attitude of its population towards basic features of the political system- the nature of the regime, toward specific political institutions, toward particular incumbent of such institutions or offices, toward the policy outputs of the system of government<sup>[13]</sup>.

It is generally found that political systems (Anglo-American) tend to have relatively homogeneous political cultures within which there is general agreement about the proper limits and function of politics. Whereas, in transitional societies like Bangladesh political culture tend to be fragmented rather than homogeneous, because people do not share common orientations or outlook toward political system or political action.

In order to understand the relationship between leadership and political culture, it is significant to discuss the political culture of Bangladesh from a broad perspective. This section, therefore, explores the general nature and characteristics of political culture of Bangladesh.

**Patron- clientelism:** Patron- clientelism is generally considered a feature of peasant or pre-capitalist society and persists in a modernizing society. Patron- Clientelism has been used widely to understand third world politics. It is worth stressing that Patron- Clientelism has at least three fundamental characteristics. First: it is a relationship between two individual and groups. One of which has more power or status, wealth and influence than the other. Patrons have more power and clients less. Secondly: the formation and continuation of the relationship relies upon an exchange goods and relationships. Thirdly: the relationships are personalized in the form of diffuse brotherhood or any such imagined and cultivated relationships<sup>[23]</sup>.

An analysis of Bangladesh politics from this paradigm would warrant stressing the structure of our political parties and their political strategies. What is also worth emphasizing is that a ruling party has more patronage to offer and can pursue a strategy of patronage to reinforce his position. In Bangladesh the structure of Patron- Clientelism relationship, take several forms.

**In horizontal patron-clientelism:** the political party, particularly the party in power, creates loyalties, allegiances and collusion with key actors in the state, the para-state, and other organizations in society. Often known as machine politics, it manifests a personalized relationship cemented through extra-organizational rewards. Appointments, promotions and transfers in civil service are often influenced by the political identities of the actors rather than their performance. The invisible hand of powerful party reaches other organization as well. Many key posts of the nation are filled through political choice. Moreover, the party forges strong relationships with trade unions of all sorts, student bodies, cultural organizations and institutions of mass media.

**In vertical clientelism:** the party spreads downwards in a chain of *neta-karmi* relationship often based on kinship, localized and personalized ties.

**Mobilization politics:** The term mobilization has been used in a variety of senses in the study of politics, especially in the third world politics and collective action. Mobilization politics attempts to bring about rapid social and or political change often against opposing political regimes or forces by involving all possible social groups and organizations

Mobilization politics has been a crucial factor in the political history of Bangladesh from the days of colonialism. Mobilization politics has been nearly

totalising here because of the inclusion of various occupational, cultural and interest group. At the early stage of mobilization politics morale and ideological power remains crucial. But at a later stage when ideological issues are no longer urgent, violence becomes more important for mobilization politics and the need for *mastens (terror)* become imperative. Thus, mobilization politics can carry the seeds of a clientelistic political regime. Both mobilization and Patron-Clientelistic politics today mark politics in Bangladesh<sup>[23]</sup>.

**Dominance of charismatic leadership:** Respect and support for charismatic leadership is another important feature of Bangladeshi political culture. The Bangladeshi people by nature have emotional attachments and deep respects for the charismatic leaders. In such a situation, the political personalities play an important role in shaping and creating political culture of Bangladesh.

**Enemy discourse:** As we all know, the Awami League and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) are trapped in an enemy discourse. The Awami League has developed and elaborated the foundational discourse embedded in Bengali nationalism, the Liberation War, and highlighted the formation of the nation state and the central role played by Bangabandhu and the Awami League in it and a set of related signifiers. Hatched in conspiracy, born in the cantonment, launched by a military official, held together by a group of self-seeking political leaders, infiltrated and influenced by a pro-Pakistani elements, BNP is a party, according to Awami League, which can not be a democratic organization by any stretch of logic has shown to be opposed to the very spirit of nations through its alliance with Jamat (Islamic Political Party)<sup>[23]</sup>.

In contrast, the BNP has constructed the savior discourse. It claims to have saved the nation from an autocratic regime and loss of sovereignty to the powerful neighbour – India. It seems to regard the Awami League as a satanical other. To BNP, the Awami League is a fascist party par excellence and stooge of India. It is poised to entrench dynastic rule. It does not believe in pluralism and is always out to establish a single party system backed by brute power of mastan. Thus the BNP claims the Awami League can not be an agent of democratic transformation of country.

**Contentious politics:** The political structures, strategies and discourses generated in Bangladesh over the last decade have fuelled what can be described as collective action as contentious politics. Thus, contentious politics is episodic, has partly framed institutional dynamics and the political construction of public space, and its symbolic outburst in the media.

Rival trade unions favoured by two opposing political parties have tended to disturb the institutional fabric of society. Vital institutions of society like civil bureaucracy, universities, industries and professional organization have become the theatres of this contentious politics undermining their efficiency seriously. The universality, rationality, hierarchy, efficiency and performance of these institutions are being increasing disrupted by clientelism, mobilization and enemy discourse, and ultimately by contentious politics. The increasingly weakened ability of these organizations to deliver services to people will critically impair the legitimacy of any democratically elected government.

Another form of these contentious politics which is staged in the streets, through processions, as public meetings, *strikes, sit-ins, hortal* and siege cause massive economic damage to the nation and undermine the ability of the major parties to bring economic prosperity to people.

**High degree of power distance:** Power distance indicates the extent to which people expect that power in institutions and organizations is distributed unequally. Bangladesh is referred to as a hierarchical society characterized by patron-client relationships and with roots in economic disparities (Koachak, 1993, cited in Jamil, 1998:148). In Bangladeshi politics, there is a high degree of power distance. In the political activities, the political party generally discourages participation and is causal about the process of consultation. Instead, it places high premium on personal loyalty and relationship based on a pecking order. General public prefer an autocratic, paternalistically oriented leaders, and to be given orders. Deviant behaviour and ideals of the followers are less encouraged. Protection, patronage and favour on the part of the leaders, and respects, loyalty and compliance on the part of the followers characterize leaders- followers relationships. Opposing a superiors decision or raising a question is often considered beyadobi (Ill-mannered). Proper manners comprising obedience are very important in gaining access to patronage and favour. Those who yield to their leaders are bestowed with all kinds of favours.

**Militarization of politics in Bangladesh: Nomination to ex-Army by both parties:** Militarization of politics in Bangladesh is a severe problem towards the process of institutionization of political institutions. Since independence, the country has suffered from crucial and illegitimate direct rule for more than 16 years (1975-1991) under the military regimes. Consequently, civilian politicians have been deprived of achieving political careers due to military intervention in the national politics.

Moreover, most of the political institutions were captured and politicized by the high-ranking army officials within the period. The presences of the ex-military bureaucrats were even more pronounced in the elite composition of Jatiya Party (JP) formed by Gen. Ershad. Militarization of civilian administration reached an unprecedented height during this period. According to one estimate, over 277 ex-military officers held important position in almost the entire range of civilian administration during 1987-90<sup>[24]</sup>. In fact, it could be mentioned that BNP and JP were born, as political parties in the cantonment and the founder of both parties were ex-Army Generals. So, naturally both parties provided illegal facilities and extra privileges to the army officials and give nominations to the retired army persons for sustaining long-time and their existence in the politics.

**Chronical foul play of candidates, black money in the election process:** It is argued that money is the most influential factor and powerful ingredient of candidates to get nomination from two major political parties in Bangladesh. Most of the MPs of present Jatiya Shangsad (JS) are millionaires. But there is always a difference between poor and rich candidates in terms of black money. In such a situation only the rich will dictate the national agenda and the (JS) may become an institution of the riches for the riches and by the riches<sup>[20]</sup>. Hardly any candidate can aspire to win the race unless his purse is bigger than the limit, said a study recently conducted by News Network, national news features agency. According to the study, where elections are hardly contested, serious candidates have to spend much more money than the prescribed minimum limit. Even people in the Election Commission observe that many candidates filed false returns to keep their expenditure within the limit. The EC, the study said, does not have any scientific mechanism to assess personal as well as the real expenditure of candidates. So, the EC cannot do anything is a candidate lies when he submit his account of expenses<sup>[19,20]</sup>.

Regarding chronically foul play of candidates black money and wealth former CEC of India Mr. Seshan expressed his opinion that there are three influential Cs behind the national election and these are mainly controlling the parliamentary election of India. These 3Cs are C1 Criminality i.e. terrorisms, C2 Cash i.e. huge amount of illegal money and lastly, C3 means Corruption i.e. votes rigging in the election. Pertinently it could be said that the same situation is prevailing in Bangladesh in terms high and low intensity and magnitudes of the condition<sup>[19,20-25]</sup>. it has correctly been diagnosed that the heavily politicized administration and the EC together with other critically attendant ills now threaten the holding of free and fair

polls in Bangladesh. Then again will not black money too take a winning role? This black money works wonder in Bangladesh. It can buy, in no mean measure, almost all the ingredients of an election night from party nomination, party activist, goons, and guns down to the grassroots voters. Even some sections of the mass media and corrupt election personnel could be lured to sell their services to the political racketeers.<sup>[20,26]</sup>

**Political culture and leadership in bangladesh: an explanation of interrelationships:** In the context of Bangladesh the concept of political culture and leadership is interrelated. In this section I will try to discuss the interrelationship of both the terms or will try to state to what extent the political culture of Bangladesh affect the development of political leadership. It is not an easy task to discuss the development of leadership from point of every feature of political culture. With a view to keep this discussion within a manageable size, I will choose five features of political culture of Bangladesh and try to discuss their role in the development of political leadership.

**Patron-clientelism:** Patron-clientelism has long lasting impact for the development of the political leadership of Bangladesh. The leaders of the party in power have more opportunity to offer patronage. They provide all the facilities to those belong to their party. On the other hand, when the opposition comes to the power, they do the same way with the expectation that they will gain their support.

In the local level, the voters also elect those candidates as leaders who will offer more patronage to them. This trend is continuing from independence till today. And it is come from the wave of patron-clientelism.

**Mobilization:** The mobilization politics has an impact to development of the political leadership in Bangladesh. Because, now a days, mobilization in the form of violence becomes a part of the political culture. In every sphere of politics, if some body wants to be a leader, must have the support of some mastans (terror) to cause violence. They became part and parcel of the politics.

In the parliament election, from nomination seeking to election, a candidate needs the mobilization of the influential one. So, it may be said that political culture determines who will be the leader?

**Militarization of politics:** The militarization has been deep rooted in the political culture of Bangladesh. Starting from pre independent period to till date, the country had gone several times under military leadership. Also, the



Table 2: Nomination of the retired high-ranking military officials in the JS election 1996.

Awami League	3.67
Bangladesh Nationalist Party	5.33
Jatio Party	6.48

Source: Adapted from Hossain, 2001:120.

people are non-responsive regarding the military. This culture is facilitating the military person to come in the leadership position even in the two big political parties in Bangladesh. If we look at the nomination procedure of the two major political parties, it will be evident that, both the parties are nominating the retired army persons during the election, in a way allowing the military leadership. The following table shows the situation.

The percent ages of nomination to the retired high ranking military officials for the JS election of 12th June 1996 by AL, BNP and JP is 3.67, 5.33, and 6.48 respectively.

**Enemy discourse:** The major political parties in Bangladesh are trapped in an enemy discourse. Even among the leaders of main parties like BNP and AL, do not have the talking relations. This will leave strong impact on the development of future leadership.

**Charisma:** Charisma plays an important role in the development of leadership in Bangladesh. As the people of Bangladesh have the emotional attachment with the charismatic leadership, they are allowing the family members of these leaders to be developed as the future leaders. For example, we can state the name of Shiekh Hasina and Khaleda Zia. The leadership of these women dominates both the major political parties of Bangladesh. If we try to analyze how theses two women have emerged as leaders? We will find that it is the charisma of Shiekh Mujibur Rahman that made Hasina the leaders of AL and the charisma of Ziaur Rahman made Khaleda as the leader of BNP. So, it can be said that political culture has a relationship with the development of leadership.

Based on above discussion, it is evident that, there is a strong relationship between the political culture and political leadership in Bangladesh.

## CONCLUSIONS

Leadership and political culture are the most important issue that can help the country to reach the pick of development. These are like the sailor of a ship and the wide sea. The fate of a ship in the wide sea depends on the efficiency of its sailor. Like that, the development of a country depends on the honesty and efficiency of its political leadership and the fairness of its political culture. In Bangladesh dishonesty, autocracy and corruption

characterizes the political leaders. The political culture of 'tit-for-tat game' is like a common practice for the leaders of major parties of all vistas. Personal resentments and rivalries between political opponents run deep.

It is most important for their own good as political leaders and for the good for our people that political leaders come out of the vicious cycle of the past politics of corruption, confrontation and intolerance. What is needed is a better understanding about the working of the democratic institutions by our political leaders and a change of outlook for a constructive beginning on the road to democracy.

This inability to separate emotion from the charisma of the political leaders is a hallmark of the political culture in the Bangladesh. In every sphere of politics and public life we encounter this characteristic, which is often manifested as corruption, lack of focus, mismanagement, hooliganism in labor and student politics, religious fanaticism and fundamentalism, criminalisation of politics and so on. That is why, it is better to say that the political culture of Bangladesh has a long lasting impact on the development of political leadership in Bangladesh.

Now, the West minister style of Democracy is persisted in Bangladesh. But the way the political leaders are running the country seems contrary to the meaning of Democracy. Actually the political leaders are running the country in a more authoritarian style under the veil of Democracy.

Lastly, it can be said that with a view to get rid of this type of situation, we need leadership with a relevant vision and direction, a kind of leadership that can inspire us and help re-channel our energy, hitherto mostly reflected in our anger, frustration and hope of a better future, into a firm and clear-headed commitment to a culture of construction, not destruction; of creativity, not anarchy; of rule of law, not lawlessness; of hope, not despair; of integrity, not opportunism; of result, not sloganeering.

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