

# Democratization in Bangladesh: Past, Present and Future

Muhammad Faridul Alam

## Abstract

Bangladesh, after the emergence as an independent state in 16 December, 1971, has not yet been able to glorify itself as a strong democratic nation thought having a wealthy history of democratic struggle. Although there are difficulties in performing democratic practice, the people of Bangladesh are always inspired by democratic ideals and democratic political system as their cherished desires. The liberal democratic system which has been performed in the West is a distinct theory here, however the fundamental freedom of the people are not realized due to political tensions and lack of consensus on national interest among the major political parties. Thus though having the possibilities of enriching the democratic values and ensuring the development, the process is being hindered. This article will analyze the gradual evolution of democratic movement, problems of present democratic system as well as the prospects of democracy in Bangladesh.



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## 1. Introduction

Bangladesh emerged as an independent country with the dream of establishing democracy for all citizens. In December 2011, Bangladesh celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of independence.<sup>1</sup> But the dream has not yet been materialized because of the infringement of democratic practices for the vested interest of the existing political parties. As a result, though having lot of potentials of national development, people are still combating with socio-economic and cultural difficulties prevailing all around the society. The history of Bangladesh shows that democratic culture here is not that much old like other developing countries though appeal for democratic values among the people has always been great. Although democratic practices have not been performed; people of Bangladesh are always inspired by democratic ideals and democratic political system as their cherished goal. Liberal democracy functions in the West mainly on two fundamental assumptions. First, the authority the government exercises is a trust, exercised on behalf of society, in a manner approved by it. It implies that there is a consensus in society in regard to the nature of political authority, nature of those who exercise it, mode of its application and so on. Second, it is law that safeguards the interests of all classes of people, and law is obeyed (even if it is a bad law) until it is changed. Only the representatives of people are entitled to make or change a law. In the environment of liberal democracy it is the force of argument and not the argument of force that reigns and a spirit of compromise, not of confrontation, prevails in society. Liberal democracy has succeeded mainly because of social terrain that is known as the fountain of democratic ethos is marked by more egalitarianism than oppressive hierarchy. Economic gains of society which is the main source of human containment are distributed in such a fashion that people of all classes are assured optimum level of living.<sup>2</sup> In Bangladesh, democracy has been imposed on a highly in egalitarian society, marked by all kinds of discriminations and inequities, where social ethos is yet to be democratic. Political prudence demands therefore a creative and dynamic political leadership which can prepare a fertile ground for the luxuriant growth of democratic values<sup>3</sup>

## 2. Methodology

This paper is based on secondary materials. Different books and research articles are studied to prepare this paper. However, in different sections of the paper, observations of the author have been boomed as independent researcher.

## 3. Theory of Democracy

The Democratic idea is close to nonnegotiable in today's world. In democratic system, equal participation of all eligible citizens is ensured either directly or indirectly through elected representatives. Governments in the democratic states are considered as they are entrusted by the majority of the citizens to create laws, implement them and are responsible for overall socio-economic and cultural development that would guarantee the free and equal practice of political self-determination.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The financial Express, 22 March, 2012, available at: [http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/old/more.php?news\\_id=124229&date=2012-03-22](http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/old/more.php?news_id=124229&date=2012-03-22), accessed on 18 February, 2014

<sup>2</sup> Eley Geoff (2002), *Forging Democracy: The History of the Left in Europe 1850-2000*, Oxford University Press, New York, p-17.

<sup>3</sup> Ahmed Emajuddin, *Democracy in Bangladesh: Prospects and Problems*, Weekly Holiday, Dhaka, 10 December, 2013.

<sup>4</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democracy>

Within democratic systems it is accepted that people are free to despise the elected government, but not its right to be the government. In the modern world, the idea of liberal democracy is known as the popular version of democracy, which is a variant of representative democracy that may include elements such as political pluralism; equality before the law; the right to petition elected officials for redress of grievances; due process; civil liberties; human rights; and elements of civil society outside the government. The role of institutions of civil societies is also important for the better performance of democracy. Democracy has different forms in different parts of the world; like the United Kingdom which originated the Westminster system, the dominant principle is that of parliamentary sovereignty, while maintaining judicial independence. Constitutional arrangements sometimes limit democracy's range, particularly in separation-of-powers systems such as the United States while constitutions generally contain entrenched guarantees of democratic government as well. In India, the world's largest democracy, parliamentary supremacy is subject to a constitution which includes judicial review.<sup>5</sup>

Among political theorists, there are many contending conceptions of democracy:

### **3.1. Minimalist Democracy**

Under minimalism, democracy is a system of government in which citizens give teams of political leaders the right to rule in periodic elections. According to this minimalist conception, citizens cannot and should not rule because, for example, on most issues, most of the time, they have no clear views or their views are not well-founded.

### **3.2. Direct Democracy**

Direct democracy, on the other hand, holds that citizens should participate directly in making laws and policies, and not do so through their representatives. Proponents of direct democracy offer varied reasons to support this view, declaring that political activity can be valuable in itself, since it socializes and educates citizens, and popular participation can check powerful elites. Most importantly, according to this theory, citizens do not really rule themselves unless they directly decide laws and policies for themselves.

### **3.3. Deliberative Democracy**

Deliberative democracy is based on the notion that democracy is government by discussion. Deliberative democrats contend that laws and policies should be based upon reasons that all citizens can accept. The political arena should be one in which leaders and citizens make arguments, listen, and change their minds.

### **3.4. Radical Democracy**

Radical democracy is based on the idea that there are hierarchical and oppressive power relations that exist in society. Democracy's role is to make visible and challenge those relations by allowing for difference, dissent, and antagonisms in the decision making processes.

## **4. Emergence of Democracy in Bangladesh**

The emergence of Bangladesh followed by real thrusts of democracy as the history illustrates various demonstrations by the people of the land against all forms of discriminations imposed by the then state authority. Thus the emergence as independent state, democracy was in-built in its nature.

<sup>5</sup> Shapiro Ian, 2003, *The State of Democratic Theory*, Princeton NJ, Princeton University Press, P -1

#### 4.1. Language Movement, 1952

The birth of Bangladesh was in many ways a unique phenomena, as immediately after the partition of Indian sub-continent, Bangladesh who was known the then East Pakistan, even having larger number of population than the West Pakistan was ill treated by them as West Pakistan was known as the power house of the newly independent state in 1947. The disappointments of the people of Eastern wing of Pakistan outburst regarding the state of official language, especially when “Bangla”, language of the majority people of Pakistan was bypassed and declared by the Pakistani authority that only “Urdu” will be the official language of Pakistan. The first instance of democratic movement started immediately after this declaration and sustained till 21 February, 1952 followed by sacrificing significant number of lives and eventually the demand was fulfilled by stating “Bangla” as one of the official language of Pakistan in the first constitution adopted in 1956.

#### 4.2. Education Movement, 1962

Immediately after the establishment of Pakistan, anarchy in the education sector was a common feature as the central government showed a step-motherly attitude towards East Pakistan. Clear discrimination was shown by the central government by cutting off the number of educational institutions in the Eastern wing within a short time, where prior to partition of the subcontinent, East Pakistan was much ahead of the then western part of Pakistan. In 1947-48 the number of primary schools in East Pakistan was 29,633, which came down to 26,000 within a span of 5 years.<sup>6</sup>

In 1959, the then Pakistani President Ayub Khan formed a Commission headed by Education Secretary SM Sharif to frame the education policy for Pakistan.<sup>7</sup> Defining education as productive activity, the report produced in 1962 suggested gross reform of education policy. The major recommendations were:

- Introducing “Urdu” language at the school level;
- Charging high cost for education;
- Extending the Bachelor degree from 2 to 3 years;
- 50% as the pass marks for the degree course;
- Abolishing the concept of free education;

Students reacted sharply to the above stated features. They pointed out that the door of education had been closed to the poor and low-income people. The very connotation of “investment in education” triggered a sharp response from the students. Action committees and sub-committees were formed in many institutions to protest against the introduction of English as compulsory subject and increase of the duration of the degree course from 2 to 3 years. The agitation programme was started by Dhaka College students. Higher Secondary Certificate examinees who considered the new English courses as an extra burden, also participated in it. Sporadic strikes and abstention from classes continued throughout this period. On 17 September, 1962 Hartal was called and observed spontaneously. When a procession entered Abdul Gani Road crossing near High Court, police fired at it. A student of Nobo Kumar High School was killed and many others were seriously injured. The firing infuriated the precisionists, who were not only students but also workers of different mills and factories, rickshaw pullers and boatmen. It is said that the '52-language movement cultivated the spirit of nationalism and the '62-education movement inculcated and infused

<sup>6</sup> Ahmed Quazi Faruque, *Evaluating the Education Movement in 1962*, the Daily Star, 17 September, 2009, available at: <http://archive.thedailystar.net/newDesign/cache/cached-news-details-106083.html>, accessed on 20 February, 2014.

<sup>7</sup> *Education Movement in 1962 in brief*, available at : <http://prouroblog.blogspot.com/2013/01/education-movement-of-1962-in-brief.html>, accessed on 20 February, 2014.

progressiveness. Two chief characteristics of the '62 education movement which deserve special mention are: first, the movement was initiated by the students alone without any outside influence and second, the central student leaders could not foresee that such a huge movement, based on education and academic problems faced by the students only, was possible. However, opposition leader Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy, who came to Dhaka from Karachi during the last leg of the movement, met East Pakistan Governor Golam Faruk and persuaded him to defer implementation of the Sharif Commission Report. This resulted in the eventual end of the movement, which was an eye-opener for the vested interests in the ruling coterie of Pakistan.

### 4.3. Six Points, 1966

As mentioned earlier, though the crude discriminations by the Pakistani authority towards the people of East Pakistan were resisted, no realizations manufactured on the mind of the Pakistani ruler to stop it, rather it became limitless. The historic Six-Point Demand or the Six-Point Formula has been widely credited as the "charter of freedom" in Bangladesh's struggle for self-determination from Pakistan's domination. Indeed, the six-point movement in 1966 was the turning point in our quest for independence. On June 7 in 1966 the Awami League called a countrywide hartal in the then East Pakistan to press home the six-point demands. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman along with many others was arrested. Since then 7th June is observed as the historic six-point day.<sup>8</sup> The Six-Point programme included the following:

1. Pakistan would have a federal structure of government based on spirit of the Lahore Resolution of 1940,<sup>9</sup> with a parliament elected on the basis of universal adult franchise;
2. The central government would have authority only in defence and foreign affairs and all other subjects would be handled by the federating units of the state of Pakistan;
3. There would be two freely convertible currencies for the two wings of Pakistan or one currency subject to effective constitutional provisions to stop flight of capital from East to West Pakistan with separate banking reserve to be made and separate fiscal and monetary policy to be adopted for East Pakistan;
4. The power of taxation and revenue collection would be vested in the federating units;
5. There would be two separate accounts for foreign exchange reserves for the two wings of Pakistan;
6. East Pakistan would have a separate militia or paramilitary force as a measure of its security.

Mujib's move raised howls of protest all over Pakistan. The civil-military bureaucracy and politicians straddling both government and opposition circles were quick to dub the Six Points as a secessionist plot to dismember Pakistan. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's arrest in May 1966, followed by the 7 June strike, swiftly led to circumstances where the Pakistan government opted for repression in East Pakistan.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Manik M. Waheduzzaman, *The Historic Six-points Movement and its Impact on the Struggle for Independence*, The Daily Star, 7 June, 2008, available at: [http://archive.thedailystar.net/newDesign/print\\_news.php?nid=40021](http://archive.thedailystar.net/newDesign/print_news.php?nid=40021), accessed on 21 February, 2014.

<sup>9</sup> The areas where the Muslims are numerically in a majority as in the Northwestern and Eastern zones of India should be grouped to constitute 'independent states' in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign.

<sup>10</sup> Ahsan Syed Badrul, *Recalling Six Points*, The Daily Star, 7 June, 2012, available at: <http://archive.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=237295>, accessed on 21 February, 2014.

#### 4.4. Mass Upsurge, 1968-69

After the announcement of the six-points, Pakistani President Ayub Khan and the then east Pakistani Governor Monem Khan decided to harass Sheikh Mujib to dismantle the democratic agitation of east Pakistan. In January, 1968, Ayub-monayem administration brought forth a case against Sheikh Mujibur Rahman accusing him of treason. It was known as *The Agartala Conspiracy Case*.<sup>11</sup> In June 1968, special military tribunal was set-up to here the case. Sheikh Mujib denied all charges against him and said the case is nothing but a response from the establishment to his six point charter for autonomy. *The Agartala Conspiracy Case* made the student community more rebellious against the oppression of Ayub-Monem. In January, 1969, all party student body known as *Central Student Action Committee* was formed to push the movement further. Finally Sheikh Mujib was freed from the case followed by the triumph of the movement. This incident revealed the unique qualities of Sheikh Mujib, who was later known as '*Bangabandhu*'. His adherence to the party hierarchy showed his faith in the democratic system.<sup>12</sup>

#### 4.5. General Election, 1970

Soon after succeeding Ayub Khan as the President, General Yahya Khan announced the general election in December, 1970. After the election was held, it was seemed that *Awami League* became the majority party in Pakistan and won a stunning victory winning 167 seats out of total 313. On the other hand *Pakistan People's Party* became the second largest party by winning 88 seats.<sup>13</sup>

#### 4.6. Liberation War, 1971

The victory of Awami League in the election of 1970 frightened the Pakistani rulers. They could smell that the Bangalees would now wield the state power and introduce a new constitution based on the six points charter. So they started conspiracy immediately after the result was published. As a part of this, the opening session of the new parliament that was convened by President Yahaya Khan on the 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 1971, was postponed on 1<sup>st</sup> March and resummoned the assembly meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> March. Bangabandhu gave a speech on March 7, 1971 and urged the people to turn all their homes into a fort of fight unless his Four Points demands<sup>14</sup> are achieved. Thereafter, military crackdown commenced a little before mid-night on 25-26 March, 1971, the Pakistani army tried to violently crush the Bengali's opposition. Residence halls of the Dhaka University were viciously attacked. On March 26, the Pakistani forces arrested Bangabandhu. A little before his arrest, he signed an official declaration for the independence of Bangladesh. War between the Pakistan Army and the Bengali freedom fighters, the Mukti Bahini, began. India also helped with ammunition and its own soldiers. They attacked the Pakistani army. India assumed an active role. Indira Gandhi ordered air and ground attacks.<sup>15</sup> On December 16<sup>th</sup>, 1971, Bangladesh became occupation free and Dhaka fell to the Mitro Bahini, the elite forces of the Mukti Bahini and the Indian army consequent upon surrender of 93,000 Pakistani soldiers under Geneva Convention.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>11</sup> It was alleged that Sheikh Mujib met with Indian intelligence Officers in Agartala, india. Hence the case came to be known as Agartala Conspiracy Case.

<sup>12</sup> Nabi Nurun, 2011, *Bullets of '71: A Freedom Fighter's Story*, Author House, USA, p. 82-101

<sup>13</sup> Website of Bangladesh Awami League, available at: <https://www.albd.org/index.php/en/party/history/118-1970-elections-awami-league-s-historic-win>, accessed on 23 January, 2014

<sup>14</sup> Annulment of martial law, sending troops back to barracks, institutional inquiry into the killings between mid-February and March 7, transfer of power to the elected representatives of people failing which non-cooperation movement and protests would continue.

<sup>15</sup> Dixit J.N (1999), *Liberation and Beyond: Indo-Bangladesh Relations*, The University Press Limited, p. 59-62.

<sup>16</sup> Rahman Alburuj Razzaq, *Bangladesh Liberation War*, available at: <http://www.astronomy.ohio-state.edu/~nahar/cv/bdliberation-essay8.pdf>, accessed on 31 January, 2014

#### **4.7. State building after independence and assassination of Bangabandhu**

After victory of the struggle for independence, Bangabandhu was released from the Pakistani jail and back to the free land on 10 January, 1972 and assumed as President of independent and sovereign Bangladesh. Like other newly independent state, Bangladesh at the outset of its birth faced formidable problem of simultaneously building an input and an output sector. Soon after the birth of Bangladesh in 1971 following a 9 month long bloody war with Pakistan, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman banned all communal politics in the country and made secularism and socialism into state principles. These steps were taken to curb the rise of Islamists. On the other hand, the two major instruments i.e., the civil bureaucracy and military were in disarray at the time of new state's birth. As the more experienced and senior Bengali civil and military officers were working with the central government and left in Pakistan, in the post-liberation period, not only did Bangladesh find itself deprived itself of the service of the experienced civil and military bureaucrats, but also schism and factionalism affected the morale and discipline of the civil service and military left in Bangladesh.<sup>17</sup> In this realities, the first constitution of the sovereign Bangladesh was passed by the Constituent Assembly of Bangladesh on November 4, 1972, it came into effect from December 16, 1972, The constitution proclaims nationalism, democracy, socialism and secularity as the national ideals of the Bangladeshi republic. When adopted in 1972, it was one of the most liberal constitutions of the time. Bangabandhu tried to unify the whole nation under this newly adopted constitution, however, as mentioned, fragmented post-war situation interrupted the process and he was assassinated by some misguided military officers in 15 August, 1975, through which the post war democracy interrupted for the first time.

#### **4.8. Absence of Democratic Practice from 1975-1990**

After the assassination of Bangabandhu, the military backed civilian government was ousted in a short-time and direct military rule took over the national control. In the period of 1975-1990, the governments started portrayal of its Muslim image to an Islamic heartland. The following two military regimes of Ziaur Rahman and Hussein Muhammad Ershad not only presented a Muslim image of Bangladesh to Middle Eastern countries but also systematically promoted Islam in public discourse. Zia and Ershad's regimes (1975-1990) took some key further measures: the concept of secularism was replaced with one of absolute trust and faith in Allah in the constitution. The reasons behind such Islamization of Bangladesh were twofold. Firstly, Islam became a tool to legitimize illegal regimes in the eyes of the Muslim majority. Secondly, in order to win the approval of Middle Eastern Muslim countries, these military regimes often collaborated with the Bangladesh Jamayete Islam,<sup>18</sup> who became the third largest political party after the assassination of Banglbandhu.

#### **4.9. Revival of Democracy in 1991**

As the country was facing serious crisis of political, economic and institutional affairs after the long dictatorial rule of Zia and Ershad, spontaneous movement against Ershad regime fomented by students gathered during the mid 80s and took its final shape in December 1990.<sup>19</sup> Ershad government was forced to resign as a result of forceful and continuous mass movement. Before resignation, he appointed Shahabuddin Ahmed, the Chief Justice of the

<sup>17</sup> Jahan Rounaq, *Bangladesh in 1972: Nation Building in a New State*, Asian Survey, Vol:13, No, 02 (Feb'1973), University of California Press, 1973. P- 200.

<sup>18</sup> Hasan Mobashar (2012), *Global Political Islam in Bangladesh: Past, Present and Future*, available at: <http://www.opendemocracy.net/opensecurity/mubashar-hasan/global-political-islam-in-bangladesh-past-present-and-future>, accessed on 15 March, 2014.

<sup>19</sup> Moniruzzaman Talukder (1992), *The Fall of Military Dictator: 1991 Election and the Prospect of Civilian Rule in Bangladesh*, Pacific Affairs, Vol. 65, No. 2, Summer, 1992, p – 206-208.

Supreme Court as the Vice-President as per the consensus among the major political parties and handed over power to him as the Acting President. Soon a set of advisors (equivalent to ministers status) were elected to hold the national election on 27.<sup>20</sup> In the election of 1991, Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) with the support of Jamat-e-Islami (who won 18 seats of the parliament out of 300) best known for anti-liberation plank-formed the government with Begum Khaleda Zia as the Prime Minister. Immediately after the formation of new government, the twelfth amendment of the constitution was adopted, replacing the parliamentary form of government.

### 5. Provision of Caretaker Government

Amid mounting suspicions on ruling party's sagacity to strengthen democratic institutions through parliamentary practice, accusation of malpractice and rigging of votes by the ruling party in Mirpur and Magura by-elections kindled and compounded the anger of the opposition parties. BNP resorted to 'media coup' in Mirpur and Magura by-elections to declare its candidate elected before the election result was announced by the Election Commission.<sup>21</sup> As a result the opposition parties started demanding to incorporate the provision of care-taker government to hold the national election, however the ruling party denied. After long movement the ruling party agreed and the provision of care-taker government was incorporated in the constitution through the thirteenth amendment.

### 6. Problems of Democracy in Bangladesh

A strong opposition and multi-party system and consensus on national issues are three preconditions for consolidating democracy. In Bangladesh, the political parties have failed to be the strong opposition party with a shadow government. At the same time as it is known that the political parties are considered as the engine for the practice for of democracy as they are supposed to mobilize the people against any irregularity, in Bangladesh, unfortunately intra and inter-party democracy does not exist. In this context, Bangladesh fulfills both the theories of Minimalist and Radical democracies. As per the idea of Minimalist democracy, people are enjoying their voting rights only, electing the representatives through periodical elections and the elected governments are incessantly being radical through their oppressive motions, while others are reacting but the fundamental vicinity of human rights are being ignored. The Major problems of Bangladesh's democracy are mentioned below; In Bangladesh, whenever any party takes over the government, there is a tendency to retain the state power. The thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth amendments of the constitution of Bangladesh the authenticate the nature of the governing parties to hold on to the state power.<sup>22</sup> Politics is often carried out on the streets, as the contending parties use various tools of intimidation to win. The hartal, or strike, can close down businesses, education, transportation, and public offices locally, and even nationwide, for hours, days, or weeks. This

<sup>20</sup> Ahsan Syea Aziz-Al (1992), *Bangladesh at the Polls: Free and Fair Elections*, Asian Profile, Vol; 20, No. 2, 1992, p 171-174,

<sup>21</sup> Molla Gyasuddin (2000), *Democratic Institution Building in Bangladesh: South Asian Experience of a New Model of 'Care-taker Government' in a Parliamentary Framework*, Working Paper No. 3, South Asian Institute, Department of Political Science, University of Heidelberg, p-11.

<sup>22</sup> The thirteenth amendment rejects the national election under the ruling party, which was passes as per the demand of the opposition parties in 1996, providing that the immediate past Chief Justice of the Supreme Court to be the Chief Advisor (Prime Minister) to conduct the election. In 2004, the ruling party BNP adopted the fourteenth amendment to extend the service of the Chief Justice from 65 to 67 of age, confirming the then Chief Justice in the office become the Chief Advisor after his retirement. Again in 2011, the ruling Awami League unilaterally annulled the provision of the national election under the care-taker government mentioning it undemocratic.

high level of conflict, rooted in deep resentments about past wrongs done, discourages party cooperation on issues of vital national concern.

The hallmark of a successful democracy can be seen at three levels: development of a participant political culture, presence of just and accountable political institutions, and effective leadership that is willing to transcend personal ambitions and maintain the sanctity of the public institutions. It can be argued that the 10<sup>th</sup> parliamentary elections failed on all three accounts where the largest opposition party BNP along with 27 (out of 40 registered political parties) other parties boycotted the election held in 5 January, 2014 and the direct election was in only 146 constituencies (out of 300) in 154 constituencies there were no option.<sup>23</sup> Though Parliamentary form of government was re-emerged as per the twelfth amendment in 1991 to make the public representatives more liable to the people, the power of the President became ornamental and the office of the Prime Minister became the most powerful. According to the constitution, if an issue comes to a vote in Parliament, Article 70 of the constitution mandates that all party members must vote with their party's majority.<sup>24</sup> In other words, crossing party lines when a member of parliament might, for reasons of conscience or judgment, vote against his or her own party is forbidden. Given the power of the top leadership, this means that MPs essentially vote by following directives rather than weighing the merits of issues to decide their own positions.

## 7. Prospects of Democracy in Bangladesh

Despite all these, our democracy has some constructive outcomes. Strong civil society, powerful media and pressure groups are instances of the strengths of our democracy. In spite of lack of consensus among the political parties, some significant initiatives have been taken which eventually fulfill the requirement of strengthening the democratic practice. All of these reform initiatives were done after the collapse of the autocratic government in 1990 includes freedom of press as at present more than 50 Bangla and English news papers are being published along with more than 30 private Television channels who are enjoying complete freedom and contributing towards the check and balance system. Besides, the formation of Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), Right to Information (RTI) Commission and Human Right Commission (HRC) in 2008. the separation of judiciary from the executive was done in 2007 is another landmark toward ensuring the fundamental rights of the people and cut the interference of the government on the judiciary. Though the mentioned reforms are still raw in its implementation process but the laws are fundamental to make the democracy in a matured shape. In this respects, the cooperative manner and attitude among the existing political parties on the national interest and respect toward the laws and fundamental rights of the people can guarantee toward a better democratic practice. Therefore, remarkable progress in some areas, can contribute toward the fulfillment of basic requirements like desired level of economic growth, poverty reduction, and improvement in quality of life and overall social development.

## 8. Concluding Remarks

In Bangladesh, the search for democracy has a long historical backdrop. Historical evidences illustrate the thirst for democracy of the people and their participation in different movement to have the real taste of democracy. The independence of Bangladesh has come through a series of complex struggle but unfortunately people's quest for democracy hinders within the

<sup>23</sup> Baker Gideon (2002), *Civil Society and Democracy: Alternative Voices*, routledge Publications, London, p- 53-55.

<sup>24</sup> Constitution of Bangladesh, October, 2011, p-23.

domestic political culture resulting underdevelopment though having geographical advantages and human resources. It is noticeable that there is a strong civil society and independent media (both print and electronic) as well as strong and energetic youth force which need to be combined with the agenda of the political parties. The current tendency of exclusiveness should be avoided and all together work for the inclusive political culture. It is the political parties who are primarily responsible to uphold and portrait the positive image of the country. People do not move spontaneously; rather wait to be called by the political parties who are the heart of democracy.

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