A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE ELITE IN
A TOWN IN BANGLADESH

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ABSTRACT

The community elite members of Rajshahi have been largely recruited from the maddhabitta category. The new elites are predominant in the power structure. They are involved in exchange relationships amongst themselves, with the non-elite members and with some national elite members in order to maintain or enhance their privileged positions. This relationship generally assumes the character of patron-clientage or a horizontal alliance. The involved parties perceive their mutual advantage. Elite conflict centres around the sharing of privileges, distribution of patronage resources, personal jealousies, political rivalry etc. Conflicts simultaneously lead to the break-up of old exchange relationships and the emergence of new ones. The kinship system, caste and land tenure relationships facilitate the emergence of exchange relationships.

In politics patronage plays a major role; political mobilization and alliance are effected through the distribution of patronage. Politics is largely non-ideological, pragmatic and leadership-centred. It ultimately leads to legitimacy crises of the ruling elites because of inadequacy, maldistribution and misappropriation of patronage resources, irregular practices and repression. They are subsequently displaced by the new ruling elites who undergo the same process.

Resources must be available for the functioning of the patronage system. Private resources in Bangladesh are
inadequate to maintain the system as a whole. Access to official resources are important because most of the resources are controlled by the government and the government-supported organizations. The securing of these resources and the distribution of resources through intermediaries give rise to brokerage in certain spheres. Brokerage plays a significant role in various community affairs.

The semi-feudalistic system of production, parochialism, manipulation, poverty, very weak class consciousness, and quick upward mobility keep the patronage system operative. The growth of Western type capitalism or a communistic type social system may break up the system, but both these possibilities seem to be very remote in Bangladesh.
I declare that the thesis has been composed by myself and that the work is my own.

February 1977.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I shall be failing in my duty if I do not mention the co-operation I have received from the elite members of Rajshahi town, from some national-level elite members and from many other people of the town and district. I wish to express some measure of gratitude I feel to them.

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Abbreviations

AL (Awami League)
AJL (Awami Jubo League)
A.D.C. (Additional Deputy Commissioner)
CFB (M) (Communist Party of Bangladesh - Moni Singh Group)
CFB (Marxist-Leninist) (Communist Party of Bangladesh - Marxist-Leninist Group)
C & B Department (Communications and Buildings Department)
D.P.I. (Director of Public Instructions)
D.C. (Deputy Commissioner)
JSD (Jatiyo Samajtantrik Dal (National Socialist Party))
JSL (Jatiyo Sramik League (National Labour League))
JSL (M) (Jatiyo Sramik League - Matin Group)
JL (Jatiyo (National) League)
Kh. (Khandkar)
MFA (Member of Provincial Assembly)
MNA (Member of National Assembly)
MF (Member of Parliament)
NAP (B) (National Awami Party - Bhashani Group)
NAP (M) (National Awami Party - Muzaffar Group)
RUCSU (Rajshahi University Central Students Union)
SL (Students League)
SU (Students Union)
SU (Sramik Union - in case of labour organization)
Tk. (Taka (Bangladesh money))
GENERAL MAP OF BANGLADESH: LOCATION & ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICTS
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INTRODUCTION

This study is concerned with the interactive process and networks of relationships of the elite members of an urban community in Bangladesh. The urban community under study is Rajshahi town. To appreciate this urban community and its power structure and its linkage with outside areas, especially the rural people of the district and the national power structure it would be helpful to give a brief introduction of the town with special emphasis on its politico-administrative set-up. Rajshahi town is located in Rajshahi district which is predominantly rural with about 95% of the people living in villages. The town is situated on the northern bank of the Ganges. It is a town that has length without proportionate breadth. Lengthwise it extends over more than five miles; but breadthwise it extends less than a mile. The total population of the town was 56,885 in 1961 of which 79.3% were Muslims, 20.4% were Hindus and only .3% belonged to other religions.\(^1\) As in other district towns in Bangladesh the rate of population growth of the town is quite high. In fact, the population of the town had registered a sharp increase over the last decades, the ratio of increase being 42% over the 1951 population.\(^2\) No statistics are available for the current rate of population growth. Of the 1961 population of the town 23,423 were literates, the percentage of literacy being 41. Out of total literate persons 39% have received education up to the

primary stage, 34.5% up to the middle school stage while 7% are literate but have passed no grades at all. Only 17% were matriculates and 2.5% degree holders. Although no current statistics are available there are good reasons to believe that the number of literate or educated persons with various educational levels has gone up substantially. For example, in the University of Rajshahi alone there are more than 600 degree holders.

The government administrative machinery which runs the administration of the district also looks after the administration of the town. The higher members of the bureaucracy along with other higher members of the branch offices of the nation building departments and the revenue department are formally entrusted with the responsibility for the administration and for development works in the town. In addition to the governmental administrative machinery the local self-government institutions such as the municipality, the zilla parishad and the town committee have certain administrative and development functions. The higher bureaucrats and their associates as well as the higher officials of the local self-government institutions have direct control over a significant volume of official patronage resources which play a vital role in the political process of

3. Ibid.
4. See Lists of Rajshahi University Teachers and Employees with their qualification in 1975, Establishment Section, Office of the Registrar, Rajshahi University.
the community. Moreover, these local self-government institutions whose higher officials are elected for a specific period of time provide the local political leaders with arenas for political activities. There are branches of all the major national political parties such as the Awami League, the NAP (M), the NAP (E), the JSD, the JL, the CPB (M), the CPB (Marxist-Leninist) etc. in Rajshahi town. The local branches of the banned political parties such as the Muslim League, the Nizam-i-Islam, the Jamaat-i-Islam etc. are not functioning in the community. All the executive committee members of these district branches of the parties are recruited from among the local politicians. Consequently, Rajshahi town has become the nerve centre of district politics. The district branches of all these political parties have branches at the subdivisional level; and some of them have sub-branches at the thana (rural police station) level. Each of the district branches of various political parties has its student front and its leaders have close connections with the student leaders of such a front.

The political leaders of the ruling party (i.e. the Awami League) have a great deal of influence in the administration of the town through the government administrative machinery and the executive members of the local self-government institutions. But recently the Awami League has established a town development committee to which some local political leaders of the ruling party have been formally recruited as executive members.

7. All these political parties were banned by the ruling Awami League Government as soon as Bangladesh became independent. In view of the rapidly changing political scene we should point out that we have used the ethnographic present to refer to the period of fieldwork, 1974-5.
Moreover, Rajshahi town is linked through the system of local self-government and political representation (generally through the political party system) to the central administration of the country. The elected representatives from the town sit in the parliament and take part in the legislation and other vital decisions affecting the country as a whole. Thus political networks of various kinds link the town people to the people occupying a variety of political positions both within and outside the town. They interconnect village leaders, district leaders, party bosses, members of the parliament, financiers, government officials and many other members coming from different occupational or professional groups.

The study of the elites of Rajshahi town should provide a valuable insight into the functioning of the community of which they form a significant part. The identification of the elites who constitute the power structure of the community in itself may be treated as a significant step toward the understanding of the interactive process and the network of exchange relationships in the community. Indeed, the adequate understanding of the process that shapes the power structure of the community, its nature and composition, the identification of the elites, their characteristics and activities, the channels and mechanisms of their emergence, the source of their power, influence and prestige, and the mechanisms through which such influence, power and prestige are maintained, their linkages and contacts in and outside the community and the nature and basis of those linkages and contacts are of
immense significance for the projection of the interactive process and the functioning of the community. Thus, the study of the interactive process and the network of exchange relations of the elite members amongst themselves and with the non-elite members is sociologically valuable. Similarly, their control over the power structure and a high degree of access to resources and the mechanisms through which they perpetuate and increase their power and access to resources are highly significant for any sociological study of the elites of Rajshahi town. The analysis of data on the problems or issues stated above may provide us with answers to the questions of how the elite members share the power and resources amongst themselves, and why and how they distribute a part of the resources to the non-elite members of the community in exchange for support and services. The analysis of data should further reveal how the elite members often develop conflicts and competitions amongst themselves over the question of the sharing of power and privileges. Competition among the elite patrons for the recruitment of supporters and clients is also one of the important causes for the emergence of conflicts and jealousies among the competing elite members. Their supporters and clients are often drawn into such conflicts, and the clients of a particular patron may become involved in conflicts with the clients of the rival of their patron. Some clients of a patron may sever their connections with the latter and establish an exchange relationship with a more resourceful new patron. This type of shifting of allegiance of the
clients from one patron to another may be seen to be tied to the problem of differential power and resources of the elite members to distribute patronage and favours to their clients and potential clients.

The problems of the acquisition of elitist positions, the pattern of upward and downward mobility of the elite members affiliated to various occupational groups and the general pattern of upward and downward mobility in the community can be seen to be highly connected with the network of exchange relationships between the aspirants and their patrons who have direct or indirect control over the process of recruitment or promotion of the aspirants to elite positions as well as over the distribution of resources as patronage to their clients and potential clients. These elite patrons are likely to show favours to their clients and potential clients, the clients and potential clients of their friends or allies and the candidates sponsored by their own patron(s) if they have any. The study of the pattern of elite recruitment is important because this enables us to locate the recruitment base or bases of the elite members as well as to examine the degree of openness or closure of the elite structure. It further enables us to study the process of interaction and the network of exchange relationships between the elite members and their recruitment base or bases. It is hoped that the analysis of data should throw some light on the social origin of the elite members when we try to ascertain the proportion of elite members recruited from elite parentage as well as that from non-elite
parentage. We shall also be able to find out the relative percentage of the elite members having fathers in the maddhabitta and nimnabitta categories. Once the recruitment pattern of the elite members has been ascertained we shall proceed to explore the channels and factors responsible for such a pattern.

The study of the pattern of elite participation in the identified community issues will enable us to see that not all the elite members are participants in those issues and that the extensity of participation varies from one elite group to another. The participation of the elite members in certain issues is largely guided by the consideration of their interests in those issues. The analysis of data in this arena should give us some idea about the structure of elite participation in the identified community issues. But this will not enable us to know much about the mechanism of the decision-making process in the community. For this reason a section has been devoted to the analysis of the problem and mechanism of the decision-making process. Such a study should show that the decision-making process is intimately connected with the network of exchange relationships of the elite members. The decision-making elite members are likely to make such decisions as will help them to maintain their privileged positions as well as their patron-client networks and horizontal alliances which are, in fact, very useful devices for the perpetuation and enhancement of their power, influence, privileges and prestige. This type of motivation is likely to induce the elite members to make

* See Appendix-C, p.523.
certain decisions often in violation of certain formal rules and regulations. This may often prompt them to make certain decisions behind the scene to be subsequently endorsed and legitimized in a formal meeting. Manipulation of a decision in favour of a particular individual or a group of individuals, who are already involved in an exchange relationship or are keen to establish a new exchange relationship with the decision-makers or with an influential elite member who has close contacts and linkages with those decision-makers, is an important feature in the process of decision-making in the community.

It is of particular importance to examine in what way the institutions or structures such as kinship, caste or caste-like grouping and land tenure enter into the interactive process and the network of exchange relationships of the elite members of the community. Here our aim is to examine whether the ties generated or effected through the above institutions or structures have any significant part to play in the emergence of exchange relationships (i.e., patron-client relationships and horizontal alliance) between the elite members and the people connected with the former through these ties. The analysis of data should reveal that the ties of kinship and the affiliation to a common caste or caste-like group generally work as factors to reinforce or facilitate the emergence and functioning of the exchange relationship which is founded on the crucial factor of transactions of one sort or another. It can be seen that the possession of superior socio-economic or
political power enables an elite member to play the role of a patron to his superior kinsmen (superior in kinship status) possessing inferior socio-economic or political power. In this situation the kinship norms are likely to influence the behaviour pattern of the elite patron to his kin clients and vice versa. Similarly, caste superiority as such is not an effective factor in promoting an individual elite member belonging to a higher caste or caste-like group to the position of a patron vis-a-vis an individual of a lower caste or caste-like group if the former is not politico-economically superior to the latter. In fact, an individual elite member of lower caste or caste-like group origin, possessing higher politico-economic power is likely to play the role of a patron to a higher caste member having lower politico-economic power. The question of caste superiority, however, is likely to have some amount of influence on the behaviour pattern of the parties involved in an exchange relationship. One important point to be noted here is that a particular caste group as a whole is not likely to play the role of patron to another caste group because even in a dominant caste group some members can be seen to be in the position of clients to politico-economically powerful elite members belonging to their own caste group or other caste or caste-like groups.

The analysis of data should enable us to see what happens when these ties become strained because of the emergence of conflict between the elite members and the people connected with them through these ties. It is likely that the exchange relationship will break up and the
conflicting parties will become antagonistic to each other. Both the parties are likely to establish exchange relationship with some other parties.

The study of the network of relationship between the elite maliks or munibs (owners or masters) and their bargadars (sharecroppers) and agricultural labourers will show the process and extent of economic exploitation and social domination of the former over the latter. A thorough examination of the problem will reveal that the bargadars and agricultural labourers are economically exploited and socially dominated by the maliks or munibs even if the involved parties exchange mutually valued goods and services. One important problem associated with the land tenure system is that the elite-sponsored land reform policy is often used as a political device to secure the support of the peasantry. Land reform measures that are likely to go against the vested interest of the elite members and their landholding allies are hardly ever adopted and implemented. The question of improvement of the socio-economic conditions of the poor peasants, bargadars and landless and near-landless agricultural labourers is never given any serious consideration in the land reform policy, even though some elite members, especially the political elite members, try to create a false impression among these poor peasants and cultivators about their concern for the uplift of the socio-economic conditions of the poor peasantry through land reform measures. However, the provision of the maximum land-ceiling of 100 bighas has had little effect on the distribution of land control as the illegal transfer of excess lands to kinsmen and often to
fictitious persons has enabled most big land owners to escape the surrender of their excess lands. Of course, some amounts of land, though not significant, have been reclaimed. But the reclaimed lands plus the Khash lands (government owned lands) have been used by the ruling political leaders as patronage resources to be distributed to the poor peasants and cultivators in exchange for their political support.

The system of dalali (brokerage) plays a significant role in the interactive process and the network of exchange relationships of the elite members. An elite member may play the role of a patron and a dalal (broker) simultaneously. When he distributes patronage to his clients he plays the role of a patron but simultaneously he may have to secure patronage for his clients from other sources through manipulation, playing the role of a dalal between his clients and the actual dispensers of patronage. He may even play the role of a dalal to establish an exchange relationship between two of his allies. But if this elite member subsequently gets someone as his patron he is required to play three roles—patron, dalal and client—simultaneously. An elite member may have his dalal(s) for effecting an exchange relationship between him and another party. A careful analysis of the system of dalali should reveal that it is an essential and powerful mechanism for the expansion of the network of exchange relationships, especially the vertical expansion of a patron-client network in various tiers. Further analysis of the data shows that the system
of dalali has an important role to play in various socio-economic and politico-administrative arenas of the community. The role-performance as a dalal often becomes an important and essential prerequisite for an aspirant’s advancement along the occupational or social ladder.

The study of the politics of the community reveals that the mobilization of political support and the formation of political alliances centre on the factor of transaction of one sort or another generally within the framework of patron-client relationships. But the formation of a political alliance between two or more political leaders of more or less comparable politico-economic standing assumes the character of a horizontal alliance. In factional politics the transaction of patronage for political support plays an important role in the sense that each factional leader tries to recruit his supporters by distributing patronage as well as making promises of future patronage and favours to their supporters and clients. Direct or indirect access to official patronage resources is highly important because the major part of the patronage resources are controlled by the government and also because a political leader’s private resources are inadequate to meet the demands of his supporters and potential supporters. The local political leaders of the ruling party are in conflict with their counterparts affiliated to the opposition parties. The opposition leaders are often harassed by the ruling party leaders and their workers and supporters. Very often governmental forces such as the police, the military and the Jatiyo Rakkhi Bahini are induced by the leaders of the ruling party to harass or coerce the leaders and workers of the opposition parties.
Community politics is predominantly guided by pragmatic considerations, and both the political leaders and their supporters place very little emphasis on the political ideologies and issues even though a few political leaders follow a certain ideology on the surface and show their concern about the issues affecting the community or the nation as a whole. The politics of the community is neither kinship-based nor caste-based. But the kinship network and caste group of a political leader provide him with already-connected and well-known avenues for the mobilization of political support as well as the formation of political alliance provided that the crucial factor of transaction between the political leader and his kinsmen and caste fellows remains operative and functional. However, in the kinship arena a significant part of the transaction of patronage for political support may be deferred for future materialization.

One important feature of the present study is that it provides us with an opportunity to examine the network of exchange relationships between the community elite members and some elite and non-elite members living outside the community. The network of exchange relationships between the community elite members and some national elite members is very important and significant because some of the decisions of the national elite members directly or indirectly affect the community elite members and some others have far-reaching consequences on the affairs of the community. Moreover, some of the decisions at the community level are often influenced by the direct or indirect involvement of some national-level
elite members. Similarly, the network of exchange relationships (i.e. patron-client relationships) between the community elite members and the general masses of the district living outside the community is very important because the elite members, especially the political elite members recruit a large number of clients and followers who constitute their support base from among these groups of people generally by directly or indirectly (indirectly through the dalals) distributing or promising patronage and favours in one form or the other. Thus, to obtain a clear and full picture of the interactive process and the network of exchange relationships of the elite members of the community it has become necessary for us to give an adequate emphasis to the analysis of the pattern of outside linkages and contacts of the community elite members.

Now we wish to talk about the importance of the study of elites. In short, it may be said that the study of elites is important because the elite members of a community play a vital role in the decision-making process and constitute and control the power structure of the community. They are powerful and influential people who have a very high degree of access to the resources of the community and whose decisions, actions and activities and network of relationships have an impact on the functioning of, and on socio-economic changes in, the community. In fact, the elite members, especially the influential and powerful ones are in charge of allocation of resources to the people of the community. They are the people who have assumed the leadership positions in various
spheres of the community. Indeed, they are treated by the general masses as the guardians of the community. Although one set of elite members may, in course of time, be replaced by another or there may be a continuous process of replacement of some elite members by the new recruits, the pattern of relationship between the elite members and the general mass of the population remains more or less unchanged in the sense that the elite members remain as the powerful and influential leaders to the general mass of the people. However, because of the existence of internal differentiation or stratification of elite members in various occupational groups the elite member with higher power, influence, privileges and prestige remain patrons or leaders to their less powerful, less influential and less prestigious counterparts. The nature of the relationship between the elite members having differential power, influence, prestige and privileges as well as between the elite members of more or less comparable status has consequences on the decision-making process and the distribution of resources in the community.

One important point to be noted here is that the concept of 'elite' assumes that there are powerful and influential minority groups dominating over the vast majority of the non-elite population. Thus, Keller says:

"The existence and persistence of influential minorities is one of the constant characteristics of organized social life. Whether a community is small or large, rich or poor, simple or complex, it always sets some of its members apart as very important, very powerful, or very prominent. The notion of a stratum elevated above the mass of men may prompt approval, indifference or despair, but regardless of how men feel about it, the fact remains that their lives, fortunes and fate are and have long been dependent on what a small number of men in high places think or do. A great deal has been said about this fact of
social life, but men do not know nearly enough about this minority who in every epoch and generation play a large role in shaping the future — by the laws they pass, the books they write, the wars they win or lose and the passions that stir them to action. Like a secret society those at the top rarely reveal the inner workings of their worlds". 8

The above statement clearly views the elites as important minority groups, dominating and influencing the life of the people by their actions, and points at the secrecy maintained by these groups not to reveal the inner mechanism of their actions and interactions. The first and second arguments of the author are by and large applicable to an underdeveloped country like Bangladesh or to any of its urban communities where these minority groups are much narrower than those in any industrially developed and advanced countries because of the lack of any significant degree of industrialization, urbanization, specialization and division of labour. The third point of the author is highly complicated in underdeveloped countries because of the elite members' complex networks of relationships amongst themselves and with the general mass of the population.

The importance of the study of elites is stressed by Giddens in his study of "Elites in the British Class Structure". According to him:

"Over the past two decades sociologists in this country have given a great deal of attention to studies of the manual working class and to the 'new' middle class, but they have paid much less heed to the upper echelons of the class structure...

on the general level, the study of social class has always been closely linked to the analysis of 'power' or 'domination'; and this is an area which can hardly be adequately understood if only one side of the coin is examined - the 'subordinate' classes'.

Although the author has made the above statement in the context of a highly industrialized and developed country the latter part of his argument seems to have general validity for both developed and underdeveloped countries.

About the importance of the study of elites in under-developed countries Bottomore observes:

"There is no context in which the idea of elites is invoked more frequently at the present time than in discussions of the problems and prospects of the underdeveloped countries. This should cause no surprise, as we have seen already there is a profound association between changes in social structure and the rise and fall of elites. Economic, political, or other changes first bring about modifications in the prestige and power of different social groups, and those groups which are increasing their power then seek to take control of the changes and to press them forward. At the same time, the need for outstanding leaders and elites is most keenly felt by the population wherever complex and difficult social changes are taking place and the familiar ways of life are disappearing. In the present-day developing countries, therefore, we have an excellent opportunity to examine the social forces which are creating new elites, as well as the activities of the elites themselves in the attempted transformation of their societies into modern, economically advanced nations".

It is quite clear from the above quotation that the author has tried to justify the importance of the study of elites in an underdeveloped country on the grounds of: (i) the rise and fall of the elites; (ii) the intimate connection


between the economic and political changes and the enhancement or diminution of power and prestige of various groups of elites; (iii) the leadership of the groups acquiring more power and prestige in the control of the process of social change in the society; (iv) the disappearance of the familiar style of life; (v) the social forces that are creating the new elites; (vi) the urge and roles of these elites in the transformation and modernization of this type of society; and (vii) the dearth of outstanding leaders among the emerging elites.

Elsewhere Bottomore has also emphasized on the importance of the study of the relationship amongst the elite members themselves.11 To add to Bottomore's observation we may say that the interactive process and the network of exchange relationships between the elite and non-elite members are highly important dimensions worth exploring thoroughly in any sociological study of the elites in an underdeveloped country.

A statement made by Karim in his study of "The Modern Muslim Political Elites in Bengal" may have some relevance here to show the importance of the study of elites in Bangladesh and therefore, in the urban, community under investigation. According to this author:

"The most far reaching consequence of British rule in Bengal (as in India generally) was the creation of a new educated middle class - first among Hindus and later on among Muslims. Political leadership

11. Ibid., p.14
is primarily associated with this new class. The struggle to form this political elite is hard, since many feudal remnants survive in the traditional set-up. Even as late as the last quarter of the nineteenth century, in the urban centres like Calcutta, members of the higher landed aristocracy and of the feudal pensioned-off Nawab families, and such other feudal elements still continue as the 'formal' leaders of the Bengali Muslim community, while the 'effective' leadership passes on to a new elite of government officials, created by the British and having had English education".12

Although it was true that in the latter part of the nineteenth century some Muslim feudal aristocrats provided formal political leadership to the Bengali Muslim community the same situation no longer exists in Bangladesh today. Indeed, the political leadership has passed into the hands of the Muslim political elite members who have largely come from the maddhabitta category which cannot claim an aristocratic descent. A few sons of the old aristocrats who are the members of the Muslim political elite have changed their style of life and have merged with other Muslim political elite members.

In short, the arguments and purposes of each chapter of the present study are as follows. In Chapter 1 we have introduced the problems of the study i.e., the interactive process and the network of relationships of the elite members of the community. The chapter also deals with the conceptual problem; and in this section we have put forward

the major criteria for defining the concept of "elite". A detailed discussion has also been made on the problem of identification of the elite members of the community. We have also dealt with the methodological aspects as well as the problems relating to the field work and the collection of data. The reasons for our methodological choice of the community study through the participant observation technique and the suitability of this method compared to a national sample survey have been discussed. A section of this chapter deals with the model we have adopted for the analysis of our data. The main arguments for the adoption of the network model along with its two sub-models (i.e., patron-client relationships and horizontal alliance) as the analytical tool in our study have been put forward; and some modifications to the network model as well as the patron-client sub-model have been suggested in order to make them suitable and useful for the purpose of the analysis of our data. Yet another section of the chapter has been devoted to showing the main reasons for not adopting the class model for the analysis of our data.

Chapter 2 is concerned with the background characteristics of the elite members such as sex, age, occupation, income, education, size and type of family, size of landholding, caste or caste-like group affiliation, father's education and affiliation to socio-economic groups, wife's father's affiliation to socio-economic groups etc. The chapter also focusses on the types of elites and the problem of elite stratification as well as showing how these are connected with
the problems of the interactive process and the network of exchange relationships of the elite members. In a section of the chapter, an elaborate discussion has been made to examine the pattern of elite recruitment and mobility as well as to discern the factors and channels responsible for such a pattern of elite recruitment and mobility. An attempt has been made to examine how the process of elite recruitment and mobility is intimately connected with the network of exchange relationships and the interactive process of the elite members. In a separate section of the chapter the pattern of participation of the elite members in the identified community issues has been shown, and an attempt has been made to examine the decision-making process in the community.

Chapter 3 deals with the problem of how kinship enters into the interactive process and the network of exchange relationships of the elite members of the community. One important feature of this chapter is that it attempts to examine the effectiveness of the norms of kinship status superiority-inferiority in determining the pattern of exchange relationship and the position of the parties involved in such a relationship. The chapter also focusses on the question of how the ties of consanguineal and affinal kinship facilitate or reinforce the smooth functioning of the network of exchange relationships. But an attempt has also been made to examine how and why the exchange relationships between the elite members and their kinsmen often break up and what consequences follow such a break. Another section deals with the pattern
of fictive kinship and focusses on how it helps in the emergence of exchange relationships between the involved parties.

Chapter 4 has been divided into two sections. In the first section a detailed discussion of the Hindu caste system in Rajshahi with special emphasis on the problem of changing caste rules, norms and values in certain spheres of life has been made. The problem of caste hierarchy and its role in the interactive process and the network of exchange relationships of the Hindus have been examined. An attempt has been made to see in what way caste rules, norms and rituals affect the interactive process of the Hindu elite members. We have also tried to examine why conflicts develop between the members of different caste groups or of the same caste group and how they affect their interactive process. The question of how far the factor of caste superiority-inferiority is capable of determining the position of the parties involved in a patron-client relationship or a horizontal alliance has been discussed here.

The second section of the chapter deals with the pattern of caste-like grouping among the Muslim population of the community. Here our aim is to examine how rigid or flexible is the caste-like system among the Muslims. We have also tried to examine how this phenomenon enters into the interactive process and the network of relationships of the Muslim elite members.
In Chapter 5 an attempt has been made to analyse critically the problems of land tenure and land reform in Bangladesh with special reference to the district of Rajshahi. This chapter also examines how and why the elite members of the community are intimately connected with and involved in these problems. One of the purposes of studying these problems is to try to discern the pattern of exchange relationships between the landholding elite members and the people employed as bargadars and agricultural labourers for the cultivation of their lands. In discussing this problem it is necessary to pay attention to the nature of patron-client relationships between the rural landholding groups and their dependent bargadars and landless or near-landless agricultural labourers as well as to the nature of exchange relationships between the community elite members and the rural landholders, especially the landholding rural gentry and maddhabitta groups. We have also tried to see how the semi-feudalistic agrarian system enables the landholders, especially the big landholders, to maintain control over the people associated with the cultivation of their lands and to use them for political purposes.

In the section dealing with the land reform policy and measures, an attempt has been made to examine how and why the elite members are not actually interested in adopting and implementing any land reform measures which threaten their rural and urban allies' vested interests in landholding even though they often talk about the socio-economic uplift of the poor peasants through the distribution of lands to the latter.
This section also throws some light on the question of how the local political leaders of the ruling party have taken advantage of certain provisions of the land reform policy in their bid to secure the political support of their clients and potential clients.

Chapter 6 is concerned with dalali (brokerage) and the reason for its emergence in various spheres such as economic, political, administrative, social, academic etc. of the community. We have tried to examine how the implication of dalali in economic arena is different from that in other socio-political spheres. An endeavour has been made to see how far a distinction between a patron and a dalal as well as between a client and a dalal can be made. More importantly, an attempt has been made to show how the system of dalali plays a vital role in the interactive process and the network of exchange relationships of the elite members and how this system is connected with the emergence, maintenance and expansion of the network of exchange relationships.

Chapter 7 deals with the political process in the community and examines in detail how the mobilization of political support and the formation of political alliance are based on the crucial factor of transaction of one sort or another and how and why the political leaders of the community are involved in a complicated type of network of exchange relationships (i.e. patron-client relationships and horizontal alliance) with various categories of elites and non-elite members living in and outside the community. Further, we have made an attempt to examine why and how the politics of the community is more or less non-ideological in
character, largely individual leadership-centred and generally guided by the pragmatic considerations of the local political leaders and their supporters and allies. The chapter also focusses on the problems of political competition, rivalry and factionalism in the community and examines how the factional leaders try to recruit their supporters through the distribution of patronage and favours to the latter. An attempt has also been made to examine how far the tie of kinship and affiliation to a common caste are effective in the process of mobilization of political support and the formation of political alliance. In the conclusion of the thesis we have tried to deal with the questions: (a) Why does this type of politics exist? (b) What are the effects of this system? (c) What factors can lead to a change in the system?
CHAPTER 1

Problem and Methodology of the Study

Problem and Model

The main problem of the study is to analyse the interactive process of the elite members and their linkages with and involvement in the power structure in an urban community, Rajshahi town in Bangladesh. Because the elite members from different occupational groups are generally connected by various institutions and organizations such as family, marriage, kinship, land tenure system, caste system, political party etc., it is important to examine how far and in what way these institutions and organizations enter into the interactive process of the elite members.

As the background characteristics of the elite members (i.e., sex, age, religion, education, occupation, income, size of landholding, father's education and occupational position), their structural arrangements such as categorization of elite members, caste and caste-like groups, kinship network, the hierarchical ordering of the elite members at occupational group level, the pattern of elite recruitment and mobility and the pattern of participation in some identified community issues are intimately linked up with the elite members' interactive process as well as the pattern of linkages that elite members or a group of elite members develop around them, these problems have to be discussed to have a clear

1. Power structure may be defined as an arrangement of elite groups or members which possesses the controlling authority and power of taking or making decisions on community affairs as well as power of issuance of orders and getting those orders adhered to.
picture of such an interactive process. Moreover, since the elite members' linkages often cross-cut the community boundary and extend to some elite and non-elite members belonging to different urban and rural communities in and outside the district this problem of outside linkages has become one of the important features of the study.

An endeavour has been made to examine how in the interactive process of the elite members patron-client relationships as well as horizontal alliances emerge amongst the elite members themselves and between the elite and non-elite members. We have also focussed our attention on the problem of conflict in the interactive process of the elite members.

So far we have talked about the elite members, but have not made any attempt to clarify the concept of 'elite' we are using in our study. In this section we shall make an attempt in that direction. The term 'elite' has been explained and defined by Giddens as follows:

"As it is sometimes employed 'elite' may refer to those who 'lead' in any given category or activity: to actors and sportsmen as well as to political or economic 'leaders'. There is evidently a difference, however, between the first and the second in that the former 'lead' in terms of some sort of scale of 'fame' or 'achievement', whereas the second usage may be taken to refer to persons who are at the head of a specific social organization which has an internal authority structure (the state, an economic enterprise etc.). I shall use the term 'elite group' in the latter sense, to designate those individuals who occupy positions of formal authority at the head of a social organization or institution; and elite very generally, to refer either to elite group or cluster of elite groups".

2. For an elaborate discussion on patron-client relationships and horizontal alliance, see pp. 41-55.
Giddens further explains:

"It should be noted that this inclusive definition leaves two problems unsettled. One is where the division between 'elite' and 'non-elite' is to be drawn; because in spite of Dahrendorf's assertions to the contrary, 'authority' normally implies a graded hierarchy of spheres of administrative autonomy - there is not always a clear-cut line between those 'at the top' and those who possess recognized authority but who are not in the 'elite'. The other is the question of the relationship between formally defined authority and 'effective' or 'real' power: the fact that an individual possesses certain formal trappings of authority does not, ipso facto, allow us to infer what effective power he wields. It is precisely one of the major objectives of the study of elites to examine the relationship between formal authority and effective power".4

In our study of the elites of Rajshahi town we have broadened the horizon of the concept of 'elite' by including those people who are associated with various occupations, organizations, institutions, bureaus, departments etc. and occupy important and influential positions. Thus by the term 'elite' we do not mean only the heads of social organizations or institutions with formal authority. It seems to us that to make a meaningful study of the elite members and groups we have to broaden the concept of 'elite' to include some more persons who are not at the head of organizations and some of whom may not even occupy any formal positions of authority but who are in effective control of power and exert significant influence upon the life of the people in the community. Thus for the purpose of our study of elite members of Rajshahi town the following criteria are suggested for defining the concept of 'elite':

i) persons of importance who have high access to economic resources; (ii) who have some degree of corporateness or group character and are bound up in a network of relationship with each other; (iii) some consciousness of position they occupy within the community; and (iv) who enjoy high status and privileges.

From the above discussion it can be seen that Rajshahi town contains more than one 'elite' so that 'elite' should rightly be in the plural. This assumption is well documented in various works on 'elite' of 'modern' societies. But this assumption is also applicable to Rajshahi town even though it is not a modern community. Pareto had possibly some such plurality of elites in mind when he suggested:

"Let us assume that in every branch of human activity each individual is given an index which stands as a sign of his capacity, very much the way grades are given in the various subjects in examinations in school. The highest type of lawyer, for instance, will be given 10. The man who does not get a client will be given 1 - reserving zero for the man who is an out and out idiot. To the man who has made his millions - honestly or dishonestly, as the case may be - we will give 10. To the man who has earned his thousands will be given 6; to those who just manage to keep out of the poor house 1; and zero to those who get in... And so on for all the branches of human activity... So let us make a class of people who have the highest indices in their branch of activity and to that class give the name of the 'elite'.'"5

Mannheim enumerates several types of elites - political, organizing, intellectual, artistic, moral-religious under two broad categories of integrative elite and sublimative elite.6 And more recently Lasswell and Kaplan have

introduced the concept of 'mid-elites' for various groups in a society which is composed of specialists in characteristic skills, such as lawyers, the military etc. Though Raymond Aron has been chiefly concerned with the elite in the sense of governing minority he has attempted to establish a relationship between the elite and social classes and insisted upon the plurality of elites in modern societies, and has examined the social influence of the intellectual elite, which does not ordinarily form part of the political power elite. Cole refers to the elites as 'groups which emerge to positions of leadership and influence at every social level'.

However, for a better conceptualization of elites in Rajshahi town it is necessary to discuss Bottomore's ideas about the meaning of 'elite'. According to Bottomore:

"The fresh distinctions and refinements which have been made in the concept of elite call for a more discriminating terminology than has been developed hitherto. The term 'elite(s)' is now generally applied, in fact, to functional, mainly occupational, groups which have high status (for whatever reasons) in a society; and henceforward I shall use it, without qualification, in this sense".

He further argues:

"If the general term 'elite' is to be applied to these functional groups, we shall need another term for the minority which rules a society, which is not a functional group in exactly the same sense, and which is in any case of such great social importance that it deserves to be given a distinctive name. I shall use here Mosca's term, the 'political class', to refer to all those groups which exercise political power or influence, and are directly engaged

in struggles for political leadership; and I shall distinguish within the political class a small group, the political elite, which comprises those individuals who actually exercise political power in a society at any given time. The extent of political elite is therefore relatively easy to determine: it will include members of the government and of the high administration, military leaders, and, in some cases, politically influential families of an aristocracy or royal house and leaders of powerful economic enterprises. It is less easy to set the boundaries of the political class; it will, of course, include the political elite, but it may also include 'counter-elites' comprising the leaders of political parties which are out of office, and representatives of new social interests or classes (e.g. trade union leaders), as well as groups of businessmen, and intellectuals who are active in politics. The political class, therefore, is composed of a number of groups which may be engaged in varying degrees of cooperation, competition or conflict with each other". 

If we carefully examine Bottomore's statements it becomes apparent that he has termed the high status functional or occupational groups elites. But it is not very clear from his statement whether by a high status functional or occupational group he means the group as a whole or the high status members of that group. If he terms a particular functional or occupational group a high status one in the sense that all the members of that group have high status then a problem is created because though it is possible to find all the members of some occupational groups such as industrialists and trade union leaders having high status, yet most of the occupational groups such as bureaucrats, military, physicians, engineers, lawyers, academicians, contractors, traders etc. are composed of both high and low status persons. But if

Bottomore's conception also refers to persons possessing high status in various occupational groups then we shall be able to use his conception about the elites in a fruitful way to find out the high status persons or groups of persons by recognizing those who are treated as important, influential, powerful and leading persons in various occupational or functional groups.

One interesting point in Bottomore's statement is that he has included the high administrative personnel, military leaders and leaders of powerful economic enterprises within the category of political elites and excluded the opposition political leaders whom he has termed as 'counter-elites' from this category. The justification for his argument can possibly be found in the involvement of all the above groups in the process of decision-making on various socio-politico-economic problems of society. To recognize the importance of 'counter-elites' he has included them along with political elites in the 'political class'. He is possibly justified in doing so because in a developed country the opposition political leaders very often play important roles in various decision-making processes and their roles as opposition leaders sometimes become important even for persons in power when they make constructive criticism of the policy of the government and expose the merits and demerits of such policies. But in Rajshahi town the political leaders of the ruling party have kept their counterparts belonging to opposition parties away from playing any role in the decision-making process. In fact, they have become involved in a conflict with the opposition party leaders. We shall discuss this problem later.
However, Bottomore's distinction between 'elites' (as "functional, mainly occupational groups which have high status") and the 'political class' seems to be little confusing, since the 'political class' which is earlier distinguished from elites (i.e., functional groups), is later viewed as containing the political elite composed, among others, of members of top civil and military services, who are clearly to be viewed as elite members of distinct functional or occupational groups, possessing high status as well as high power. Hence in our study we have kept the political leaders separate from high administrative, high ranking military officers and leaders of powerful economic enterprises who constitute separate elite groups.

Though in our study of elites we have tried to accommodate some of the points of the conventional type of elite study which emphasizes structure, function, recruitment and mobility of the elites etc. we have given greater emphasis to the system of interaction and the network of relationships of the elite members of the community. We have decided to do this because the structural analysis seems to be inadequate for the understanding of the process of actions and the pattern of linkages which cross-cuts the community boundary. Moreover, this type of study should enable us to examine the inner mechanism of the functioning of the community. However, our approach to the study of the elite members of the community is not something new because there are other scholars12 who have already adopted this approach fully or partially to the study of elites at local and regional levels.

12. See overleaf.
Footnote 12.

Carter in his study of 'Elite Politics in Rural India' has given a good account of the interactive process, linkages, alliance formations and conflicts among the political elites and between the local political elites and the non-elites. He has also dealt with the problem of interactive process and linkages between the local political elites and the district, provincial and national level political leaders. See Carter, A.T. Elite Politics in Rural India: Political Stratification and Political Alliances in Western Maharashtra, Cambridge University Press, 1974.

Broomfield's work on 'Elite conflict in a plural society: Twentieth-Century Bengal' deals with the problem of interactive process and networks of relationships amongst the elite members themselves and between the elite and non-elite people of Bengal. See Broomfield, J.H. Elite Conflict in a Plural Society: Twentieth-Century Bengal, Oxford University Press, 1968.

Karim's study of 'The Modern Muslim Political Elite in Bengal' partly deals with the interactive process and network of relationships of the Muslim political elites with the British rulers and the Hindu elite members, especially Hindu political leaders as well as with the Muslim and non-Muslim population of Bengal. See Karim, A.K.N. 'The Modern Muslim Political Elite in Bengal' - Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1964.

A.C. Mayer's work on 'Patron and Brokers, Rural Leadership in Four Overseas Indian Communities' provides a good example on this point. See Mayer, A.C. 'Patrons and Brokers, Rural Leadership in Four Overseas Indian Communities' in Freedman, M. (ed.) Social Organization, Frank Cass & Co.Ltd., 1967.

In his article on 'Local Government and Politics, and Political and Social Theory in India' Tinker has also dealt with the problem of linkages of the British and Indian elites with the general mass of the population as well as the interactive process between the British elites and Indian elites. See Tinker, H. 'Local Government and Politics, and Political and Social Theory in India' in Swartz, M.J. (ed.) Local-Level Politics: Social and Cultural Perspectives, Chicago, 1968, pp.217-26.
So far we have discussed the conceptual problem. In the following section we shall discuss the analytical model of our study. The analytical tool of our study of the elite members is a network model. This model has been first used by Barnes (1954) in his study of a Norwegian island parish and developed and used by Elizabeth Bott (1957) in her study of 'conjugal roles in London families'. Both Barnes and Bott have seen networks as series of relationships which an individual builds up around himself on a personal basis. In a review article Barnes notes that the concept of network was developed in social anthropology to analyse and describe those social processes involving links across, rather than within, group and category limits.

"The interpersonal links that arise out of common group membership are as much part of the total social network as are those that link persons in different groups, and analysis of action in terms of network should reveal, among other things, the boundaries and internal structure of groups. While there are other ways of discovering groups, the network concept is indispensable in discussion (sic) those situations where, for example, the individual is involved in 'interpersonal relations which cut right across the boundaries of village, sub-caste and lineage' (Srinivas and Beteille, 1964, p.166)."

Here a question arises whether the network model is capable of taking care of both positive and negative relationships. On this question Barnes says:

"The fact remains that there are people in the real world and some of them impinge on others. The notion of one person impinging on another is left vague deliberately. The kind of analysis we are concerned with at given time will determine how broad and how narrow a meaning we give to 'impinging', whether we are concerned with only positive rather than negative relationship, with direct rather than indirect interaction, and so on." 14

From the above quotation it is quite clear that the network model can be used to deal with both positive and negative relationships if demanded by the kind of analysis with which a researcher is concerned. Bernard Cohn and McKim Marriott have described Indian civilization as comprising numerous levels of diversity whose integration is accomplished by 'networks' of kinship, ritual and trade relations which join the local community with the larger society, and by urban 'centres' where economic, religious, and political specialists congregate and mediate between the local area and the next larger unit. 15 Epstein has used the network model to explain how the norms and values of the local elites in a town percolate into the ranks of the non-elites with whom the elites themselves had no direct contact. 16 A.C. Mayer has written a series of valuable papers in which he has used Barnes' concept of network to

analyse both the principle of recruitment within Indian factions and the principle of alliance among factions. 17

Mitchell (ed.) *Social Networks in Urban Situations* contains some valuable articles where the network model has been used to analyse the data. 18

In our study we have adopted the network model because in the first place, this model has been found to be an effective tool for the analysis of the interactive process of the elite members as well as the network of relationships that emerges around an elite member or a group of elite members. Secondly, this model is particularly suitable to deal with the outside linkages of the community elite members.

Before we carry on the discussion of the network model any further it is necessary to discuss why we have not adopted a class model to analyse our data at the community


level. Studying the literatures relating to class models\textsuperscript{19} it seems to us that there are two class models: a class model of conflict and a class model of co-operative interdependence. The first model is most notably represented by Marx and his followers and the second one is upheld by the scholars oriented to structural-functional school. In the first model inter-class conflict is the main focus of attention, whereas in the second one inter-class co-operation and interdependence feature most prominently. However, both these class models are primarily concerned with the problem of inter-class relationship within a bounded society or community; and both of them place very little emphasis on explaining the networks of relationships of different classes in a particular community which frequently cut across the community boundary and extend to outside communities. Moreover, the first model seems to be inadequate to deal with the problem of political groupings in a community in an underdeveloped agrarian country like Bangladesh where these groupings generally cut vertically across the class lines and where even nominally class-based organizations like trade unions are simply personal vehicles for upward mobility. On the other hand, the second model being highly concerned with the problem of co-operative interdependence at the inter-class level will have a very limited capacity to account for conflicts between different classes of people.

\textsuperscript{19} See overleaf.
Footnote 19.

There are other reasons for not using a class model as an analytical tool in our study at the community level. In the first place, class categories are not at all prominent in the community mainly because of lack of industrialization, very weak market situation and force, a very low level of technological development and division of labour.

Secondly, at the community level the interactive process and networks of relationships generally centre around an individual actor or a group of actors. This characterizes a significant part of the socio-economic and political processes in the community. The class model which presupposes class category as the unit of analysis and places a very high degree of emphasis on the analysis of the inter-class relationship, paying very little attention to the problem of inter-personal relationships, cross-cutting class categories, seems inadequate to account for the socio-economic and political processes stated above. Thirdly, as has already been mentioned, the networks of relationship of the elite members of the community generally cross-cut the community boundary. This problem cannot be properly explained by the class model.

Fourthly, informal types of relationships at individual and group levels which have penetrated into various institutional and organizational structures of the community cannot be fruitfully studied with the help of a class model. For example, if we try to examine why a bureaucrat's authority
is likely to depend, to a large extent, more on his personal supporters and extra-bureaucratic activities and connections than on his formal post, or why the political parties in the community seem more like ad hoc assemblages of notables together with entourages than arenas in which established interests are aggregated, the use of the class model cannot give us much analytical leverage.

From the above argument one should not, however, assume that the class model cannot be applied as an analytical tool to explain the macro-process in Bangladesh.

Returning to our discussion of the network model it should be noted that during the course of our field study it has become quite apparent that the positive relationships in the network model largely assume two important forms i.e., patron-client relationships and horizontal alliance, which should be treated as two sub-models under the general network model which, as has already been mentioned, would take care of negative relationships (i.e., conflicts) that emerge around an individual or a group of elite members. Of these two sub-models the first one plays the dominant role in the network of exchange relationships of the elite members.

Horizontal alliance refers to an exchange relationship between two or more elite members of comparable socio-economic status. When such a relationship is established between two elite members it assumes the pattern of two-elite horizontal alliance in which the relationship becomes direct and face-to-face; but when it is established between more than two elite members it assumes the pattern of multi-elite horizontal
alliance and the relationships may be both direct and indirect. The typical representations of the horizontal alliance are given below:

Two-elite horizontal alliance

\[ \triangle \leftrightarrow \downarrow \rightarrow \triangle \]

Diagram 1

Multi-elite horizontal alliance

\[ \triangle \leftrightarrow \rightarrow \leftrightarrow \rightarrow \rightarrow \rightarrow \triangle \]

Diagram 2

However, the horizontal alliance has its dynamic aspects because it is not difficult to see the break-up of an old horizontal tie and the emergence of a new one. Thus although sometimes one may see a long enduring horizontal tie between two parties, one may also equally see a short-lived one. Moreover, in a horizontal network of an elite member there may be inclusion of new parties and the exclusion of the old allies, especially when conflicts arise between the partners. However, when a horizontally allied partner is able to enhance his politico-economic power and tries to behave like a patron with his partner the relationship breaks up if the latter is unwilling to accept the position of a client. But if the latter accepts the position of a client the relationship turns into a patron-clientage.

Regarding the patron-client relationship it is necessary to summarise how the concept has so far been used and how and why in certain situations the concept has to be modified for its proper application in the analysis of our data. The concept of patron-client relationship has been defined and interpreted differently by various authors. Consequently, the concept has undergone some modifications, while keeping
its basic assumption i.e., of a relationship between unequal partners, more or less undisturbed. According to Foster the term 'patron' is derived from the Spanish patron meaning a person of power, status, authority and influence. It may signify an employer, a commercial sponsor or even a saint, but is only relevant in relation to a less powerful person or 'client' whom he can help and protect. Lemarchand and Legg have defined clientelism widely as a more or less personalized relationship between actors or sets of actors, commanding unequal wealth, status or influence based on conditional loyalties and involving mutually beneficial transactions. Powell specifies three basic factors in patron-client relationship which, he claims, defines and distinguishes it from other power relationships between individuals or groups, (a) the tie develops between two parties unequal in status, wealth and influence, being in Pitt-River's description, a 'lop-sided friendship'; (b) it depends on reciprocity in the exchange of mutually valued goods and services; and (c) it relies heavily on face-to-face contact between the two parties, the relationship being intimate and highly particularistic.

According to Scott:

"The patron-client relationship - an exchange relationship between roles - may be defined as a special case of dyadic (two-person) ties involving a largely instrumental friendship in which an individual of higher socio-economic status (patron) uses his own influence and resources to provide protection or benefits, or both for a person of lower status (client) who for his part reciprocates by offering general support and assistance, including personal services to the patrons." 23

Then he elaborates three distinguishing features of patron-client links, implied by his definition: their basic inequality, their face-to-face character and their diffuse flexibility. 24 In the first place, there is an imbalance in exchange between the two partners which expresses and reflects the disparity of their relative wealth, power and status. A client in this sense is someone who has entered an unequal exchange relation in which he is unable to reciprocate fully. A debt of obligation binds him to the patron. In his search for the reasons for imbalance in reciprocity between a patron and a client he relies heavily on Peter Blau's argument that an imbalance in reciprocity is based on the fact that the patron is often in a position to supply unilaterally goods and services which the potential client and his family need for their survival and well-being. 25 But the problem

24. Ibid., pp.93-94.
is that Blau's argument cannot be a general principle in explaining the imbalance in reciprocity between a patron and his clients because all clients' economic conditions may not be so desperate as to make them fully dependent upon the supply of goods from their patrons for their survival. In fact, some clients who are already in some elite positions may require the help of their patrons for their further upward mobility and in return they may supply goods and services to their patrons. A second distinguishing feature of the patron-client dyad is the face-to-face, personal, quality of the relationship. The continuing pattern of reciprocity that establishes and solidifies a patron-client bond often creates trust and affection between the partners. The third distinctive quality of patron-client ties, one that reflects the affection involved, is that they are diffuse, 'whole person' relationship rather than explicit, impersonal contract bonds. Such a strong 'multiplex' relationship as Mayer terms it covers a wide range of potential exchanges.26

According to Kaufman:

"The patron-client relation is defined here as a special type of dyadic exchange, distinguishable by the following characteristics:

(a) the relationship occurs between actors of unequal power and status;
(b) it is based on the principle of reciprocity; that is, it is a self-regulating form of interpersonal exchange, the maintenance of which depends on the return that each actor expects to obtain by rendering goods and services to the other and which ceases once the expected rewards fail to materialize;
(c) the relationship is particularistic and private, anchored only loosely in public law or community norms".27

Now it is necessary to examine how far the characteristics of the patron-client relationship mentioned by various authors can be maintained and whether any modification of the concept would be necessary for its application as an analytical tool in our study. With that purpose in view we shall take up each characteristic mentioned by the above authors and point out the areas where modifications or refinements should be made.

1. Status of a patron and client: From the above discussion it emerges that all the authors have agreed on the point that a patron's socio-economic status is higher than that of a client. We also agree with other scholars on this point because in Rajshahi town a patron is always treated as superior to his client. So far as the patron-client tie between an elite patron and his non-elite clients is concerned there is little problem in determining the higher status of the patron because by definition an elite member's socio-economic status is higher than that of a non-elite member. But in an exchange relationship between two elite members it would be necessary to find out the relative socio-economic status of the two partners. When such a tie develops between two elite members belonging to two different strata of the same occupational group it is not difficult to find out their socio-economic position because one partner will be higher than the other in the hierarchical ordering which is based on the factor of differential socio-economic power.

However, there may be some cases where the partners develop patron-client ties in spite of the fact that socio-
economically they are of comparable status. Here the behaviouristic criteria (such as allegiance or loyalty of one partner to the other, domination over or submissiveness of one partner to the other etc.) should be taken into consideration to ascertain the superiority of one partner over the other. This shows that a patron and a client may not always have higher and lower socio-economic status respectively. But when two elite members belonging to two separate occupational groups become involved in a patron-client tie the party which has higher access to power structure, higher control over the decision-making process than the other should be treated as the superior one. If it is difficult to ascertain the relative status of the partners by applying the above criteria we have to resort to behaviouristic criteria as mentioned earlier. Thus it may be said that a patron is always superior to a client whatever may be the criteria used for determining the superior position of the former.

2. Dyadic face-to-face relationship: All the authors we have mentioned earlier, except Lemarchand and Legg, have directly or indirectly said that the patron-client relationship is dyadic in nature. In fact, we have seen that the relationship generally assumes a dyadic form when the clients are directly connected with a patron. But the problem arises

28. Scott has changed his stand on this point and argued that there may be indirect contact between the patron and client through an intermediary. Scott, op.cit., p.94.
when the exchange relationship between the two parties who are not in direct contact is established through an intermediary. Here the essence of the dyadic face-to-face nature of the patron-client tie is upset. This creates a pyramidal type of patron-client network which may extend further downward as well as upward. Thus it may be argued that the patron-client relationship is dyadic and face-to-face when it assumes a clustering pattern.

3. Exchange: Powell, Lemarchand and Legg have clearly mentioned that the parties involved in a patron-client tie exchange mutually valued goods, services and other things. The involved parties must see their mutual advantage in the transaction. Poster and Kaufman have talked about mutual exchange between a patron and a client but did not specifically mention whether the transaction is based on mutual advantage of the involved parties. Scott, on the other hand, did not raise the issue of mutually beneficial transaction. He has emphasized the point that it is a mutual but unequal exchange relationship in which a patron supplies more resources to his client who is unable to reciprocate fully because the former's control over resources is much higher than the latter's. In general a patron's control over resources is undoubtedly higher than that of a client, and hence he is in a position to contribute more than his clients in a transaction. But the important point is that he did not pay much attention to the question of why a particular patron gives something to his client in exchange for something from the latter. This point has been clarified
by Powell, Lemerchand and Legg by introducing the idea of mutual advantage of the involved parties. In our study we have also seen that the involved parties in a patron-client tie exchange mutually valued goods, services and other things. But the factor of mutual advantage in a transaction does not always necessarily mean the absence of exploitation by the patron over the clients because in a particular situation where the patron has full control over the resources desperately needed by a client for his subsistence and survival the former may exploit the latter. For example, a bargadar (sharecropper) client gives much value to getting lands on lease from a landholding patron who, in turn, is interested in getting a share of the crops and control over the former. Here both the parties see their advantage in the transaction, in spite of the fact that a landholder patron indulges in exploitation by appropriating the surplus value created by the labour of a bargadar client. However, the desperate economic condition of a bargadar client who can expect and get some other types of help and support from his patron may make the question of exploitation unimportant to the former.

4. Multiplex nature of relationship: Scott and Mayer have argued that the patron-client ties are diffuse 'whole person' relationship; they are not purely impersonal contract bonds. Our study extends support to the above point because we have seen that when two parties become involved in a patron-client tie they develop a multiplex type of exchange relationship in which the involved parties generally make various kinds of demands on each other.
Thus for our purpose the concept of patron-clientage refers to a multiplex, diffused, largely personalized and particularistic type of exchange relationship, accommodating both face-to-face and non face-to-face contact between the involved parties, between persons of superior and inferior status who exchange mutually valued goods, services and other things to their respective advantages though some amount of exploitation by the patron over his clients may be present in certain situations.

The patron-client network can be projected through the following diagrams:

Patron-client Cluster
Diagram 3

Patron-client Pyramid
Diagram 4

But when the above diagrams are combined with the two-elite and multi-elite horizontal alliance (see p.42) the following representations can be found:

Patron-client Cluster combined with the two-elite horizontal alliance
Diagram 5

Patron-client Pyramid combined with the two-elite horizontal alliance
Diagram 7

Patron-client Cluster combined with the multi-elite horizontal alliance
Diagram 6

Patron-client Pyramid combined with the multi-elite horizontal alliance
Diagram 8
Our field study in Rajshahi shows the existence of all these types of horizontal and vertical linkages. However, there may or may not be horizontal links between those who are functioning as intermediaries (see diagrams 7 and 8). If all the intermediaries are elite members of comparable standing they may develop horizontal alliances amongst themselves provided they feel the necessity of establishing an exchange relationship. There may be horizontal alliance between some elite members of comparable standing out of the total number of intermediaries. But because there may be a status differential between the intermediaries, and some of them may also come from the non–elite category there may not be horizontal linkages between all the elite and non–elite intermediaries. Even an intermediary of a particular patron may be a client or patron of an intermediary of another patron who has horizontal alliance with that particular patron.

Before we examine the dynamic aspects of the patron–client relationship it is necessary to make it clear that the positive relationship between two partners of socio–economically unequal status may not always assume the character of a patron–client relationship because the involved parties may establish an exchange relationship for a specific purpose; and the relationship may be terminated soon after the goal is achieved. Moreover, although in many cases a contractual relationship between two unequal partners turns into a patron–client relationship there are cases where the relationship does not cross–cut the contractual boundary. However, it is possible to analyse data relating to this type of relationship with the help of the network model.
Returning to the discussion of the patron-client relationship we wish to say that the patron-client relationship has also dynamic aspects. In the first place, in a patron-client network there is scope for the shifting allegiance of the clients from one patron to the other when the patron fails to meet some of their demands which can be secured through a new patron, or when a potential patron promises something more than what the clients are getting from their present patron. When this happens the former patron not only develops antagonism to his break-away clients but also accuses their new patron of alluring them away. Moreover, when a patron is displaced from the power structure and loses his control over resources required by his clients his patron-client network begins to erode because many of his clients sever connections with him and form a patron-client tie with a resourceful and powerful patron who is capable of supplying things, rendering services and giving protection valuable to and desired by the clients in exchange for something which they possess and which is valuable to and required by the patron. The competition among the patrons to secure more and more effective clients gives an impetus to the shifting of the clients from one patron to another. This, sometimes, enables a client to acquire certain advantage in the sense that he might have a choice of binding himself with one patron or the other out of a group of competing patrons from whom he may be able to secure higher patronage.

But when a patron finds that some of his clients are contributing nothing to his cause and doing something which
goes against his interest he terminates his patron-client tie with them. This shows that though the system of patron-clientage continues there may be changes of membership in the tie. And the network of patron-clientage of a particular patron is subject to expansion as well as erosion depending upon his position in the power structure.

Moreover, it should not be assumed that once two parties are involved in a patron-client tie it will always remain like that. Although generally a patron tries to maintain his superiority over his client, sometimes it may so happen that a client rises to such an important position that both the partners may begin to treat each other on more or less equal terms and thereby change their patron-client relationship into a horizontal tie. But if a patron tries to maintain his superiority over his client whom he has brought to a status comparable to his own and the client is not willing to accept his patron's superiority then conflict starts and the exchange relationship between the two terminates. In yet another situation when a client comes to occupy an important position and his patron is displaced from his position of influence the relationship between the two may take the following three different shapes: first, the client may assume the role of a patron to his former patron provided that both the parties are willing to change their position in the patron-client tie; secondly, the exchange relationship will break up and turn into a conflict when the former patron is unwilling to accept the superior position of his former client who insists on
asserting his superiority over the former; thirdly, both the parties may terminate their exchange relationship without showing any outward sign of antagonism.

At the end of our discussion of the patron-client relationship we are faced with a crucial question of whether all the transactions in a patron-client network are in conformity with the community norms. In Kaufman's view the patron-client relationship is anchored only loosely in community norms. He is possibly right in making such an argument because if the system is not somehow connected with the normal practice of the people and hence in certain respects with the community norms it will break down.

But the problem is that all the transactions in the patron-client network are not normative and some transactions are clearly illegal and illegitimate. It is necessary to explain this situation because in our analysis of the data this question will arise. Clearly some transactions such as giving a bribe for a favour, manipulation of cases violating formal rules etc. are formally declared (through public laws) illegal and illegitimate. But the important point is that these types of transactions have become normal practices in the community; and people raise the question of the illegitimacy of these transactions when they are unable to resort to them, or when they fail to achieve their goals in a competitive situation. Interestingly enough, people failing in their first attempt go on making further attempts. However, many transactions such as leasing out lands to bargadars, advancing loans to
someone, offering some money or materials to political workers and voters, assurance of future material help and a job, distribution of relief materials, recommending someone for a job, a licence or a permit etc. in exchange for support and services are supported by the community norms. The above discussion shows that in a network of patron-clientage there may be transactions supported by the community norms as well as illegal or illegitimate transactions which are not in conformity with the public laws or community norms, but are widely practised by the people. However, the patron-client relationship may be based exclusively on transactions supported by the community norms or on widely practised illegal or illegitimate transactions.

Weakness of the Model:

Although we have found the network model and its two sub-models suitable tools for the analysis of our data, we should admit here that this particular model may not be proved to be adequate and powerful tools for the study of the macro socio-economic and political processes where the Marxist class model may be a valuable tool. One serious problem for the application of the network model at macro-level study is that it would be very hard and almost impossible on the part of a fieldworker to observe closely

the activities of the people and to elicit information about the networks of relationships of a large number of people coming from various parts of the country because for the collection of data on the interpersonal networks a fieldworker must live with the people for a reasonable period of time so that he can closely observe the activities of the people and interact with them by participating in some of their activities.

More importantly, the patron-client sub-model, being implicitly tied to the concept of structural-functionalism, is a poor tool in explaining social changes, especially long-run social changes even at the community level. This sub-model is also a very poor tool for the analysis of the macro-level political process. Kaufman has thoroughly dealt with this problem and pointed out the inadequacy of the patron-client concept for the study of the macro-level politics.

Criticizing Powell's stand on this point Kaufman argues that there is an implication, of course, that patron-client relations are germane to understanding the behaviour of other sorts of individuals as well - notably, politicians and brokers, urban voters, and various 'traditional' authority

31. According to Powell, the concept's main value is in its power to explain the "political behavior of low status actors ... particularly peasants, as they are incorporated, recruited, mobilized, or inducted into the national political process". See Powell, op.cit., p.433.
figures. But even so, the dependent variables in Powell's formulation would seem to involve attributes of units studied in the anthropological literature - individuals, small, usually rural subsystems, and their linkages to the outside world. Such an approach would stay within the relatively restricted scope of 'micro-politics', considering only selectively the attributes of larger system itself. Given the difficulties involved in extending the clientele concept, it may well be that we ought to be content with somewhat modest choice and concentrate comparative research on the relatively narrow arenas from which the concept was originally drawn.32

Justification for the Study of Elites by a Community Study Approach rather than a National Sample Survey:

If we characterize the socio-political process in a local urban community like Rajshahi as largely structured round the patron-client relationship then a sample survey of the whole country is misguided because (1) a sample survey33 assumes there is no reason for choosing one person rather than another to interview i.e., it would assume that members of the elite are equivalent, whereas the 'patron-client' concept assumes that the elite is hierarchically structured; (2) a sample survey assumes that, basically, it is characteristics of individuals which are important, whereas the 'patron-client' concept assumes that it is characteristics of relationships between individuals which are important. Relationships between individuals can only

33. Assuming the use of random sampling for the selection of respondents.
be studied with the use of data through time, and data which relate to specified individuals—neither of which are easily approached through a sample survey, or through questionnaire technique. So, for example, many elements in a particular patron's network will remain idle, only being activated at certain times like elections or when building contracts are awarded, or scholarships and jobs distributed.

There is a further reason for a community study in Bangladesh. There are now very strong grounds for doubting the value of the information produced by questionnaires. There is difficulty in getting trained interviewers who are sufficiently committed to the project, difficulty in persuading respondents to answer questions, and severe doubts about the honesty of the answers which would be given to certain questions which may be of importance, such as income or control over land. These difficulties are greatly reduced by participant observation, combined with other checks such as consulting land records.

A community study generates data about process as well as structure—processes of formation, recruitment, mobility and function of the elite as well as consideration of threats to the existing patterns, especially from the non-elite. For example, it should be possible to discover the conditions under which the clients change their patrons and the patrons terminate the relationship with their former clients as well as the impact of this shifting allegiance of the clients from one patron to the other. Moreover, the network of
horizontal and other types of vertical alliances of the elite members can be properly understood at the community level through continuous observation of their activities for a reasonable period of time. In other words, where a sample survey using a questionnaire would produce a static picture based on unreal assumptions and on questionable data, a community study should provide more dynamic data based on more reasonable assumptions and with data which are more likely to stand up to rigorous questioning. The drawbacks — of not being able to generalize from one case, being unsure how much the local pattern is unduly affected by idiosyncratic features such as proximity to the border — these are by no means powerful enough considerations to overcome the advantages.

Methodology: To begin the discussion of the methodology of our study of the elites of Rajshahi town it is necessary to make a short statement of the procedure we have adopted to identify the elite members (i.e. 330) of the community from and on whom we have collected a significant proportion of data.* In identifying these 330 elite members we have adopted two procedures: First, we have taken those persons as elite members whose statuses are high in various occupational or functional groups and who hold high positions of authority and have high access to socio-economic or political power, of course, assuming the existence of hierarchical ordering of these persons in their respective occupational or functional groups. Secondly, those persons who have reputations as powerful and influential leaders in the community. These persons are so well reputed

* See Appendix-A, p.516.
in the community that they are easily recognizable. This second criterion has been found to be in conformity with the first criterion in the sense that most of those who are well known in the community as powerful and influential men have also high occupational status with the exception of a very few political elite members who, though they do not occupy an important formal political position, are widely known to be influential informal political leaders.

Another important point to note here is that data have also been collected from some non-elite members of the community and the district as well as some outside elite members who are involved in a network of relationships with some elite members of the community in order to get a full picture of the interactive process and network of relationships of the community elite members. Thus the identified 330 community elite members do not constitute the full universe of our study, though a significant amount of statistical information or data is based on these 330 elite members. In fact, the whole community plus some outside elite and non-elite members entered into the study of the community elites.

In our study we have used the concept of methodology in a narrow sense to mean the procedures and techniques for the collection of data.

It is often argued that the selection of specific field research methods depends upon the nature of the problem to be investigated and the relevant social conditions of the people to be studied. The nature of the problem of

investigation in our study has made it necessary for us to choose the participant observation method for the collection of data in the field continuously for a period of nine months. We think that for a better understanding of the network of relationships of the elite members it is essential to apply the participant observation method which provides an opportunity to collect valuable information about the process of socio-economic and political activity of the elite members of the community for a reasonable period of time. As has already been mentioned, the survey method which emphasises the collection of data at a particular point of time and the use of a questionnaire with a limited number of questions cannot be a useful tool for the collection of data about the network of relationships of the elite members which frequently cross-cuts the community boundary. Moreover, while the survey method is not an adequate tool to gather data on the qualitative dimension of social relations, the participant observation method is an effective tool for the collection of such data. But we have used the method of participant observation in a much wider sense, as it has been thought of by McCall and Simmons when they say:

35. In support of our statement we may refer to Béteille’s study of 'Caste, class and power'. This author has given higher emphasis to the importance of the qualitative dimension of social relations and has adopted the method of participant observation for the collection of data and extensively used the materials collected through his informants. More importantly, while studying a village in Southern India he has very vividly shown how the villagers' networks of relationship cross-cut the community boundary. See Béteille, A. Caste, Class and Power, Berkeley, 1966, pp.9-12.
"... it refers to a characteristic blend or combination of methods and techniques, as exemplified by the work of the lone anthropologist, living amongst an isolated people, involves some amount of genuinely social interaction in the field with the subject of the study, some direct observation of events, some formal and a great deal of informal interviewing, some systematic counting, some collection of documents and artifacts and open-endedness in the directions the study takes".36

These authors have discussed at length the arguments both for and against the participant observation method and defended the method as a powerful one for the collection of more realistic and better quality data.37

Fieldwork:

The fieldwork on which our study is based was conducted largely at Rajshahi town over a period of nine months in 1974 and 1975. However, I was not an outsider to the people of the community because before my admission as a postgraduate student in the University of Edinburgh I was a resident of the town teaching in the University of Rajshahi. My status in the community was an unambiguous one. I was marked out as a temporarily inactive or absent academic elite member of the community. Before my arrival in Edinburgh in September, 1973 I was in charge of the Department of Sociology in Rajshahi University and was very much involved in the decision-making process in the department. By virtue of my position as the head of the department I was a member of the Rajshahi University Academic Council.

37. Ibid., pp.2-4.
I was also appointed as one of the members of the University Committee for Advanced Studies. As a member of the above-mentioned bodies I had the privilege of taking part in the decision-making process on certain affairs of the University. But now I am not in the active service of the university and do not hold my former positions. Consequently, I have no scope and opportunity to participate in the decision-making process on university affairs. But as I am on leave from the University of Rajshahi and will rejoin my elitist position after the expiry of my leave, I should be treated as a temporarily inactive or absent academic elite member of the community. Although I was an heir to the broad culture of the district my life style is, to a large extent, distinctly elitist and largely different from the general mass of the population. I share with other elite members, especially the academic elite members of the community many of their interests and concerns. But I must admit that because I have come of a non-elite maddhabitta family, having my father in a non-elite white collar job I have still retained some maddhabitta values which played an important part in the process of my socialization. Moreover, my kinship network with the maddhabitta families is quite extensive.

Before I took up the programme of the study of the elite members of the community I did not give much attention to the problem though I had the opportunity to observe the behaviour of many community elite members in various contexts. During that period I was not very particular to take notice of many problems relating to the interactive process and networks of
relationships of the elite members and my observations on many incidents and events were casual and unorganized.

In September 1974 I came to Rajshahi town for the collection of data. I decided not to formally introduce my study to the elite and non-elite people of the town because I thought that a sudden formal introduction and publicity of my study would make it a topic of discussion of the town; and this might go against my endeavour to observe things happening in the natural setting of the community. I thought that when I gathered information from members of the community they would ask me about my intentions, and then I would be able to explain to them the purpose of my fieldwork. But interestingly enough, soon after my arrival in Rajshahi town many of my friends, relations and people acquainted with me began to ask why I came to Rajshahi without completing my study programmes in the University of Edinburgh and whether I would go back to my place of study. I told them that I was there in the town to collect some information from and about the people, especially the elite members of the town, to write a book about the people of the community. Within a month or so a large number of people of the community, especially the elite members, came to know about the purpose of my fieldwork because those people to whom I explained the purpose of my fieldwork spoke about it to their friends and relations who, in turn, told their friends and relations and so on. However, the gradual and informal introduction of my programme of fieldwork to the people of the community was not free from problems. Soon I discovered that a small number of elite members had become apprehensive of my purpose of
of gathering information about the elite members and the community affairs. They became eager to ascertain whether I was hired by any foreign or national organization to collect such information and why I was so interested in the activities of the elite members of the community. I explained to them that the collection of data was necessary for my academic purposes, and that it had no connection with any foreign or national organization. My explanation had some effect on them to assure me of their co-operation.

Thus my systematic informal interviewings and observations on the pattern of interactions and activities of the elite members for the collection of data and their recording actually began during the period of my fieldwork.* During this period, I informally interviewed 330 community elite members for times varying from half-an-hour to fifteen hours. I had intensive informal discussions with fifty highly influential and powerful elite members because they featured most prominently in the community power structure. I also informally interviewed twenty national-level and twenty-five village-level elite members whose names were frequently mentioned by the people of the community, suggesting their close linkages with the community elites, for times ranging from one hour to four hours. I also talked with some non–elite members of the community and district for times varying from fifteen minutes to an hour.

However, I entered the field with a certain aim and objective in mind i.e., the understanding of the interactive process and networks of relationships of the elite members. But I did not enter the field armed with a battery of structured hypotheses because that would lead me to collect data on the

* See Appendix-B for the Face-sheet of basic data, p.520.
basis of those hypotheses and thereby put a limitation to
my observing an endless variety of phenomenon and collecting
information virtually on everything I could lay my hands on.
Of course, I realized that I would have to face the problem
of selection sooner or later, but I wanted this to be done
later rather than sooner. I was also aware that in a more
subtle manner the process of my selection was working all
the time, directing my enquiries one way rather than another
and leading me to collect or record certain facts and not
others. It is likely that my elitist as well as some
maddhabitta values have, to a certain degree, influenced my
interpretations of the problem. This has probably prevented
me from achieving full objectivity in my observations,
interpretations and presentation of materials. Thus Béteille
says:

"It has by now become a truism that full objectivity
in the social science is beyond attainment. As such
the sociologist has to examine critically at every
stage the kind of concern which he carries into the
research".38

Hence it must be admitted here that although I have tried at
every stage to observe things in the field and interpret them
as objectively as possible, trying to remain conscious about
my concern and involvement in the community, this has not
been possible beyond a certain level. The only way to
provide a corrective to this study is to bear in mind these
limitations. The way I have perceived the problem of the
interactive process of the elite members of the community
is possibly, to some extent, coloured by my own position in the

community. Yet, as it has been said by Karl Mannheim:

"The fact that our thinking is determined by our social position is not necessarily a source of error. On the contrary, it is often the path to political insight".39

Similar views have been expressed by a reputed Indian sociologist, Srinivas, when he argues:

"The sociologist who is engaged in the study of his own society is likely to be influenced by his social position, not only in his observations but also in the problems he selects to study. But this need not always be a source of error—it might even be a source of insight. (Bose (1967) and Ramkrishna Mukherjee (1960) take up a similar stand). Insights, however, have to be subjected to rigorous testing before they can become valid generalizations".40

However, my social position in the community has enabled me to have relatively easy access to, and movements among, the people of the community, many of whom are known to me; and I have the privilege of visiting them without formal appointments. This has enabled me to meet the elite and non-elite members in their residences, places of work, meeting places (e.g. club, association etc.) in order to collect a significant proportion of my data through my personal observations on their activities, as well as informal discussions with them. During the course of my informal discussions with them, once or twice I had to use my respondent's bathroom to jot down certain points of the discussions, the recording of which in presence of the respondents might not be possible because of the nature of the issue. For example, a political elite member can tell

me in an informal discussion that he has purchased votes for winning an election, but he will object to my recording the point if I try to do so in his presence. Similarly, a higher bureaucrat in the course of an informal discussion will tell me why he has issued a licence to a relation of an influential political leader of the community, but he would not allow me to record the facts in his presence.

These bath-room notes were very helpful in my almost immediate subsequent recording of the information gathered through informal discussions. But some of the information not likely to arouse any suspicion in the minds of the elite members, as for example, age, education, district of origin, number of kinsmen, caste or caste-like group affiliation etc. was recorded in the presence of the respondents. However, some of my informants have supplied me with valuable information as well as helping me in recording them in detail.

Moreover, because I could build up rapport with most of the elite and a good number of the non-elite members of the community, I have been allowed to attend many of their formal and informal meetings as an observer, of course, with the exception of those meetings in which outsiders are not allowed and the decisions of the meeting are to be kept secret, at least temporarily, from the public. This has created a real difficulty for me for directly observing the decision-making process on certain affairs of the community. But this could not stand as a barrier in my way for gathering information on this type of secret decision-making process because some of my elite respondents or informants who are directly or
indirectly involved in the decision-making process have supplied me with information about the whole mechanism of such decision-making. Although I have received full co-operation from most of the elite and non-elite members for the collection of my data, a few elite and non-elite members have shown reluctance to participate in the discussion with me and have tried to avoid discussion on certain issues. But because they are not antagonistic to me and remain willing, though reluctantly, to talk with me, I have been at least partially successful in gathering some information from them. Moreover, I could collect further information about them from their friends and relations.

I have already mentioned that I held informal interviews with some outside elite and non-elite members; but I must point out here that my access to these people has not been an easy task because most of them are unknown to me. Thus it was necessary for me to build up some sort of rapport with them which I could do with varying degrees of success. In some cases I have got full co-operation, in some cases only partial co-operation; and in a few cases they, being apprehensive of my purpose of collection of data from them, have refused to supply me with some important information. In this situation I have to remain satisfied with the information supplied by the community elite and non-elite members with whom they are involved in a network of relationship.

Lastly, I must say that in my study I have used the real names of the respondents, except in those cases where they asked me not to use their real names. For them I have used fictitious names.
CHAPTER 2
Nature of Elites in Rajshahi Town

The background characteristics and structural arrangements of the elite members are important for understanding their interactive process and networks of relationships. However, because our purpose here is to study the nature of elites we have also discussed the processes related to some aspects of their structural arrangements in order to obtain a clear picture of the problem.

Sex: The elite member of Rajshahi town is heavily weighted with males. Although women constitute 45% of the total population of the town according to the census of 1961, they are grossly under-represented in the elite structure, forming only 1.5% of the total elite members of the community. As in other parts of Bangladesh, women are directly or indirectly discouraged from appearing in public and freely mixing with men, or to enter such occupations and professions which would keep them away from their homes for a substantial period of time. Even today it is believed by many in the community that the ideal place for women is the home and that women are inferior to men. Hence they are not capable of performing the responsibilities associated with the elitist positions. However, nowadays certain changes regarding women occupying the elite positions are visible, but not significant enough to encourage women to come out of their homes and occupy elite positions.

Age: In our analysis of the age data of 330 elite members it has been found that the maturity of age is somehow related with the elite status. For a meaningful analysis the age
data of the elite members have been grouped under three age groups i.e., young, middle and old.¹ Table 1 (see p.72) shows the age distribution of the elite members according to their occupation. The data in this table indicate that most of the elite members belonging to various occupational groups except the student leaders and the military elite members belong to the middle age group. The case of the student leaders is quite consistent with their student status because the students generally belong to the age group of below 34 years. The equal percentage of military elite members in the young and middle age groups is the effect of the independence of Bangladesh because many young officers of the liberation army were subsequently promoted to elitist positions.

**Education:** As education is one of the factors for the acquisition of elite status, especially in certain occupational groups such as bureaucrats, lawyers, physicians, engineers, academicians etc. it is important to have an idea of the educational level of the elite members of the community. Though in Rajshahi town 50% of the population are illiterate, none of the elite members is found in this category. But among the elite members the educational level varies considerably. This can be seen from Table 2 (see p.73). The figures in this table indicate that the elite members are not only educated but a vast majority of them have higher qualifications also, 72% of them falling within the post-graduate or graduate category, whereas only 2.5% of the town people are degree holders.

¹ Similar age grouping has been made in the study of urban elites in Jodhpur City (India). See Lal, S.K. The Urban Elite, Thomson Press (India) Limited, Delhi, 1974, Table 3-1, p.30.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Total Percent</th>
<th>Young (below 34)</th>
<th>Middle (35-54)</th>
<th>Old (55 and above)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Note: The data in the table represents the age groupings of the elite members (330) classified by their occupation.*
TABLE 2
Distribution of the elite members according to their educational level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational level</th>
<th>No. of elite members</th>
<th>Percent.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post-graduate</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matric. Pass</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Pass</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read up to Class V</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read up to Class IV</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>330</strong></td>
<td><strong>99</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. The classification of the educational level has been adopted from the 1961 Census. Classification of the educational level of the people of Rajshahi District. See District Census Report: Rajshahi District, 1961, p.1-20.
holders.  

In order to obtain a clear picture of the educational level of the elite members we have classified them according to their educational level and occupation in Table 3 (see p.75). The table shows that all the bureaucrats, academicians, engineers and physicians are either graduates or post-graduates. Among the lawyers and student leaders a significantly higher number of them are graduates. Although a higher number of political leaders are graduates or post-graduates, the number of them having educational level below graduation is not insignificant. This happens because some people having lower educational qualifications but high access to wealth and control over a good number of people can achieve political leadership. In other occupational groups most of the elite members have received education below graduation level because people having higher qualifications do not generally enter these occupations. However, it can be seen from the table that the number of elite members with education below matriculation level is low.

Religion: Muslims, who form the majority of the population, constitute 90% of all the elite members and the remaining 10% are Hindus. People belonging to other religions constitute a very insignificant proportion of the total population of the town.  

They do not have any representation in the elitist positions in the community.

4. For the religion-wise distribution of the town people, see Ibid., p.I-31.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Level</th>
<th>Occupation of the Elite Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>156</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3

Distribution of Elite Members According to their Educational Level and Occupation.
It may be interesting to see the distribution of Hindu and Muslim elite members in various occupational groups. The table given below shows such a distribution:

**TABLE 4**

Religion-wise distribution of elite members according to their occupation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elites' Occupation</th>
<th>Religious Affiliation</th>
<th>Hindu</th>
<th>Muslim</th>
<th>Percent of Muslim</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bureaucrat</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physician</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contractor</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politician</td>
<td></td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trader</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>83</td>
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</tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academician</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religious leader</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade-Union leader</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student leader</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>33</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is evident from the above table that the Muslim elite members predominate in each occupational group, and the Hindus do not have any representation at all in elitist positions in the bureaucracy and military service. We shall discuss the reasons for this situation later in the chapter on 'caste systems'.
**Occupation:** We have already shown the distribution of the elite members in various occupational or professional groups. The affiliation of the elite members to one or the other occupational or professional group implies the existence of the division of labour among these people who have varying degrees of control over the politico-economic power in their respective occupational groups. Division of labour among the elite members is highly important for the understanding of their existing as well as emerging networks of relationships. Although sometimes there is an overlapping in the occupational affiliation of some elite members, we have classified them into one or the other occupational group with which they are more commonly and widely identified in the community. For example, if an elite lawyer is more commonly identified as a political leader, he has been categorized as a politician, in spite of the fact that he is also an elite lawyer. Our data show that the overlapping occupational affiliation generally takes place among the political leaders, lawyers, physicians, contractors and traders. It has been found that out of 21 political leaders 14 are lawyers, 2 are physicians, 3 are contractors and 2 are traders. This suggests that two-thirds of the political leaders are lawyers and that political leadership is open to members of various occupational groups except, of course, to members of those occupational groups who are debarred by law to enter into politics such as all government servants, in-service academicians, etc.

**Income:** The income of the elite members varies from one occupational group to the other. Even in the same occupational

5. See Table 4, p.76.
group all the elite members do not belong to a homogeneous income group. However, for the convenience of analysis as well as to obtain a meaningful picture of the income level of the elite members, we have created three income groups according to their monthly income, such as lower income group (Taka 500-899), middle income group (Taka 900-1899) and upper income group (Taka 1900 and above). Table 5 (see p. 79) shows the pattern of income distribution of the elite members. Even the income of the lower income group of the elite members is much higher than the per capita income of Bangladesh (i.e., Taka 450 per annum or Taka 37.5 per month) which is applicable to Rajshahi district. This is expected because the elite members by definition have higher access to economic resources than the non-elite members.

The table also indicates that the maximum proportion of industrial elite members are in the upper income group followed by the elite contractors and traders. In occupational groups like military, physician, lawyer, politician, engineer, academician and trade union leader a higher proportion of elite members can be found in the middle income group. If we look at the lower income group of elite members of different occupational groups, the table shows that in some occupational groups, such as religious leaders and student leaders all the elite members belong to lower income group, even though there are differences in their individual incomes.

The income of the elite members shown in Table 5 includes their total income from various sources. Thus it is relevant here to show the size of landholdings of the

6. Taka 26 = £1.
TABLE 5

Income distribution of elite members (330) in percent.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Occupations</th>
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<th>100</th>
<th>100</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
elite members and to examine whether it has any relation to their income level. We have classified the size of landholding into lower, medium and higher because the size of landholding varies from one elite member to another so much so that for a meaningful analysis some sort of classification is necessary. The size of landholding of the elite members can be seen from the table below:

**TABLE 6**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of landholding (in bighas)</th>
<th>Percentage of elite members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower (25-44 bighas)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium (50-74 &quot; )</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher (75 and above &quot; )</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 100

A significant point to notice is that all the elite members of Rajshahi town are landholders possessing lands in varying proportions.

To ascertain the relationship between the size of landholding and income of the elite members we have classified their income by the size of their landholding in the following table:

**TABLE 7**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of landholding</th>
<th>Income group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 100 100 100

7. 1 bigha = 1/3 acre.
Table 7 clearly shows that there is an association between the size of landholding and the income of the elite members.

Nature and Size of Households:

Our data on the nature of households indicate that the incidence of extended or joint household is high among the elite members of the community. This can be seen from the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of household</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear household</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplemented nuclear household</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended or Joint household</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We shall discuss the reasons and significance of this pattern later in the chapter on "Kinship Structure".

Regarding the size of the household our data suggest that on an average the elite members belong to households of 7 members which is more or less equal to those of the general population.

Elite's father's level of education and occupational status:

Although a large proportion of elite members, i.e. 72% are graduates or post-graduates, only a small proportion of elite members have graduate or post-graduate fathers. The table given overleaf shows the educational level of elite members' fathers.

8. Although Vatuk has made a detailed classification of the household composition we have used, with slight modification, the broad typology developed by her. See Vatuk, S. Kinship and Urbanization, University of California Press, 1972, pp. 53-62.
9. See Table 2, p. 73.
### TABLE 9

Distribution of elite members according to their father's educational level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational level of elite's father</th>
<th>Percentage of elite members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hindu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-graduate</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matric. Pass</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Pass</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read up to Class V</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read up to Class IV</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No formal education</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If we compare the educational level of the fathers of the Hindu elite members with that of the fathers of the Muslim elite members it can be seen from the above table that 40% of the Hindu elite members have fathers with graduate or post-graduate level education, whereas only 12% of the Muslim elite members are the sons of graduates or post-graduates. The table also indicates that 33% of the fathers of the Hindu elite members have education below matriculation level whereas 64% of the fathers of the Muslim elite members have achieved only the same level of education. Moreover, the percentage of the fathers of the Muslim elite members having no formal education is three times that for the Hindus. This situation was created because of historical reasons centering mainly around the Muslims’ initial aversion to English education and their poverty and lack of opportunities to take such education.

As the occupational group affiliation of the elite members' fathers will feature in our later discussion on the pattern of elite recruitment we shall not discuss the issue here.

Classification of elites:

In Rajshahi town the members of the elite can be broadly divided into two categories: a) transitory elites and b) permanent local elites. Before we begin our discussion about the characteristics of the above two categories of elite members we should make it clear that the above categorization of the elite members is not the same as the well known division of the influential members of a community into 'local' and 'cosmopolitan' as has been suggested by Merton in his study of the influential members of a community and also found by Frank A. Pinner in a study of high schools in relation to the value-structure of the environing community and by D.S. Thomas in a study of technological and social change in a Pennsylvania city. 11

Merton argues:

"the chief criterion for distinguishing the two is found in their orientation toward Rovere. The localite largely confines his interests to his community. Rovere is essentially his world. Devoting little thought or energy to the greater society, he is pre-occupied with local problems, to the virtual exclusion of the national and international scene. He is strictly speaking parochial. Contrariwise with the cosmopolitan type. He has some interest in Rovere and must of course maintain a minimum of relations within the community since he, too, exerts influence there. But he is also

oriented significantly to the world outside Rovere, and regards himself as an integral part of the world. He resides in Rovere but lives in greater society. If the local type is parochial, the cosmopolitan is ecumenical".12

According to Bell and Newby, in Margaret Stacey's study of Banbury there is a tendency for those she calls traditionalists to be locals in Merton's sense, but those of higher social standing always had social relations extending well beyond the town. There is a similar tendency for the non-traditionalists to be cosmopolitans in that 'their frame of reference extends beyond (Banbury)'.13

The above statement clearly shows that Stacey's traditionalists of higher social standing cannot be treated as locals if the chief criterion suggested by Merton is strictly maintained because their social relations with the people outside the community is likely to lead them to orient to the outside community.

In our classification of the elite members Merton's chief criterion cannot be properly maintained because it has been found that many transitory elite members, as for example, the higher bureaucrats are oriented to both local and national


problems and in some cases even to international problems. They are highly concerned with the problems of the community because they are in charge of its administration and are required to devote much of their time and energy to local problems. They are also concerned with problems outside the community because they have contacts and connections with some national elite members and are often required to handle the community problems according to the directions and wishes of those national elite members. Moreover, when their upward occupational mobility depends largely upon the actions of some national elite members and they are likely to be, to some extent, affected in the event of any change in the power structure at the national level they become interested in keeping track of the happenings at the national level.

Similarly, the permanent local elite members such as most of the political leaders, industrialists, trade union leaders, lawyers etc. are not only oriented to or preoccupied with the community problems but also national problems and society outside Rajshahi town because they have linkages with some national elite members as well as non-elite members outside Rajshahi town. Some of them have orientation to international problems in the sense that they discuss and often show concern about the politico-economic developments in some foreign countries.

The above discussion clearly shows the difficulties to equate the transitory elite category with the cosmopolitan type and the permanent local one with the local type even though some features of the cosmopolitan type and local type may be present in the transitory and permanent local categories respectively.
In our study transitory elite members are those who temporarily live in the town for varying periods of time and hold elitist positions. These are the elite members who have no permanent residence and base in the town or the district. For some of these transitory elite members such as civil servants and other government officials in professional, judicial, military services and the like, the period of their stay in the community is determined by the authority located at national level. They have little control over the period of their stay in the community except that they may try to shorten or lengthen that period by manipulation of national-level decisions. But they can never stay permanently in the community because according to the rules of the government service a government servant cannot be permanently stationed in a particular community. However, those transitory elite members engaged in jobs in autonomous organizations such as Rajshahi University, private colleges, private companies, factories etc. have the privilege of determining their period of stay in the community; they may continue in their jobs for a long time or leave the community after a short period of time when better jobs are available in other places in Bangladesh. Some of them may even leave the country if they get a suitable job abroad.

On the other hand, permanent local elite members are those who live permanently in the community and belong to Rajshahi district. They are socially and psychologically integrated more or less permanently with the community life. Most of them are born and brought up in the district; but some of them
have migrated from other districts of Bangladesh and West Bengal.

Each of these two broad categories of elites i.e., transitory elites and permanent local elites is subdivided into (a) comparatively senior new elites and (b) new elites. The first category includes those elite members who have occupied elitist positions during the later period of the British rule in India and are still in active service. On the other hand, the second category consists of those elite members who have started entering elite positions since the partition of Bengal in 1947. We have used the term new for both these categories to distinguish them from the old generation declining elite category. In fact, the elite members of both these categories belong to the new generation. So we have classified them according to the index of seniority. The table given below shows the pattern of distribution of the elite members in various elite categories according to their religious affiliation:

**TABLE 10**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elite categories</th>
<th>No. of elite members</th>
<th>Hindu</th>
<th>Muslim</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permanent local elite</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>i) comparatively senior new elite</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>201</td>
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<tr>
<td>i) New elite</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ii) New elite</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitory elite</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i) Comparatively senior new elite</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii) New elite</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>143</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>33</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>330</td>
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</table>
The table shows that the number of Muslim new elite members belonging to the permanent local and transitory category is much higher than that of their counterparts in the comparatively senior new elite category. This shows the numerical predominance of the Muslim new elite members in the power structure of the community. This, however, does not minimise the importance of the Muslim comparatively senior new elite members because by virtue of their seniority the elite members of this category hold some top positions in the community, especially where seniority affects promotion to higher positions.

For the Hindus the pattern is different. The vast majority of the Hindu elite members belongs to the permanent local elite category. This has happened mainly because the types of occupations which include the maximum number of transitory elite members have very meagre representation from the Hindu community. For example, in the bureaucracy, military service and in many other government services, the Hindus have little opportunity to occupy elitist positions because of discrimination practised by the appointing or promoting authority which is mainly constituted by the influential and powerful Muslim elite members, both at local and national levels.

The data also indicate that there is very little difference between the number of Hindu elite members of comparatively senior new elite category and that of their counterparts belonging to new elite category. This situation has been created mainly because of the fact that those Hindus who occupied elitist positions before the partition of Bengal and did not like to migrate to India are still there, and the number of new entrants to elitist positions, especially in the
field of commerce, law, medicine etc. after the partition was not significant enough for the new elite category to gain a numerical superiority over the comparatively senior new elite category.

However, in Rajshahi town the two broad categories of elites from the two religious groups live together and participate in various activities of the community. They are involved in networks of both positive and negative types of relationships. Although the transitory elite members leave the community after a certain period of time their vacated positions are generally filled up by transitory elite members.

When the transitory and permanent local elite members are categorized according to their occupations we can see that some occupational groups contain only permanent local elite members, some only transitory elite members and some members from both these categories. This categorization of elite members is important for two reasons. First, it will often enable us to see whether affiliation to the elite category has any influence on the pattern of interaction amongst the elite members affiliated to the same elite category as well as between the elite members coming from different elite category. For example, it will often be necessary to examine whether the interpersonal relationship between, say, a higher bureaucrat and an influential political leader is in any way affected by the former's affiliation to the transitory elite category and the latter's affiliation to the permanent local elite category. Secondly, it will enable us to examine why some occupational groups contain only transitory or permanent local elite members and why in some occupational groups there is a mixture of the two.
The distribution of the elite members in various occupational groups according to their affiliation to permanent local and transitory elite categories can be seen from the following table:

**TABLE 11**

**Types of elites classified by their occupation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elites' occupation</th>
<th>Types of elites</th>
<th>Permanent local elite</th>
<th>Transitory elite</th>
<th>Percent of all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureaucrat</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physician</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contractor</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politician</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trader</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrialist</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academician</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious leader</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade union leader</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student leader</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>201</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table shows that all the bureaucratic and military elites belong to transitory elite category, whereas all the elite lawyers, politicians, contractors, traders, industrialists and trade union leaders are permanent local elites. But the elite academicians, physicians, engineers, religious leaders and student leaders are distributed in both the categories. Here a question may arise why should there be such a pattern? If we try to find out the reasons why all the bureaucratic and military elites belong to the transitory category we can see that according to the rules of the government service...
which were introduced by the British Government in Bengal and retained by the Government of Bangladesh, no higher bureaucrats and high ranking military officers would be posted to their home districts. The reason was that it was, and is, taken more or less for granted that a man holding a high position in his home district may indulge in nepotism, favouritism, and other types of corruption due to pressure from his kindred; and moreover, he may even try to victimize the people who have personal enmity with him or his kindred. All these would go against the principle of fair justice. Although the reasons are no longer fully sound, and a highly placed official can be corrupt and can show favouritism and nepotism to his kindred whatever may be the place of his work, the old rules have been strictly maintained in regulating the placement of bureaucratic and military elites of Bangladesh. On the other hand, the lawyers and politicians belong to the permanent local category because at district level the lawyers of one district practising in another district town can have little hope of a good professional career as the lawyers of the home district do not generally welcome a lawyer from another district. More importantly, a lawyer’s success is highly dependent upon securing clients from the district where he is practising. A lawyer from outside the district will have less chance than a lawyer belonging to the town or district in securing clients, mainly because his

14. According to the laws of the country the district civil and criminal courts are empowered to deal with only those cases that originate within the jurisdiction of a particular district.
networks of relationships with the people, especially the rural people of the district who constitute the maximum number of litigants will be limited indeed. Most of his kinsmen, bargadars and other known people of his own community and district will not be of much help to him in securing clients. This factor of limitation by the network of his relationships discourages a lawyer from starting his practice in a district town other than his own. Moreover, the elite lawyers in different districts of Bangladesh are generally politically ambitious persons. To fulfil their political ambitions the home district where they have an extensive network of relationships with people from both rural and urban areas is considered an ideal place. Similarly, if a politician does not belong to his home district he has very little prospect of political success because his commitment to the welfare of the community and the district is always doubted by the permanent members of the community who are largely parochial. Thus, generally it would be difficult for him to convince the people of the district to vote for him in the election. Moreover, the political leaders belonging to the district or town do not like to see an outsider taking leadership in local politics. They are generally seen to adopt various coercive measures against him, even to the extent of physical coercion, if he tries to contest the election against them. Any bid to distribute patronage to the voters or purchase votes is blocked by them in various ways. Even his political agents and workers (especially when they are the permanent people of the community) are likely to be easily persuaded by the permanent local
political leaders to betray him. Moreover, if he requires to mobilize rural voters he must have dalals (brokers) to establish linkages between him and the rural voters. It often becomes difficult for him to secure a good number of dalals and workers, especially from rural areas as his linkages with the rural people are likely to be very limited. All these factors are possibly enough reasons for the political leaders to belong to their home district.

The reason why all elite contractors, traders and industrialists belong to the permanent local elite category is that all of them are connected with the local political leaders either through a kinship bond or various other ties. In most cases they secured their licences, permits and dealership with the help of the political leaders who did the job for those people who have permanent bases in the community because they (the local political leaders) were not only interested in helping their kinsmen and friends or clients and securing financial contributions from them for conducting their political activities and enriching themselves but also want them (i.e., the elite contractors, traders and industrialists) to mobilize political support for them. This prompts the political leaders to manipulate licences and permits in favour of those persons who have permanent bases and an extensive network of relationships within the district. Moreover, there is local opposition to the outsiders' entry into these occupations. The local elite members belonging to these occupational groups do not like to see outsiders sharing socio-economic privileges with them or trying to
compete with them in gaining higher access to economic resources. Consequently, they in collaboration with the local political leaders, adopt such measures as will create great difficulties for an outsider to secure licences, permits and contracts from the higher bureaucrats who generally control those resources. Even if an outsider is favoured with a licence, it is not easy for him to run his business smoothly because the permanent local elite members will create all sorts of trouble and difficulties for him.

All the trade union leaders’ affiliation to the permanent local elite category can be explained by the fact that the labourers working in various commercial concerns, factories and mills are generally recruited from the people of the district; and these labourers elect their trade union leaders who are affiliated to local branches of various political parties. Candidates for trade union leadership are generally nominated and supported by the district-level political leaders. Thus both labourers and local political leaders are highly inclined to choose trade union leaders from among the people who belong to the district and are permanently settled in the community. It is difficult for an outsider to aspire to trade union leadership because his prospect of securing a nomination from the local branch of a political party would be very little and if he prefers to contest the election, as an independent candidate he will have little chance of winning the election.

Elite members of other occupations such as engineering, medicine and educational services are distributed in both the permanent local and transitory elite categories because in
these occupations some elite members are government officials stationed in Rajshahi town for a specific period of time, but others are engaged in the private sector and are generally recruited from the permanently settled people of the district.

Academic elites of Rajshahi University and some private higher educational institutions are recruited both from permanently settled local people as well as people from outside the district because the community cannot supply sufficient people with the expert knowledge and specialized training required.

The student leaders are also distributed in both permanent local and transitory elite categories as the students have little feeling of regionalism and generally elect those students as their leaders who are thought to give leadership to the students and in certain crisis situations of the country. Thus for the election of students to leadership positions, the question of their belonging to one district or the other does not arise. Although the student leaders are intimately connected with the political leaders of the community, the latter do not give much importance to the district affiliation of the former, mainly because when the student leaders are engaged by the political leaders for the mobilization of political support the factor of district affiliation does not feature at all because they are generally identified as students and not by their place of origin. Moreover, the local political leaders are aware of the fact that a large proportion of student voters who elect the student leaders come from different parts of Bangladesh. This often prompts the political leaders to act in such a way that no serious regional feeling can develop among the students and student leaders.
Also the religious leaders are distributed in both categories of elites, mainly because a well-reputed religious leader from outside the community is generally welcome by the permanent local religious leaders as well as many others, especially the political leaders. They are often seen to engage them for the mobilization of political support. The local political leaders are very conscious of the fact that a well-reputed religious leader, no matter whether he belongs to the district or not, is likely to have a good number of religious-minded followers who will listen to his advice. Because a well-reputed religious leader's association with the permanent local religious leaders gives the latter a chance to enhance their prestige in the community, the former is most welcome to stay in the town.

Stratification of Elites:

In our field study it has been found that not all the elite members of the community are equal; some are superior to or more powerful than others. In other words, the elite members are hierarchically structured. But the problem is that it is difficult to make a hierarchical ordering of all the 330 elite members who are affiliated to different occupational or professional groups along a general scale of hierarchy because the nature of power, position, privileges and activities of the elite members of one occupational group are different from those of the elite members belonging to another occupational group. For example, an elite member with a very high degree of access to economic resources, i.e., a rich industrialist or a contractor and a highly powerful and influential political leader cannot be taken together to
categorize them into a particular stratum in view of the fact that the sphere of their activities, nature of power and privileges are not the same.

However, we have already seen that the elite members of the community are economically stratified into upper, middle and lower income groups, both at occupational and general levels.\textsuperscript{15} Although the economic stratification shows the differential economic power of the elite members belonging to the already-mentioned three income groups, as well as the more or less comparable economic status of the elite members affiliated to the same income group, it does not enable us to make an overall hierarchical ordering of the elite members into various strata because it is difficult to make a categorical assumption that those elite members who have higher economic power will also have higher political power, even though the degree of association between economic and political power is generally found to be high. For example, there are some elite members in Rajshahi town who have high access to economic resources but do not have much access to political power, and similarly there are others, especially some political elite members who have a high degree of political power but lower (lower than some rich contractors, industrialists, traders etc.) access to economic resources.

Thus in dealing with the problem of elite stratification, which is highly relevant to our analysis of the interactive process and exchange relationships between the elite members of differential as well as comparable status, we have found it more logical to arrange hierarchically the elite members

\textsuperscript{15} See Table 5, p.79.
of each occupational or professional group into various strata such as super elite, higher elite, middle elite and lower elite according to the degree of possession of power and influence and control over the decision-making and taking process in their respective occupational groups. In some occupational groups such as the bureaucracy and the military there are formal hierarchical arrangements on the basis of differential power and status. In fact, the elite government employees in various departments are formally stratified. Similarly, in some autonomous and semi-autonomous organizations, the elite members are formally stratified.

Thus our approach to the analysis of the problem of elite stratification at occupational group level means that there will be a hierarchical arrangement of the elite members into various strata in each occupational group, and the elite members of one stratum would be higher or lower than their counterparts affiliated to another stratum. But the elite members belonging to a common stratum in an occupational group are assumed to have more or less comparable socio-politico-economic status.

But the problem arises when we try to ascertain the higher or lower or comparable status between two or more elite members coming from different occupational groups because it is difficult to say that an elite member belonging to a super-elite stratum in a particular occupational group would be superior to an elite member affiliated to a higher elite stratum in another occupational group for the sphere of their activities and nature of power, position and privileges may not be the same. For example, a religious super-elite member cannot be treated as superior to a political higher or even middle elite member.
Similarly, the elite members coming from different occupational groups but belonging to the same stratum, say the higher elite stratum in their respective occupational groups cannot be treated outright as having comparable status.

One possible solution to the problem discussed above is to introduce behaviouristic criteria to determine the higher, lower and comparable status of an elite member of a particular occupational group vis-a-vis an elite member belonging to another occupational group. Thus if we see an elite member of a particular occupational group showing loyalty and expressing his inferiority through his treatment and pattern of address (i.e. addressing as hujur (sir)) to a political elite member, the latter should be treated as superior to the former. But in some cases the politico-economic power differential between two elite members belonging to two different occupational groups is so great that it is not at all difficult to determine who is superior to whom. For example, it is quite evident that a political super elite say, K. Zaman, a member of the ruling cabinet, is superior to Moulana Shah Alam, a religious super-elite member.

However, the more or less comparable status of the elite members coming from different occupational groups may be assumed when they are seen to behave with each other on more or less equal terms as expressed through their pattern of address to each other, the pattern of their exchange of visits at family level, entertaining each other in dinners, parties and social evenings, as well as accepting the principle of "give and take" with a high degree of reciprocity in their exchange relationships.
Caste and caste-like group affiliation of the elite members:

The elite members of the community are affiliated to different castes and caste-like groups. As the Hindu caste system is somewhat different from the pattern of caste-like group arrangement among the Muslims, we shall first discuss them, and then take up the problem of caste-like group affiliation of the Muslim elite members. Here our purpose is to make a brief introduction to caste because we shall discuss the caste systems in a separate chapter.

Most of the Hindu elite members belong to higher caste groups and only a few of them come from the medium and lower castes. The following table shows the pattern of distribution:

**TABLE 12**

Distribution of Hindu elite members according to their caste affiliation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste groups</th>
<th>No. of elite members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Higher caste</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brahman</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayastha</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baidya</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Medium caste</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saha</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lower caste</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namasudra</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the Muslims are divided into three caste-like groups such as Ashraf or Sharif (upper caste-like group), Atraf (lower caste-like group) and Arzal or Azlaf (lowest caste-like group), the Muslim elite members of the community who have originated from the lower and lowest caste-like groups are not willing to accept their affiliation to the
lower and lowest caste-like groups. They call themselves "new-sharifs". They have become successful in establishing their claim to a higher caste-like group because of their dominant politico-economic power. However, the fact that they are still conscious of their lower caste-like origin can be seen in their eagerness to establish matrimonial connections with the old generation declining sharif families. We shall discuss this problem later in the chapter on "Caste Systems".

Interestingly enough, 26 elite members who actually belong to the sharif or Ashraf caste-like group identify themselves as new-sharifs mainly because the Ashraf or sharif caste-like group projects an image of the already decayed, displaced and declining old generation Muslim elite members. The above discussion suggests that all the Muslim elite members belong to one caste-like group i.e., the new-sharif. But the fact remains that they have originated from three different caste-like groups mentioned earlier. Thus if we take the factor of their origin into consideration it becomes quite clear that most of the Muslim elite members have originated from the Atraf caste-like group and a few of them have come from the Ashraf or Sharif and Arzal or Azlaf caste-like groups. The table given below shows the pattern of distribution of Muslim elite members in different caste-like groups according to their social origin:
Recruitment of the Elite:

In Rajshahi, as elsewhere in Bangladesh, a vast majority of elite members, especially the Muslim elite members, have been recruited from among the members of the maddhabitta category. In other words, the maddhabitta which is a non-elitist category is the main base for the recruitment of all categories of Muslim elite members. However, some are recruited from the old generation declining elite category whose members are no longer in elitist positions and active service of the community. Although they have no power and positions, they are proud of their nobility of birth. It is also true that some elite members have been recruited from comparatively senior new elite and new elite categories. The following table gives us some idea of the recruitment pattern of Muslim elite members of the community:

**TABLE 13**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste-like groups</th>
<th>No. of elite members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ashraf or Sharif (upper caste-like group)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atraf (lower caste-like group)</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arzal or Azaal (lowest caste-like group)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Distribution of the Muslim elite members in various caste-like groups according to social origin
TABLE 14

Distribution of Muslim elite members classified by their fathers' occupation (figures in percentage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elite's Occupation</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burceatat 53</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military 7</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyer 31</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physicist 36</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contractor 20</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politician 17</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Businessman 20</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrialist 5</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academician 68</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineer 16</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious leader 11</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade union leader 4</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student leader 9</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total 97</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparatively

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New elite</th>
<th>Senior new elite</th>
<th>Comparatively new elite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 100

Note: Figures in percentage.
The table clearly shows that slightly more than three-quarters of the elite members have been recruited from the non-elite maddhabitta parentage. The following reasons may be advanced to explain this situation: (i) When Bengal was partitioned in 1947 most of the Hindu elite members who were up till then occupying most elitist positions in the community migrated to India because they feared persecution by the Muslims; and frequent Hindu-Muslim riots before and after the partition created a serious problem for their future safety in what was then East Pakistan. This created a vacuum in elitist positions in various types of occupations and professions which was subsequently filled up by the people coming from the maddhabitta category because the people of this category had some education. As a result, many maddhabitta sons who were holding clerical and subordinate positions got quick promotion to elitist positions. Thus Maddison says:

"Muslims have benefited from a double displacement effect and have taken over the perquisites and power of both British and Hindus". 16

(ii) There was a lack of supply of eligible candidates from old Muslim elites whose number was very limited. 17 Even today the comparatively senior new elite and new elite members are not able to supply an adequate number of eligible candidates for recruitment to elitist positions because their sons are mostly in schools, colleges and universities and many of them are too young to come to elitist positions.

17. See Ibid., p.140.
During the Pakistan period there was a proliferation of elite positions because of the expansion of administrative, economic, political, educational, professional etc. establishments. These elitist positions had to be filled up by the people who had at least some qualifications to enter those positions. The people of the maddhabitta category came forward to pick up some of these opportunities because they had some education. In independent Bangladesh there is a further proliferation of elitist positions which have been filled up mostly by the people of the maddhabitta category who have kinship connections with the recruiting and promoting authorities who are already involved in an exchange relationship with the people of the maddhabitta category which can be easily put within the framework of patron-clientage. Thus kinship obligation and the patron-clientage network of the recruiting and promoting authorities have jointly paved the way for recruitment or promotion of more and more people of maddhabitta parentage to elitist positions.

If we discuss the recruitment pattern of the Hindu elite members and try to locate their main base of recruitment, it can be seen that there is an important departure from that of their Muslim counterparts. The major departure is that most Hindu elite members are recruited from elite parentage, while the Muslim elite members are mainly recruited from maddhabitta parentage. We have already referred to the caste base of the recruitment of the Hindu elite members.

18. Ibid., pp.139-48.
19. See Table 14, p.103.
20. See Table 12, p.100.
However, Table 15 (see p.107) will give us some idea about the pattern of recruitment of Hindu elite members of various occupational groups according to their father's group affiliation. The table shows that the main base for recruitment of Hindu elite members is the old generation declining elite category. The main reason for this is that the Hindus of Rajshahi as elsewhere in Bengal were occupying elite positions in various sectors of society from the early period of the British rule in India because when the British Government introduced Western education and opened up various opportunities to move to elitist positions, the upper caste Hindus such as the Brahmans, Kayasthas and Baidyas took the opportunity to acquire Western education which enabled them to occupy most elitist positions and white collar jobs in various sectors of the society. Moreover, the introduction of the Permanent Settlement Act of 1793 created a group of Hindu landed gentry which was able to retain its elite position right up to the partition of Bengal in 1947. This means that the Hindus already had a wide elite base for recruitment of elite members; and there was no dearth of eligible candidates from elite parentage who had the privilege of getting the best kind of education suitable for occupying elitist positions.

Although there was a large-scale exodus of Hindu elite members from Rajshahi and other parts of East Pakistan, some Hindu elite members did not leave the community because they had linkages with influential political leaders in the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Old Generation</th>
<th>New Generation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bur- eau- crat</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milit- ary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law- yer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phys- ician</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contr- actor</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polit- ician</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trad- er</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indus- trial- ist</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academ- ician</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engi- neer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relig- ious leader</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade union leader</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student leader</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old Generation</th>
<th>New Generation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elite's father's group affiliation</td>
<td>Elite's father's group affiliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 15*
community. Some of them could at least partially retain their influential position mainly by collaborating with influential Muslim elite members, especially the Muslim political leaders. When these Hindu elite members decided not to migrate to India a few of their relations in elitist positions also decided to remain in the community. These are the elite members who have their fathers in the old generation declining elite category.  

Subsequently a few sons of comparatively senior new elite members have come to some elite positions. Although the main base for recruitment of Hindu elite members is the elite category, some Hindu elite members have also come from the maddhabitta category because, like their Muslim counterparts, the Hindu elite members are also intimately linked up with the maddhabitta category, as many of their kindred belong to this category which supplies many clients for the Hindu elite members. Consequently, some members of this maddhabitta category have been recruited to elite positions.

However, recruitment of elite members in the community is a continuous process; and replacement or displacement of some elite members by some emerging elite members continues though its intensity may vary from time to time and situation to situation. This process of circulation of elites necessitates the recruitment of elite members. Recruitment or promotion of persons to elite positions is largely dependent upon the availability of vacancies of elite positions as well

22. The members of the old generation declining elite category are no longer in elitist positions because they have retired from active service and do not have any power and influence in the community.
as the future possibility of creation or proliferation of elite positions which generally depends on the growth and expansion of various institutional services, institutions and organizations and the volume of development activities in the community. Replacement of elite members in various occupational categories becomes inevitable because some elite members eventually retire from active service, some die and some may be dismissed. Moreover, when the principle of election is introduced for recruitment of persons to certain elite positions such as membership in the parliament, chairmanship of the Municipality and the Zilla Parishad, Presidentship of the Chamber of Commerce etc. the possibility of replacement and displacement increases because generally there is competition between two or more rival candidates. When the principle of rotation is applied to elite positions for some posts in an organization, some elite members are replaced by others, at least temporarily.

Channels and Factors for movement to elite positions:

By the term 'channel' we mean the mechanism through which people move to elite positions. The importance of the study of the channels which are used to move to elite positions is stressed by Giddens when he says:

"The measurement of the 'circulation' of elites between the generations, which defines the degree of 'openness' or 'closure' of access to elite groups, is obviously of key importance; but if we do not know what are the channels through which this occurs, it is extremely difficult to interpret the significance of whatever mobility rates are found".23

In Rajshahi one of the main mechanisms used for movement to elite positions is the use of patron-client relationships. It is through this mechanism that one's chance for movement to elite position is largely facilitated. At a certain stage in his career, a person requires the help of his patron for his upward mobility. For example, a politician who aspires to an important leadership position in a party hierarchy is required to remain attached to powerful leaders of the same. It is generally believed that if an aspirant does not accept clientelism to an established political leader he would not be able to learn much about practical politics, and hence would be unable to provide effective political leadership. He will fail to understand the functioning of the party machinery and learn the technique of securing the support of the voters. Our data show that all political elite members of the town at a certain stage of their political career had to remain attached as clients to some political leaders. Similarly, in other occupational arenas the patron-client tie is one of the important mechanisms for movement to elite positions. For example, the promotion of a bureaucrat, an academician, a trader, etc. to elite position is to a considerable extent connected with his involvement in an effective network of patron-clientage with the promoting authorities.

Tadbir (manipulation) is another channel commonly used by the aspirants to elitist positions. It is a Bengali term which refers to manipulation of promotion or appointment in favour of some aspirants, often in violation of stated principles and practices. It can be direct as well as
indirect in nature. When an aspirant himself tries to manipulate his case with the appointing or promoting authority it assumes the character of a direct tadbir; but when he takes the help of someone who has contact and connections with such an authority it becomes indirect in nature, bringing a third party in the role of a broker. An aspirant's taking recourse to direct or indirect tadbir largely depends upon the nature of his linkage with the authority. Thus if he is in close contact with the authority he may try to manipulate his case directly; but at the same time he may also go for indirect manipulation in order to increase his chance of achieving his goal. On the other hand, if he does not have direct contact with and access to the authority, he is required to depend on indirect tadbir. An aspirant to an elitist position becomes highly concerned about tadbir because he knows well that it would be quite difficult for him to achieve his goal without tadbir which plays an important role in the decision-making process of the authority. Our data reveal that out of 330 elite members, 302 are of the opinion that tadbir plays an important role in the process of movement to elitist positions as well as upward mobility of many non-elite members. The data also show that 290 elite members at some stage of their careers took recourse to tadbir to move to their present elite positions and all 330 elite members admit that they have manipulated cases such as promotion to higher position, securing a job, licence, permit, scholarship etc. in favour of their friends, clients and relations.

It may be necessary here to cite a concrete example to show how both the informal channels discussed above played their
roles in the recent promotion of Daniel Mallick to an elitist position. Mallick was an assistant controller of examinations in Rajshahi H.S.C. & S.S.C. Board. He has been recently promoted to the post of secretary of the board. Although he is an ordinary graduate and possibly does not deserve such a high post he has been promoted to that post and given permanent tenure. In the first place, Mallick, being a local man, is involved in a network of patron-clientage with top local political elites of the ruling party, especially with his distant cousin, K. Zaman, and with Samad who hold important political positions at the national level. Mallick is a well-known worker for the ruling Awami League and has some supporters among ordinary members of the party whom he helps in securing various privileges through his own patrons. So when the question of appointment to the post of secretary came up, he immediately approached his patrons and requested them to manipulate the case in his favour by influencing the decision of the appointing authority. After getting assurances from them, he began to make frequent visits to the residence and office of the chairman of the board, Dr. N. Ahmed, with whom he was in direct contact and harmonious relationship. He also persuaded Mrs. N. Ahmed, who is a colleague of his wife in Rajshahi women's college, to take up the case of his promotion with Dr. N. Ahmed. In persuading Mrs. N. Ahmed his wife played an important role because it was she who managed to bring Mrs. N. Ahmed to a dinner in his house. Mallick was taking recourse to all these manipulative measures because Dr. N. Ahmed was the chairman of the selection board. He got some assurance from Dr. N. Ahmed, but thought it necessary nevertheless to tap
other sources to manipulate the case in his favour. He came
to know that the Director of Public Instructions (D.P.I.)
would be one of the influential members of the selection board.
Because he had no direct access to or any other linkage with
the D.P.I. stationed in Dacca city, he took up the matter
with the Principal of Rajshahi Government College who is
distantly related to his wife and in direct contact with him,
as well as a close friend of the D.P.I., the Principal,
having a kinship link with Mallick, agreed to talk to the
D.P.I. about his promotion. Although Mallick was trying to
keep his activities on this particular issue secret, he was
not successful because before the formal meeting of the
selection board, it was known to many people of the town,
especially to his patrons, friends, and relations that he was
going to be promoted to the post. The example shows that,
in moving to his elitist position, Mallick used both the
informal channels mentioned earlier. It also suggests that
these channels often involve some irregular practices so that
the users of these channels try to keep the matter secret.
However, one should not assume from this particular example
that an aspirant to higher position must use both the
channels simultaneously, because in certain cases the use
of one channel may be sufficient.

But when two or more competing aspirants to an elitist
position try to use tadbir to move to that position the
relative strength of the tadbir must be taken into considera-
tion. Similarly, in a situation where there is a competition
between the aspirant clients of different patrons for an
elite position, the appointment or promotion to which is beyond
the control of these patrons and must be manipulated from the actual appointing or promoting authority, the patron whose power of influencing the decision of such an authority is higher than the patrons of his client's rivals can manipulate the case in favour of his client. The following example may be cited in support of our statement: Ziauddin Mahmud, an Assistant Professor of Islamic History, and Dr. T.K. Sen Gupta, an Assistant Professor of Political Science of Rajshahi University were aspirants to the post of a provost of a university hall of residence. Both of them used their respective patron-client ties and tadbir as channels in their bid to occupy this elite position. Although both of them used the same channels, Ziauddin Mahmud was able to capture the position because his patron, Mansur, chairman of the Department of Islamic History has greater power of manipulation than Dr. T.K. Sen Gupta's patron, Dr. B. Karim, chairman of the Department of Political Science because Mansur's linkage with the appointing authority (i.e., the Vice-Chancellor) was more intimate than that of Dr. B. Karim.

So far we have discussed two important informal channels used by the people to move to elitist positions as well as for upward occupational mobility which refers to movement to higher positions, not necessarily to elitist positions. There are also some formal channels generally used for recruitment of persons to elite positions. Before we begin our discussion of those formal channels, it is necessary to refer to the criteria we have used for making a distinction between the informal and formal channels. First, informal channels are hardly regulated by formal rules, whereas the formal channels have certain formal rules and regulations,
even though they may often be violated. Secondly, as has already been mentioned the informal channels are not generally made public by the people who use them, even though people of the community are aware of them and resort to them when necessary. The users of these channels often try to conceal the fact that they have come to elite positions or any higher positions through *tadbir* which involves some irregular practices and often undermining of proper justice and efficiency.  

In our study we have found the following formal channels:

(a) Inheritance of landed property and other economic interests enables a person to occupy an elitist position. A man who inherits a vast landed property or a big commercial firm or an industrial establishment from his father or any other kin moves to an elite position. But to maintain his position and for further upward mobility, it may be necessary for him to use the informal channels discussed earlier. However, the question of inheritance as a channel is applicable only to land-holding, commercial, trading and industrial elites because here the ownership of property is associated with elite status. But in the process of recruitment of other types of elites the question of inheritance is not relevant because elite positions in those are, at least theoretically, open to all persons having the education, training and knowledge to meet the minimum standard demanded. Here the son of an elite member cannot inherit the elitist position.

of his father though he might have a higher possibility of acquiring better education and training; and his linkage (mainly through his father) with some influential elite members both at community and national levels may be of great help in his attainment of an elitist position in certain occupations, not necessarily that of his father.

(b) Election also takes some persons to elite positions when recruitment to those positions must be done through it. For example, political elite members and elite members in some organizations where the elective principle has been accepted are generally recruited in this way, except in some cases of nomination. But this formal channel is intimately linked up with some informal channels, especially patron-client relationships, because the competing candidates are required to secure the support of the voters to increase their chances of winning the election and this is very commonly done by developing patron-client ties with the latter who provide political support in exchange for patronage.

(c) Co-optation is another formal channel through which individuals are recruited to elite positions. In some institutions, organizations and associations where the elective principle is practised, often a special provision is made for co-optation of some persons, especially when such positions become vacant due to the resignation and sudden death of some elite members. Generally the established elite members of those bodies are in charge of co-opting the would-be elite members who often need to have close linkage and be involved in a network of patron-clientage with the former to increase their chances of being co-opted to the positions.
(d) Selection on the basis of achievement is also a very common formal channel for recruitment of persons to elite positions, especially in those occupations and professions where specialized training is essential and to perform the job, the aspirants should have some minimum qualifications and training.\(^\text{25}\) This imposes a limitation on the number of possible aspirants because many people might not have the minimum qualifications to aspire to the positions. Thus recruitment is shut to many; but at the same time it remains open to many competing aspirants for a limited number of elite positions. Hence it becomes necessary to devise methods and procedures for the selection of candidates. Generally competitive examinations and interviewing techniques are used for that purpose. But a question arises whether recruitment is made purely on the basis of achievement or whether other informal channels also become important. Our data suggest that in many cases some informal channels are connected with this formal channel and sometimes \textit{tadбир} plays an important role.

**Factors responsible for movement to elite positions:**

1. Education and training: For a person to occupy a certain elite or non-elite position (a man initially joining a non-elitist post may rise to an elitist position in his occupational category, of course, except lower occupations and professions where the question of elitist position does not arise) a minimum qualification or training is necessary. If this minimum qualification or training requirement cannot be met

by a person he is generally debarred from occupying that position in a particular occupation or profession. For example, for a person to become a physician he must have formal education or training in medical science, to become a lawyer he must have formal education or training in law and to become a university teacher he must have at least a good graduation degree. These rules are enforced by the authority in charge of recruitment. Similarly for entering the civil service, foreign service, police service, taxation service etc. a candidate must be a graduate to become eligible to sit for the competitive examination, and must qualify in the examination to enter the services. However, there is always scope for manipulation of the results of the examination and it is often alleged that manipulation sometimes take place during the course of the viva-voce examination. But the minimum qualification to sit for the examination is legally enforced.

In the case of recruitment to politically important position, there is no formal qualification requirement for a man to hold that position. But in reality some amount of education is necessary to run for a politically important position, especially to contest for membership of the parliament because when there is a contest in an election between candidates of various rival parties, each political party contesting the election is likely to set up a candidate with some amount of education so that he might not be projected to the public as an illiterate candidate by his rivals. Moreover, some voters, especially educated voters, expect that a representative they are going to send to the
parliament should have sufficient education and intelligence to deal with problems affecting his constituency. Even many ordinary voters believe that an educated representative is more capable than an uneducated one in securing patronage resources for them. But sometimes a man with little education but with very high access to economic resources is recruited to an elitist position in the party hierarchy simply because he finances the party. For example, Mirza Hafiz is a very rich contractor of the town. He is also the owner of a big road transport company. His educational background is poor because he has read only up to class VIII. He is affiliated to the Jatiyo League and is known to be a financier of that political party. When Mirza Hafiz became interested in occupying an important political post in the local branch of the party hierarchy he was asked by some senior local political leaders of that party to remain attached to, and work with them for some time so that he can have some orientation to the functional mechanism of the political party. Accordingly, Mirza Hafiz began to travel with the party leaders and attend some public meetings. Sometimes he was asked to address the meeting. After a few months he was co-opted as one of the vice-presidents of the district branch of the Jatiyo League.

Similarly, for recruitment to elite positions in commercial, industrial and construction fields, there is no formal qualification requirement; and anybody, whatever his qualification may be, can move to elitist positions in these fields. However, our data show that all the elite members in these arenas have some education; but some of them have very
low education. For example, Mustafi Ali, a rich trader of the town has only class IV level formal education, but he has moved to his present elitist position because he could, by using his patron-client ties with some influential ruling elites of the community, secure a licence for exporting fish to India. Although he is legally permitted to export fish worth Tk. 50,000 per year, he is actually exporting fish worth more than Tk. 100,000. In the illegal part of his business he has been able to secure the co-operation of some high officials who deal with matters relating to exports and imports. These high officials get illegal gratification, mainly in cash in exchange for their co-operation. On top of all these, Mustafi Ali has some influential ruling political elites such as Hamid, K. Zaman, Azam etc. to give him political protection because he is affiliated to the ruling party and involved in a network of patron-clientage with these political leaders. Moreover, he has made a handsome contribution to party funds and has promised to make more contributions in the future.

2. Contact with important elite members both at national and local levels is an important factor for recruitment to elite positions. A person's possibility for upward mobility is increased when he has such contacts. Contact with influential elite members at national level is very important because in some cases the decision is taken at that level. Even the local-level decision-making is often influenced by the national-level elite members because the community-level appointing authorities are likely to be guided by their patrons at national level. Thus if an aspirant is in contact

26. See Table 3, p.75.
with some national-level patrons of community-level appointing authorities his chance of recruitment or promotion is largely increased. Our data reveal that out of 330 elite members, 302 have in one way or the other taken advantage of their contact and linkage with the influential elite members at community and national levels to reach their present elitist positions. To cite a concrete example, let us take the case of M. Hossain's appointment as the Vice-Chancellor of Rajshahi University. M. Hossain, a Professor of History was an aspirant to the post of vice-chancellor. Being a member of the permanent local elite category, he was very much involved in a network of relationships with influential local leaders of the ruling party. He directly or indirectly encouraged the students and teachers of his department to support the cause of the ruling party, and as a chairman of the department showed them favours in various ways. Some students, especially the student leaders, were given free-studentship and stipends whether they deserved them or not; and there was large-scale manipulation of admission of students. Similarly, he showed favours to many teachers by recommending them for examinerships, helping them in their way to upward mobility, award of foreign scholarships and allotment of houses in the university campus. This enabled him to build up an effective network of patron-clientage with many of his colleagues and students. Moreover, he was very much involved in university politics and became one of the influential leaders of a group of teachers who support the ruling party. There are always very close connections between various political parties and the groups involved in university politics. But the process of interaction
between political leaders and leaders of university politics generally transcends the community boundary and reaches the national level, mainly because the local-level politics is closely connected with the national-level politics, and the national-level leaders are involved in networks of exchange relationships with their local counterparts. Thus it can be seen that M. Hossain not only has contact with influential local political leaders but also some powerful national-level leaders of the ruling party. So when the post of the Vice-Chancellor became vacant, M. Hossain's contacts with these political leaders became very helpful in achieving his goal. He could persuade the ruling political leaders of the community to take up his case with the appointing authorities and decision-makers at the national level. Similarly, he was able to take advantage of his contacts with some national-level political leaders who were directly or indirectly involved in making the decision. Both community-level and national-level ruling political elites could see the advantage of having a man as the Vice-Chancellor who is a strong supporter of the ruling party and who would try to secure more political supporters for the ruling government and the party. This has ensured some sort of indirect political control by local influential political leaders over university affairs. On the other hand, the Vice-Chancellor being a man of the ruling party, is able to secure more resources for distribution as patronage to his clients and potential clients, and thereby has been able to expand his network of patron-clientage.
3. Recommendations and personal letters of influential national and local elite members often play a significant part in appointment or promotion to elitist positions. Impacts of recommendations and personal letters of powerful elite members are felt in many spheres of the community, and in many cases they do, to some extent, undermine the institutionally set rules and regulations. Generally, when an aspirant is not in personal contact with the appointing or promotion-giving authority he tries to secure a personal letter of recommendation from an influential and powerful elite member which might influence the decision of the authority in his favour. If the aspirant is able to secure such a letter from an elite member who is a patron to the decision-maker, it becomes quite effective in manipulating the case in his favour because the decision-maker would not generally go against the desire of his patron. But if the recommended case is too weak to be considered, the decision-maker in private communication with his patron, drops the case because although some institutional rules and procedures may be ignored, the gross violation of rules often becomes very difficult. In support of the above statement, we may cite the following example: Ahsan was a lecturer in the city college of Rajshahi town. Recently he has been promoted to the position of the Principal of the college, ignoring the applications of the present Vice-Principal of the college and other more qualified and experienced candidates. In the process of Ahsan's appointment, the recommendation of K. Zaman, a Minister of the ruling cabinet played a significant role. Ahsan is distantly related to K. Zaman and is widely
known as one of his dalal-clients. He is actively engaged in securing political supporters for him. Thus when the post of the Principal became vacant, Ahsan became very active to become the Principal of the college. He could persuade his patron, K. Zaman, to recommend him to the Chairman and some other members of the selection board. Because K. Zaman is a politically very powerful and influential national-cum-local elite member, most of the members, including the chairman of the selection board, are involved in some sort of patron-clientage with him. Thus when their patron has recommended a case for promotion, it becomes difficult for them to disoblige him, even if the rules of seniority and higher qualifications have to be ignored. This is how Ahsan came to occupy his present position.

According to service rules of the college, the post should have gone to the present Vice-Principal because he is senior to Ahsan in service. But as the Vice-Principal is a transitory elite member, it was very difficult for him to secure the recommendation of any influential political leaders of the community when there was a candidate belonging to the district and a distantly related client of K. Zaman. This shows that when a permanently settled resident of the community is in competition with a transitory member, the former is in a better position to secure the recommendation of the political leaders belonging to the district who need more effective mobilizers of political support. However, the Vice-Principal's affiliation to the ruling party enabled him to secure two increments in his salary.
4. Possession of wealth is one of the important factors for upward mobility because wealth is often used to buy elite offices and political power. The most feasible method of accumulating wealth is the ownership of land. What national wealth there is in Bangladesh stems almost entirely from agricultural production. Thus possession of land gives one a share in that wealth. But land-ownership is by no means the sole source of wealth. Profits from internal commerce or production and exports and imports, acquisition of large amounts of black money by smuggling and hoarding and amassing of wealth through illegal transactions also finance the elite status of some people. But in the process of acquiring an elite position in the political arena a wealthy man is also required to develop his network of patron-clientage to create a supporting base for the continuity of his elitist position as well as for his further upward mobility. For example, Haider Ali, a wealthy contractor and a land-holder has been able to secure the position of the treasurer of the District Awami League because he is a wealthy man of the town. As a contractor he has accumulated plenty of money, often illegally, by securing permits for an excess quantity of cement and selling it at a very high price (i.e., three times the price he paid the government cement dealer) in the black market. He has inherited only 20 bighas of land but has invested a part of his money in purchase of lands, and now he owns altogether 97 bighas of land, leased out to bargadars (sharecroppers). Thus his possession of lands enables him to have control over a group of people as well as giving him

27. See Barber, op.cit., p.411.
plenty of crops which he can convert into cash. However, he is not fully satisfied with having possession over vast economic resources; he has become eager to acquire elite status in the political field. From my informal discussion with Haider Ali, as well as from an official record of the local Awami League, it has been possible to ascertain that he has already made a contribution of Tk. 5,000 to the ruling party fund and promised to make more financial contributions provided he is given an elitist position in the party hierarchy. He was advised by the local political leaders to remain attached to them to have some idea about the activities of the party, but he was assured of an elitist position. In the recent election, Haider Ali has been elected uncontested as the treasurer of the local branch of the party. So it is mainly Haider Ali's possession of wealth that has brought him to his present political position. However, Haider Ali has become quite active to create a supporting base among the voters, so that he may try to become an M.P. in future.

Wealth may also be used to buy the education that provides opportunities for access to elite positions.28 The wealthy fathers often send their children to those educational institutions in and outside the country to obtain such education as would be highly valuable for movement to elite positions. They do not hesitate to spend a substantial amount of money for that purpose.

28. See Barber, op.cit., p.375.
5. Kinship bond also plays a role in the process of recruitment or promotion of people to elite positions. But kinship plays its positive role only when co-operative relationship prevails between an aspirant and his influential and powerful elite kinsman from whom he would expect and get favour for his upward mobility. He must show the allegiance of a client to his patron relative. On the contrary, if an aspirant is in a conflicting relationship (which is generally caused by personal jealousies, dispute over the inheritance of property, providing support to the anti-party of a kinsman, failure to secure a loan from or repay the same to a kinsman, etc.) with his powerful elite kinsman he would not approach him for favour because he would never show any favour to a relative in that position. It is more likely that he would work against him. Our field data show that out of 330 elite members, 240 have been, in one way or the other, helped by their elite kindred in and outside the community for their recruitment or promotion to their present elite positions.

6. Marriage also helps a person to move to elite position, especially when a man is successful in marrying the daughter of an influential elite member; his patron father-in-law helps him in his upward mobility. For example, Aminul Islam, a Lecturer in the Government college, married a daughter of Mofizuddin, a higher bureaucrat who has very close connections with K. Zaman and some other influential political elites of

29. A Danish study gives statistical weight to the popular notion that the marriage a man contracts is an important factor in his subsequent mobility. See Svalastoga, K. 'An Empirical Analysis of Intrasociety Mobility Determinants', (Working Paper Nine) submitted to the Fourth Working Conference on Social Stratification and Social Mobility, International Sociological Association, December 1957.
the community. Aminul Islam's father-in-law became active to help him in securing an elitist position. He has already raised the problem of his son-in-law's promotion with his patron, K. Zaman, the Minister. As K. Zaman requires the service of Mofizuddin in distributing certain favours to his clients and potential clients, he has made the necessary arrangements with the Ministry of Education for Aminul Islam's promotion. Recently Aminul Islam has been promoted to the post of Assistant Director of Public Instructions.

7. The War of Liberation in Bangladesh has contributed to the recent recruitment of some persons to elite positions in two ways. First, when the liberation war ended in the creation of an independent state of Bangladesh, the non-Bengali elites in the commercial, banking and industrial fields left the country leaving their properties behind. Some Bengali people with close connections with the ruling party as its supporters and workers captured those abandoned properties in collaboration with the ruling political and bureaucratic elites often by creating false documents of purchase of these properties from their owners. This has brought a group of people to elitist positions. There is no dearth of examples of the creation of such false documents. For limitation of space, we may cite just one example:

Nurunnabi, a local Awami League worker, captured a rice mill previously owned by a non-Bengali elite member named Ujair Ahmed who left Rajshahi town during the war of liberation.

30. According to Umar, "They fell upon the residential houses of non-Bengalis, they fell upon the shops of the non-Bengalis, they fell upon the business concerns of the non-Bengalis. Their greed had practically no end". See Umar, B. Politics and Society in East Pakistan and Bangladesh, Dacca, 1973, p.282.
Nurunnabi, a relation of Alauddin, the President of the district branch of the Awami League, created a false deed of purchase with the help of Alauddin and the District Registrar. That the deed is a false one has been ascertained by the fact that the original owner of the property wrote a letter to his friend, Ataur, an elite trader of the town to take care of his rice mill. When Ataur took up the matter with Nurunnabi the latter showed him a deed of purchase. The falsehood of this document can be ascertained from the fact that it has been executed after the creation of Bangladesh when Ujair Ahmed was no longer in the town. But Nurunnabi claims that Ujair Ahmed left for West Pakistan a few months after the creation of Bangladesh. But, as a member of the community, I know that most of the non-Bengali elite members, including Ujair Ahmed, in fact left for West Pakistan before the creation of Bangladesh.

Similarly, in some government, semi-autonomous and autonomous organizations, the elite positions vacated by the non-Bengalis were occupied by Bengalis. Secondly, when the Pakistan Army embarked upon a policy of large-scale killing of Bengalis, a large number of Bengalis from all walks of life took shelter in India but came back to Bangladesh after the war was over. The India-retumed elite members who might not have made any contribution to the cause of the liberation war appeared as heroes and began to call all the people, especially the elite members, who could not or did not like to go over to India collaborators, and demanded their removal from elite positions and the installation of the India-retumed elite members to all important elite positions.
The ruling Awami League Government was also a party to such demands for the displacement of so-called Bengali elite collaborators of the Pakistan Army, no matter whether the charge is right or wrong because the India-returned elite members were considered by the ruling party leaders as strong supporters of the Awami League. Thus a process of replacement and displacement of elite members of the community by the India-returned elite members and their relations began. But after some months the ruling party leaders realized that they were being alienated from a large section of both the elite and non-elite population because of their policy on this question. This realization possibly prompted them to stop the process of elite replacement; but by this time many people were given a lift to elite positions.

**Participation of Elite Members in the Community Issues:**

Before we begin our discussion on the problem of the participation of elite members in the community issues, it is necessary to mention that the participation of the elite members in the identified community issues does not in any way exhaust the elite participation in the decision-making process because some elite members who do not participate in the community issues are involved in the decision-making process on the issues or cases involving individuals and groups in the community. However, because participation in the community issues is an important function of those who are considered to be the directing force of the community, the analysis of this problem may throw some light on some

aspects of power distribution in the community. With this in view, the following community issues have been identified to examine the role of the elite members and the extent of their participation in them:

2. Extension of the jurisdiction of Rajshahi Municipality.
4. Introduction of Town Bus Service.
5. Distribution of Relief goods to the 1975 Flood Victims.
6. Town Development.
7. Establishment of the Regional Science Laboratory.
8. Opening and Location of a Town Park.

But before we begin to examine the problem in detail, it should be made clear that a proportion of the elite members has been found to have participated in one or more than one identified community issues; and the other portion has not participated in the issues mentioned above. Our data show that out of 330 elite members, 210 (i.e. 63\%) participated in one or more than one issues; and the remaining 120 (i.e. 37\%) have no participation in any identified issues. However, to examine the nature of participation in the community issues, an attempt has been made to see whether the same set of elite members participated in all or many of the issues, or a different set participated in different issues. The distribution of 210 elite participants with respect to these issues shows a more or less dichotomized distribution in one or more than one issues. This means that slightly more than half of them are actively engaged in only one issue and the remaining portion in two or more issues. The following table shows the distribution of the elite participants in the identified community issues:
TABLE 16
Distribution of participant elite members in the identified community issues, according to the number of issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Issues</th>
<th>No. of elite participants</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>210</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data indicate that the percentage of elite participants decreases in general with an increase of the number of issues participated in. However, it can be seen from the table that the issue participation or resolution process involves 49% of the elite participants with overlapping participation. \(^32\)

Now it is interesting to show the relative number and percentage of participants in each of the eight issues. The table given overleaf shows the participants in the eight identified community issues.

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32. In his study of the urban elites in Jodhpur city in India, S.K. Lal has found 50% overlapping participants in the identified community issues. See Lal, S.K. *The Urban Elite*, Delhi, 1974, p.63.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>No. of participants</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Construction of the Rajshahi Airport</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Extension of the jurisdiction of Rajshahi Municipality</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Establishment of a Cotton Textile Mill near the town</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Introduction of Town Bus Service</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Distribution of Relief goods to the 1975 Flood Victims</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Town Development</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Establishment of the Regional Science Laboratory</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Opening and Location of a Town Park</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is evident from the above table that the issue of the establishment of a cotton textile mill near the town has drawn the largest percentage of participants. It is considered to be the most vital issue in Rajshahi because this will be a major step in the industrial development of the community which is thought to be highly associated with the economic development of the community, as well as the district of Rajshahi.

For a more detailed picture it is necessary to examine the pattern of participation of the elite members in each of the identified community issues according to their occupations or professions. The pattern of participation can be seen from the following table:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Percentage Distribution of Participants (210) According to Their Affiliation to Various Occupational or Professional Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Construction of the Airport of Rajshahi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Extension of the Jurisdiction of Rajshahi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Establishment of a Cotton Mill near the town</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Introduction of Relief Goods to Victims of 1975 Flood</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.
The figures in Table 18 show, in the first place, that a larger proportion of political leaders participated in all the issues. This happens possibly because the political leaders want to demonstrate to the public that they are very much concerned about various issues related to the welfare of the community. Secondly, the proportion of participants coming from different occupational groups varies from issue to issue, depending upon the interests of the participants in the issue or issues. For example, the highest proportion (i.e. 88%) of the academic elite members participated in the issue of the establishment of the Regional Science Laboratory, and the largest proportion of elite engineers participated in two issues i.e., the town development and the opening and location of a town park. Similarly, the largest proportion of the student leaders participated in the distribution of relief goods to the 1975 flood victims.

The above discussion mainly shows the pattern of participation and the involvement of the elite members (210) in the identified community issues. It does not tell us much about the process of decision-making and the mechanisms involved in such decision-making. Thus, we feel it necessary to discuss the decision-making process in the community in this section. Elite members by virtue of their being in responsible, leading and powerful positions in the community are entrusted with the responsibility of taking and making decisions concerning general community issues as well as issues relating to individuals and groups. They are the people to whom the people turn for decisions because they are
generally trained and experienced people in powerful positions. A question arises here whether all the elite members, irrespective of their rank and status, are involved in the process in the community and whether all the decisions regarding community affairs are made exclusively by elite members of the community. For the first part of the question we can say that our data suggest that not all the elite members participate in the decision-making process on the identified community issues. However, when the decisions are made on a specific issue such as the promotion of an individual to a higher post, the awarding of a contract to an individual etc., the decision-makers need not necessarily come from the participants of the identified community issues. But when a decision is made on a specific issue or issues mentioned above, there are some elite members who are formally entrusted with the responsibility to take the decision, but there may be others who make the decision from behind the scene, only to be endorsed by the former.

33. For statistical data, see pp.132-33.
34. The significance of this process in decision-making can be seen in the following statement of Giddens: "Here we are concerned with the connections which prevail between what Lockwood briefly refers to as 'making' and 'taking' of decisions. Decisions are taken by those whose formal position authorizes them to do so; but what is important is how far and in what ways, the decisions are 'made' by others who themselves do not possess such authority". See Giddens, A. 'Elites in British Class Structure', in Stanworth, P. and Giddens, A. (eds.) Elites and Power in British Society, Cambridge University Press, 1974, p.19.
Dealing with the second part of the question we have observed that the elite members are not autonomous enough to make decisions on all the identified community issues as well as some other key decisions affecting a particular individual or a group of individuals without reference to national government, business organizations and other national organizations. Hence the participation and involvement of influential national elite members in the process on certain issues often becomes almost inevitable. However, there are issues where the community decision-makers have exclusive control and power to make the decisions. But the problem is that these decisions may be influenced by some national-level elite members through their decision-making clients at the community level.

One important aspect of the decision-making process in the community is that most of the decisions relating to community affairs as well as to individual cases are actually made quite informally and privately behind the scenes by some influential and powerful elite members of the community, often in collaboration with some powerful national elite members. Generally, the elite members in a closed door private and informal discussion decide what should be done on a certain issue; and in many cases formal rules and regulations are not strictly maintained. Often the issue is treated as a special case requiring a special type of decision, so that the decision-makers can make a decision which would serve their purpose to maintain their positions in the power structure of the community, as well as to advance themselves. But the decision-making elite members
are very particular to give legitimacy to their decisions which have been made without any regular procedure. This prompts them to call a formal meeting of the participants only to endorse the decisions already made behind the scene as well as to create a false notion among the public that the decisions have been taken in a formal meeting according to formal rules and regulations. This is one of the devices often adopted by the decision-makers to achieve their goals by deceiving the general public, even though some members of the public may be aware of such a mechanism.

Generally, the news of a particular decision, especially a decision affecting the community as a whole, is communicated to the public either verbally or through certain mass media of communication such as the newspaper, radio etc. In most cases only the broad outlines of the decision are given and details are withheld from public notice. In some cases when a particular decision concerns an individual or a group of individuals, the decision-makers do not feel the necessity of making the content of the decision public. Sometimes certain decisions are made confidential and secret. But the problem is that in an urban community like Rajshahi town where face-to-face relationships predominate in most community affairs it is difficult to keep any decision secret and confidential, because even the decision-making elite members who put a confidential stamp on the decision do not hesitate to divulge the decision to their friends, some close clients and relations who in turn tell their friends about it and so on. Thus the decision generally becomes a talk of the town.
Our data show that in the decision-making process on certain issues affecting an individual or a group of individuals of the community *tadbir* (manipulation), offering and acceptance of illegal gratification, network of patron-clientage, kinship ties, recourse to irregular procedure, face-to-face contact, conflict, jealousy, co-operation, friendship etc. play their respective roles. And in most of the decisions one can see the interplay of some of these factors. The following recent decision of the allotment of a large-scale construction contract to G. Mowla, a rich contractor of the town, provides us with a good example to study the mechanism. Qazi Jalal, the Superintending Engineer of the Communications and Buildings Department has advertised in the local and national newspapers, inviting tenders from bona fide contractors for construction of eight big buildings with 48 residential flats. Many contractors of the town, as well as a few from outside the district, submitted tenders for the work. G. Mowla also submitted a tender and was determined to see that the decisions went in his favour. Thus he became active to contact the people who would actually make the decision. Although the Superintending Engineer is formally in charge, the men involved in the informal back-door decision-making process are K. Zaman, an influential Minister, Salam, Alauddin, Mesbahuddin of the ruling party hierarchy, the Deputy Commissioner of Rajshahi, Mahiuddin, the Chief Engineer of the C. & B. Department and some national-level political leaders of the ruling party. Because G. Mowla is involved in a network of patron-client relationship with K. Zaman and is in friendly relationship
with some local-level ruling party leaders he has taken up his case with them and assured them of more financial support from him to the Awami League provided the decision is made in his favour. But the problem became a bit complicated because there are other Awami League affiliated contractors interested in getting some share of work. They are also involved in patron-client ties with K. Zaman and have friends among the local Awami League leaders. They have approached their patron and friends for a share in the work. Initially, G. Mowla was unwilling to give any share to these contractors, but he has been persuaded by his patron, K. Zaman, to surrender a part of the work to others. K. Zaman has taken the responsibility of taking up the issue with the national-level elite members involved in the decision-making process and to manipulate the decision in favour of G. Mowla and a few other local contractors who have agreed to remain satisfied with a minor share of the work because they are aware of the fact that G. Mowla is affinally related to K. Zaman through a marriage between K. Zaman's distant cousin and G. Mowla's younger brother who has a share in G. Mowla's construction contracting firm. Though G. Mowla was assured of the contract by his patron and friends, yet he felt it necessary to take up the issue with the Superintending Engineer who is responsible for the supervision of the quality of the work and the sanctioning or making of payment from time to time. So it became important for G. Mowla and his partners to come to an understanding with this engineer for two reasons: first, his support in the matter of getting the contract is necessary and secondly, his role in the course of construction work would be vital in determining the amount of profit that would be made out
of the construction work. If the Superintending Engineer and his subordinates such as the Executive Engineers and Assistant Engineers remain satisfied, it would be easy to use cheap and lower quality materials in the construction work and thereby to increase the margin of the profit. However, G. Mowla and his partners are already involved in an exchange relationship with the Superintending Engineer and his subordinate officers. They are bribing the engineers to get their favour in making handsome profits out of construction works. But generally in each allotment of construction work, the exchange relationship is renewed and the interested parties finalize the deal up to each other's satisfaction.

When the deal with the Superintending Engineer was finalized, G. Mowla contacted his brother-in-law, Mustafa, a Deputy Secretary in the Ministry of Education and a good friend of the Deputy Commissioner of Rajshahi, to tell his friend about his (G. Mowla's) interest in getting the contract. His other would-be partners also became active in tapping various sources, both at local and national levels for the manipulation of the decision in their favour. All these manipulative measures through various channels worked well and an informal back-door decision in favour of G. Mowla and his partners has already been made. But to give legitimacy to the decision, the Superintending Engineer called a meeting of the tender committee and announced the date for opening the tender. In that meeting, an already-made decision was formally put up before the members of the committee for its endorsement.
CHAPTER 3

Kinship Structure

As the ties of kinship play an important role in the interactive process and networks of exchange relationships of the elite members of the community, it is necessary to examine in what ways they enter into and maintain connections with the power structure.\(^1\) The concept of power structure is important here because the kinship system directly or indirectly influences, to some extent, the structure and functions of the elite members and thereby influences the power structure. Because the elite members, like others, fall within the general framework of the kinship system, it is necessary to discuss the general pattern of kinship structure for an understanding of the problem. However, as the community contains both Hindu and Muslim elite members, we have to take into consideration the kinship structures of both the Hindus and Muslims. We shall discuss the Hindu-Muslim system jointly except in those areas where separate discussions are necessary to obtain a clear picture of the problem.

Descent: Descent in Bengali Hindu and Muslim society is patrilineal. In other words, descent is always traced down the father's line; and the children, especially the male children assume the title of their father. But the female children who go out of their father's family after marriage to their husband's father's family generally adopt the title of their husbands. This happens because of the prevailing system of patrilocal residence. The adoption of her husband's title gives a wife more identity with her husband and other

\(^1\) For a definition of power structure, see Chapter 1, footnote 1, p. 26.
kindred of her husband's bangsho (patrilineage); but she never loses her identity as a member of her father's bangsho except in the case of a Muslim who is a paternal cousin of her husband. Thus, the fundamental kinship institution of the Hindus and Muslims of Rajshahi, as elsewhere in Bangladesh, is the bangsho.\(^2\) The bangsho identify for both male and female members is permanent because they are born in a bangsho i.e., the bangsho status is ascriptive. All the members of a bangsho are connected by blood flowing down from a common male ancestor through descendants. However, unlike for the Hindus a bangsho is not an exogamous group for the Muslims, because parallel cousin marriage is permitted. Generally a bangsho includes in principle all those between whom actual links of common descent can be traced in the paternal line, regardless of the number of generations that have elapsed. This situation creates obvious difficulties in imposing any fixity in the size of a bangsho. In the absence of the maintenance of genealogies by the families except as a few noble landholding families, and then only up to certain number of generations, the boundary of a bangsho is generally determined by the limit of recognition.\(^3\) The facts that a bangsho is a geographically dispersed group and that in theory, it includes any number of agnates impose limits on the social interactions which actually keep mutual recognition alive. As it is very difficult to trace the relationship beyond a few generations, with successive

\(^2\) The extended form of a bangsho up to generally 21 generations is known as a gotra among the Hindus.

\(^3\) See Alavi, H.A. 'Kinship in West Punjab Villages', Contributions to Indian Sociology, No. VI, 1972, pp. 2-3.
generations branches of a bangsho tend to drift beyond the horizon of mutual recognition. Our data about the limit of recognition of a bangsho show that generally, apart from ego's own generation, agnates of three ascending and three descending generations are recognized by ego. In addition to the above relatives, ego recognizes many other kindred who are connected with him through his father and mother.

Analysis of the relationship between the above kindred and ego shows that ego is always inferior to both males and females of all ascending generations in kinship status. Ego must not address them by name, whereas they may address ego by name. Ego is expected to show respect to these kindred such as father, grandfather, maternal and paternal uncle, aunt etc. who are required to reciprocate it by showing varying degrees of affection depending on the nature of kinship ties existing between them and ego.

In ego's own generation where he has brothers, sisters and cousins of various categories and their spouses, his superiority or inferiority is largely determined by the age factor. He commands superiority over all those males and females who are junior to him by age. He generally calls them by name, but they address him as bhai (brother). But those who are senior to ego by age are generally shown respect and addressed as bhai by the latter. These kindred generally address ego by name. Thus, assuming more or less equal kinship

4. According to Vatuk, "To use a person's given name implies that one is superior in age or status, yet surnames, in the form that they take in Western societies, traditionally do not exist and are only beginning to gain some currency among the educated". See Vatuk, S., 'Reference, Address, and Fictive Kinship in Urban North India', *Ethnology*, 8: 1969, p.255.
status between brothers, sisters and cousins, the higher the age, the greater would be the claim of a relative to deference from the junior kindred. But when ego is superior in kinship status to a kinsman who is older than him, ego remains superior. For example, if ego's nephew is older than him, it is ego who remains superior because his kinship status superiority over his nephew is not disturbed and the nephew is expected to show respect to him and must not address his maternal uncle by name. The maternal uncle i.e., ego on the other hand, shows affection to his nephew and addresses the latter by name.

As regards his kindred of descending generations, ego is superior to all the males and females and their spouses in kinship status. He addresses them by name. All these kindred must address him by appropriate kinship terms i.e., baba (father), chacha or kaka (paternal uncle), dada (grandfather) etc. and are expected to show respect to him.

Although ego's kinship ties with the kindred discussed above are traceable, it does not necessarily mean that he will be able to have interaction with all these kindred because, in the first place, some kindred of his ascending generations are likely to be dead before ego is born and ego himself may be no more when his great grandson is born; and secondly his interactions and social contacts are largely governed by the factor of locality of residence. When the kindred are located within a reasonable distance from where ego lives, the interaction and social contact are likely to be higher than when the kindred are geographically widely dispersed.
Although ego is affinally connected with some of his kindred discussed above through marriages of his sister etc., the range of his affinal network increases much more through his marriage. His affinal kinship ties further proliferate through marriages of his sons, daughters, grandsons etc. If we look at the nature of ego's kinship status vis-a-vis his affinal kindred, it can be seen that all his affines senior to his wife are superior to him in kinship status. Ego must address them by kinship terms used by his wife for them and show them respect. They in turn address him by name and show affection. But all the affinal kindred junior to ego's wife are required to show respect to him and address him by appropriate kinship terms such as dulabhai (brother-in-law), mama (maternal uncle) etc. Ego addresses them by name and is expected to show affection to them.

The above discussion suggests that ego is either superior or inferior or equal in kinship status vis-a-vis his consanguineal and affinal kinsmen. The relationship between ego and his superior or inferior kin ideally provides a patron-client model in which the superior partner is expected to play the role of a patron to the inferior one. Similarly, the relationship between ego and his equal status kin ideally provides a horizontal model. But these ideal types cannot be maintained when the factor of socio-economic status superiority-inferiority intervenes. Thus, taking both kinship and socio-economic status factors into consideration, the pattern of relationship of ego vis-a-vis altar can be shown in the following table.
TABLE 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ego's Kinship Status</th>
<th>Ego's Socio-economic Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>Patron 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal</td>
<td>Patron 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Patron 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table will help us to see who is a patron or a client or an equal partner when we shall discuss the pattern of exchange relationships between two or more kinsmen in various settings such as family or household, marriage etc. However, we should also keep it in mind that the question of kinship superiority-inferiority always plays an important role in influencing the pattern of behaviour of the involved parties toward each other. In other words, the respect to a superior kin and affection to an inferior one remains, regardless of the position of the parties involved in an exchange relationship.

The pattern shown in the table will also be applicable in ego's fictive kinship structure.

So far we have discussed some of ego's recognizable kindred. He has many other kindred linked to him through these recognizable kindred. The nature of his interaction and contact with all his kindred is not of the same type. It may range from a very close and informal type of interaction and contact to a very distant and formal type of interaction and contact. Thus, generally the kindred of ego whether recognizable or not are included in two categories such as nikat atmiyo or ghanistha atmiyo (close kin) and dur samparko.
atmiyo (distant kin) as determined by closeness of kinship ties as well as by the nature and degree of contact and social and ritual interactions. Thus Jean Ellickson says:

"Outside the patrilineal kin group (gusthi) the next significant group is the atmiyo which includes patrilateral, matrilineal and affinal kin. Ghanistha atmiyo are close kinsmen with whom relatively constant social and ritual relations are maintained. These are the people to whom one may turn for economic or political assistance; they are allies. Beyond this are dur samparko atmiyo (distant kinsmen) with whom relations are traced when the occasion arises".5

Although Ellickson's statement is closer to reality, the author has missed an important point in not giving attention to conflicts and jealousies that arise between the ghanistha atmiyo. They are not always allies to each other and may be in conflicting relationship. But that the co-operative side is more prominent cannot be doubted.

However, the member of a particular bangsho living with their family in separate houses either in the same area or scattered in different villages and towns are generally invited to participate in each other's ceremonial functions; and mutual exchange of gifts takes place, but the exchange of gifts is never ritual and obligatory, not even regular. But when the members of various households of a particular bangsho live in the same area, they have maximum interaction of both co-operative and conflicting nature. This is true for both elite and non-elite members. Co-operation follows when their common interests and protection are involved; and conflict occurs mostly due to clashes of personal interests.

involving inheritance of property, fragmentation of holdings etc. Jealousies between paternal kinsmen, especially between paternal uncle and his brother's son and between paternal cousins are not infrequent. Thus by living in the same area, the members of various households of the same bangsho may not develop any strong group solidarity among themselves.

On the other hand, it can be seen that the alignment of a specific household of a particular bangsho is much greater with the households belonging to ego's wife's bangsho and his mother's bangsho i.e., father-in-law's household, maternal uncle's household etc. This happens because of two reasons: First, if ego is socio-economically inferior to his father-in-law, maternal uncle etc., he generally turns to them for favours, protection and certain material benefits in exchange for his services. On the other hand, if ego is socio-economically or politically superior to his father-in-law, maternal uncle etc., and has control over certain resources to distribute as patronage, the latter have a preference for seeking patron-client ties with the former who will not only distribute patronage but also give importance to the kinship ties existing between him and his favour-seeking relatives. Secondly, a cordial type of relationship generally prevails between ego and the members of these households. The cordiality of the relationship has been well projected in a Bengali nursery rhyme when it says:

\[
\text{Aye chelera aye meyera,} \\
\text{mama/nana bari jai.} \\
\text{mama/nana bari bhaari maja,} \\
\text{Kil-chaur na.} 5
\]

5. The English translation of the rhyme may be like the following:

Come on boys and girls,
Let us go to the house of maternal uncle
and maternal grandfather.
Maternal uncle's and maternal grandfather's house
is a place of enjoyment
No punch and slap are there.
The classification of the atmiyo into nikat and dur samparko atmiyo is important because the degree of atmiyotar dabi (relation's claim), atmiyotar dabi puran (meeting relation's claim) and atmiyotar kartabba (relation's duty) varies from one group to the other. The claim of a nikat atmiyo over the services, patronage and favours of an elite relative and the latter's duty to distribute such patronage and favours to the former is greater than those of a dur samparko atmiyo (provided that a nikat atmiyo gives his support and services to his elite relative). However, the face-to-face and informal type of relationship, prevailing amongst the nikat atmiyo facilitates this type of vertical exchange relationship.

On the other hand, a dur samparko atmiyo may not always get an easy access to an elite dispenser of patronage because of his lack of contact and communication. He often tries to use his kinship link and directly approach his elite relative for favours. But generally he prefers to approach him indirectly through one of his nikat atmiyo who may also be a nikat atmiyo of his elite relative who is told by the intermediary about the existing kinship ties between the seeker and dispenser of patronage. Similarly, a patronage-dispensing elite member ensures the allegiance, support and services of his distant kin either directly by activating his kinship link or with the help of some of his close kinsmen, whichever is convenient. However, it is much easier for an elite member to exploit his kinship linkages with a distant kinsman who, in fact, is very eager to trace such linkages which enable him to come closer to an influential
and resourceful person. The reason for the general preference for an indirect approach by the non-elite distant kin is that they think that their direct approach for favour on the basis of distant kinship linkages may not be fruitful to achieve their goal. Two distantly related elite members, however, may establish either vertical or horizontal exchange relationship by activating their kinship ties.

However, one important point is that among the Muslims these atmiyo can be recruited from various caste-like groups because of the prevalence of marriage between members of different caste-like groups, whereas among the Hindus all these atmiyo must come from ego's own caste group because there cannot be any kin outside the caste group, assuming the absence of hypergamy and hypogamy.

Inheritance:

The question of inheritance is very much connected with descent as well as kinship structure. As regards inheritance among the Muslims the Islamic law of inheritance "provides for fixed shares which take precedence over the succession of the next kin to the residue of the estate". That is a number of levels are set up by the degree of closeness of kinship. Only if there are no survivors in the first level do kinsmen of subsequent levels receive shares of the estate. After the debts of the deceased are taken care of from the estate, the surviving spouse and the mother receive fixed shares. Any sons and daughters divide their shares with a female receiving a share half the size of a male's share.

There is no right of representation, however, the concept that a pre-deceased heir is represented by his descendants. In fact, this disinherit grandsons if their father dies before their grandfather. They would be the heirs of their father, but since at the time of his death he owned no land, there would be nothing for them to inherit. The Pakistan Muslim Family Laws Ordinance, 1961, however, provided that a grandson should receive a share of the inheritance.

The estate in Rajshahi as elsewhere in Bangladesh consists mainly of land. The claims of women over the property (after their father's death) vary according to the socio-economic conditions of their families. If they are economically solvent, they usually do not claim their shares. They leave their shares to be divided among their brothers, of course, with some exceptions. This practice maintains good relations between brothers and sisters and provides a woman with a place to take shelter should her husband divorce her or die, and she is no longer welcome in the household of her husband's kinsmen. But with a few exceptions, if the socio-economic condition of a woman's family is poor, she claims her share of the patrimony. This often creates some tensions between a woman and her brothers, but in most of the cases the problem is settled amicably so that the cordial relationship between her family and her brother's family is not disturbed. The prevalence of maternal cousin marriage often subdues the women's claims of the share in the patrimony. Often women are persuaded to sign a deed of gift transferring their share of the land

8. Ibid., p.170.
to their brothers. However, in some rare cases the conflict over the property between a brother and a sister may assume such a serious dimension that the case is taken to the law courts for a settlement. But in most cases of conflict the elderly male kinsmen come forward to settle the matter because of social stigma attached to the appearance of a woman in the court.

Our data show that out of 60 Muslim elite members whose fathers are dead and who have sisters, only 7 have had to give the share of the patrimony to their sisters; in 5 cases the sisters have transferred their shares to their brothers in exchange for some money; in 1 case the dispute over the sharing of the property was brought to the court; while in the remaining 47 cases the sisters have not made any claim over the patrimony. The surrendering of the claim of the women over the property, especially lands, is important for the elite members in the sense that it adds to their higher access to economic resources as well as enabling them to have control over a larger number of bargadars (share-croppers) and agricultural labourers whose support and services are valuable to them, especially the political elites who can secure their votes at the time of elections.

But unlike the Muslim system, the question of inheritance among the Hindus is quite simple. The Hindu law of inheritance clearly states that only the male members of a family will inherit and the female members will have no share of the patrimony, except in a situation where there is no male member available to inherit the property and when he has not transferred the property to someone by will or a deed of gift.
Some people, however, think that pan (dowry) paid to the wife-receiver is the share of the patrimony of the daughter. But the problem is that the law of inheritance and the dowry are two different things. The former is the legal aspect of the Hindu property laws which have very little connection with the marriage of a daughter because whether a daughter is married or not she is not entitled to patrimony by inheritance except under special circumstances mentioned above. For example, when a Hindu father is dead leaving both sons and unmarried daughters, all the property must go to the sons. On the other hand, the latter is a matter of customary practice which has undergone some changes. We shall discuss the present state of dowry system later in the section dealing with Hindu marriage.

However, the significance of Hindu inheritance for the Hindu elite members is that they are not required to deal with their sisters on the issue of inheritance. Their networks of exchange relationships with their sisters and the latter's family members are hardly influenced by this issue which plays an important role in their interactive process with their brothers.

Family or Household:

Family or household occupies an important position in the kinship structure. Many kinship relations may be seen to emerge from it. The distinction between 'household' and 'family' has become common in sociology and social anthropology, particularly since the publication of The Developmental Cycle in Domestic Groups (Goody, J. (ed.) 1958). 10

9. In our discussion the terms 'family' and 'household' have been used interchangeably, meaning a commensal unit in a common residence.
In our study we have not made any attempt to distinguish between 'family' and 'household' because our data suggest that both the elite and non-elite members of the community generally use these two terms synonymously, meaning a group of close kinsmen living together in a residence with a common hearth (chula) and economic pool. However, when there are separate commensal units in the same residence, each unit is treated as a 'family' or 'household' even though the members of these units may be connected through close kinship bond.

Thus, for understanding some of the interactive processes - co-operating and conflicting - in rural and urban settings of Rajshahi district, it is necessary to discuss the pattern of family or household. Although generally the exchange relationship prevails over family or household norms in determining interpersonal relationships in a household, the prevailing kinship norms which determine the kinship status of the members of a household in relation to each other and the process of socialization in the family facilitate the functioning of these exchange relationships which generally imply exchange of material goods, services, prestations of various kinds, protection, allegiance, support etc. The exchange relationships that exist or emerge at the household level may be of a vertical or a horizontal nature.

Now the question arises what is 'household' or 'family'? By family or household we mean, as Gore has meant, a residential unit consisting of at least one married couple.12

But to add to the above definition, the members of this residential unit eat regularly from a common hearth. And two or more families may occupy the same residential compound, partitioned amongst themselves.

The household (ghar) may take various forms depending upon its composition and controlling authority. By taking the composition factor as an index of classification, it may be seen that among the Hindu and Muslim population of Rajshahi, there are two major types of household i.e., the joint household and the nuclear household. But the predominant type is the joint household, especially in villages and district and subdivisional towns of Bangladesh. This form of household is predominant both among the elite and non-elite population in Rajshahi town. Although no statistics are available on the nature of household of the non-elite population of the district we have data to show that the elite members of the community predominantly belong to the joint household. But either the joint or the nuclear household may take an extended form when they incorporate additional members from consanguineal and affinal kin groups.

In a joint household more than one married couple live with their children in a common residence with a joint economic pool and common hearth. The size of the extended or joint household depends upon how far it extends along the line of patrilineal descent and how many married couples and relatives are included in the household.

13. See Chapter 2, Table 8, p.81.
14. See overleaf.
Footnote 14

According to Shah, "if a 'joint family' is defined as a household composed of two or more elementary families, or of parts of two or more elementary families, or of one elementary family plus part or parts of another elementary family, then there is no difference between 'joint family' and 'complex household'. But then 'joint family' will be very different from what it has been so far. It will include, for example, patrilineal and virilocal as well as non-patriloc al and non-virilocal relatives". Shah, A.M. op.cit., p.153.

To Gore the joint family is a family of male coparceners and their dependents, which for its continuity and smooth functioning, needs to ensure 'community of material interests and outlook among the adult males' and effective integration of the in-marrying women to the group. See Gore, S.M., Urbanization and Family Change, Bombay, 1968, p.33.

A few sociologists such as Madan (1962, 1965), Bailey (1957, 1960), Mayer (1960) and Nicholas (1961) have suggested that the term 'joint family' should be used only to the joint-property group. For a critical discussion on this suggestion, see Shah, A.M., op.cit., p.158.
In the event of the death of the father, a joint household may for some time break up into nuclear households, when there are jealousies, conflicts and separatist tendencies among the brothers as well as their dependants. These households remain nuclear in form until the sons are married and bring their wives to their father's house. Thus, although there is continuity of a joint or nuclear household for a certain period of time, a joint household breaks up into some nuclear households which again, after a lapse of a period of time, turn into joint households. This domestic cycle goes on.\(^{15}\) However, a joint household may also assume the form of a fraternal joint household generally under the headship of the elder brother. Here a joint household is not allowed, at least temporarily, to disintegrate after the death of the father. The fraternal joint household emerges after the death of the father when two or more married brothers share a common residence, eat from the common hearth and have a common right over any land. This type of household may include their mother (if living) and unmarried brothers and sisters.\(^{16}\) Kolenda, however, has termed this type of family as collateral joint family which in her view takes various forms.\(^{17}\) The incidence of


17. See Kolenda, P.M., *op.cit.*, p.53.
this type of household is insignificant both among the Hindu and Muslim elite members of the community. Our data show that out of 33 Hindu elite members only 2, and out of 297 Muslim elite members only 15 are living in fraternal joint households. Even these few fraternal joint households are on the verge of disintegration because of the factors mentioned earlier and the inability of the sub-groups to reconcile their divergent interests.  

In a lineal joint household generally the father is the head and his decisions in household matters prevail over the others. But sometimes, especially when the father is too old to manage the family affairs, he functions through his elder son or a son having an elitist position who manages and controls the household in the name of his father and takes decisions regarding family matters in consultation with his parents, especially his father and according to the direction of the latter.

Sometimes, the head of the household or his representative consults other senior members of the household and thereby tries to make the decision a joint one and introduces some democratic elements into it. In case a difference of opinion arises, measures for reconciliation are tried and in most cases some sort of agreement is reached. But in case of failure to reach any agreement, the opinion of the head of the household prevails over the other and the decision is taken accordingly. In some cases, the senior members of a joint household may be involved in quarrelling with each

other and thereby pave the way for the future disintegration of a joint household. But as long as the father or grandfather is alive and owns the family property, even if other senior members of the household live under tensions, they do not try to terminate their connection with the joint household because of the fear that the father may withhold the benefit of the enjoyment of his property from the members who leave him. So a man who owns the property can directly or indirectly exert his influence over other members of the household who are economically inferior to him and can demand obedience, loyalty and services in exchange for permission to derive benefits out of his property. But the problem becomes complicated when some members of a joint household are in elitist positions having much higher politico-economic power than the head of the household who may not be in elitist position. In this situation, the head of the household, with superior kinship status, is likely to depend on the patronage of these elite members. Our data show that out of 65% of the elite members who belong to extended or joint households, 20% are not heads of their household. Their fathers or grandfathers, and in a few cases, elder brothers are heads of the household. The heads of these households, except in a few cases, are in non-elite positions. Hence it should not be assumed that in a joint household the power of patronage is confined to the head of the household having a higher economic power by virtue of his ownership of land than some other members of the same. It may so happen that some other occupationally higher and politico-economically powerful members of the

19. See Chapter 2, Table 8, p.81.
household also play the role of a patron and distribute patronage among the members of the household, and thereby create a network of clientelism among their kinsmen in the household, some of whom may act as their agents for the further expansion of the network of clientelism and dependency to other relations. Thus, it may be argued that in a joint household, those members who contribute more to the economic pool and who are in important occupational positions i.e., elitist positions, can also play the role of a patron to socio-economically inferior kinsmen, regardless of their kinship status. 20

The growth of clientelism and dependency in a joint household often helps the continuity of the household, at least for a certain period of time. But the problem is that the family members may not always be in a harmonious relationship with the member(s) possessing elitist positions; there may not exist any patron-client ties between conflicting kinsmen. In fact, there may be enmity between them. But the interesting point is that this situation also helps the growth and extension of patron-clientage transcending the family boundary. The elite members of a particular joint household will try to build up a network of patron-clientage with the persons from other related and unrelated households. Similarly, the members of an elite member's joint household may shift their allegiance to other persons, often terminating their patron-client ties with an elite member of their household. In other words, this shows that in the case of non-co-operative and conflicting relationship between an elite patron and some of his kinsmen in a joint household,

20. See Table 1, p.147.
the kinship bond in the household becomes strained and the patron-client network shifts to members of other related and unrelated families or households.

However, an elite member's network of patron-clientage generally comprises some relatives whether they come from the kin groups of close or distant relations. For instance, A.Hossain is an elite contractor of Rajshahi town. He has close connections with some ruling party political elites of the community such as S. Hossain, an executive committee member of the local ruling party. He also maintains connections with some bureaucratic elite members and is involved in an exchange relationship with them. He is a member of an extended joint household and controls the family affairs on behalf of his old father. His elder brother, M. Hossain, always co-operates with him and has developed the habit of dependency. For anything he approaches his brother, A. Hossain, and also takes his advice even in taking his personal decisions. He is a post master in a local branch. He has accepted his brother as his patron because he can get things done by the latter who, in return, only wants his support and allegiance to him even though M. Hossain is shown respect by his patron brother because of his seniority in age. On the other hand, A. Hossain's younger brother, J. Hossain, is in a conflicting relationship with him. He is very jealous of his elder brother's elitist position. The jealousy has started over the issue of Zilla Parishad (District Council) membership. J. Hossain, a social worker, does not want his brother, A. Hossain, to contest the election for the membership for which he himself wants to be

21. Ibid., cell-4.
a candidate. Thus he finds his elite brother an obstacle on his path of upward mobility. He wants his elite brother to support him in his venture, but A. Hossain who has economic power but no direct political power and position, is not willing to give way to the demand of his younger brother. A. Hossain, finding his brother very antagonistic to him, has become more active to recruit more and more potential clients from kin and non-kin families, distributing certain patronage to them as well as assuring them of more patronage in future. However, he himself has become a client of his distant nephew, K. Zaman, the Minister who has assured him of political backing because A. Hossain made a contribution of Tk.2,000 to the Awami League party fund and also worked hard for mobilizing political support for K. Zaman. A. Hossain has also developed a horizontal type of relationship with his paternal cousin, D. Hossain, an elite trader of the town on the basis of reciprocal support in each other's needs. Because of D. Hossain's alignment with A. Hossain, J. Hossain has become antagonistic to the former.

Because J. Hossain is affiliated to an opposition political party, i.e. the NAP (B), K. Zaman does not like him. So J. Hossain has become a client of his distant cousin, S.A. Basit, who is a prominent lawyer and the general secretary of the local branch of the NAP (B). Moreover, he has also developed a friendly horizontal type of relationship with his maternal cousin, A. Haque. He has assured A. Haque of certain favours such as the Zilla Parishad stipend for his son (provided that

22. Ibid., cell-3.
23. Ibid., cell-5.
24. Ibid., cell-6.
25. Ibid., cell-5.
he can become a member of the Zilla Parishad) in exchange for A. Haque's political support. He has also secured a few kin and non-kin clients, mostly by assuring them patronage if he can occupy the membership position in the above body.

The above example shows the nature of exchange relationships and conflicts among some members of a joint household, as well as some kin and non-kin members coming from outside the household. This type of example can also be found among the Hindu elite members.

However, in a joint household it may so happen that sometimes a politico-economically inferior partner comes to occupy an important elite position and thereby acquires a higher degree of politico-economic power than his patron relative who may be superior or inferior or equal to him in kinship status. In this situation the former client relative assumes the position of a patron to his former patron relative provided that the latter is willing to maintain the exchange relationship. Conflict develops and the exchange relationship ceases to function when the former patron relative is unwilling to accept his former client relative as his patron who may try to assert his newly acquired politico-economic superiority, claiming the status of a patron. For example, Kafiluddin, a petty mango trader, was living in a joint household with his elder brother, Moinuddin, a former M.P. of the previous ruling party (i.e., the Muslim League) and his paternal uncle, Mofizuddin, a rich contractor and an informal influential political leader of the then ruling Muslim League, as his patrons.26

26. Ibid., cells-6 and 9.
During the liberation war of Bangladesh, Kafiluddin joined the Mukti Bahini (Liberation Force). After the creation of Bangladesh as an independent state he has become a prominent worker of the Awami League and a devoted client of K. Zaman who has helped him in securing a licence to export a huge quantity of chickens and eggs to West Bengal (India). This has enabled him to acquire wealth and become an elite trader. Moreover, with the help of his patron, K. Zaman, he has been elected as one of the Municipal Commissioners. In return, he has rendered and is rendering valuable services to K. Zaman in mobilizing political support for the latter and the ruling party hierarchy.

On the other hand, his former patron relatives - Moinuddin and Mofizuddin - have lost their former positions and power because they were branded as collaborators of the Pakistan Army. Mofizuddin has subsequently changed his political affiliation to become a supporter of the ruling Awami League and has become a client of Kafiluddin in order to regain his lost politico-economic power. But Moinuddin is not willing to accept the position of a client to Kafiluddin who asked him to change his political affiliation to the Awami League and to co-operate with him so that he would be able to enjoy certain privileges from him as well as from his patron, K. Zaman. This has given rise to conflict, leading to a break-up of the former exchange relationship between two brothers. Although they still live in the same household under the headship of their father, Sultanuddin, the two brothers are not on good terms. Their father is trying to achieve a reconciliation between them.

27. Ibid., cells-7 and 3.
Kafiluddin's nephew, Habibuddin, a former leader of the Students League (Awami League's student front) also joined the Mukti Bahini. He has started a construction contracting firm in partnership with K. Zaman's distant nephew, Aminur Rahman. Both the partners are K. Zaman's close clients. K. Zaman helped them in securing some building contracts. This has enabled Habibuddin and Aminur Rahman to become elite contractors. Kafiluddin has established a patron-client type of exchange relationship with his nephew, Habibuddin.28

Before we take up the discussion of the nuclear household, it is worth remembering that there is a domestic cycle in the household or family. But the important point is that this domestic cycle cannot shake the value orientation to the joint household or family because the heads of the nuclear households aspire to marry their sons and bring their sons' wives to live with them and become very happy to see them giving birth to children. Thus the basic value orientation to the joint household is always there.29 This is very much related to the patrilocal type of residence. The value orientation to joint household is reinforced by the fact that a grown-up son is expected to support their parents who have reared them and supported them during their period of economic dependency. In view of the lack of any social security system and old-age pension, the old parents become dependent upon their sons who are socially obliged to support and look after their parents, especially economically disadvantaged parents. Failure on the part of a son to do so brings about social disapproval and adverse criticisms of his conduct from his

28. Ibid., cells-2 and 8.
kindred and friends; and he is dubbed an unworthy and ungrateful son. Thus, it so happens that when a man lives in a town with his own family of procreation, he cannot sever the connection with his parents' household, though he may have to live in a nuclear household, because he has to send money regularly to his parents to fulfil the obligation of a grown-up and employed son towards his parents. The sending of money is also necessary because the property is in the name of the father who, for want of financial support from a son, may dispose of it and thereby deprive him of any share of the patrimony. The connection of an urban-dwelling son with his parents remains active because he and his family members go to stay with his parents occasionally. The parents, in turn, occasionally come to live with the son's family. In many cases, the old parents along with their unmarried sons and daughters live more or less permanently with their urban-dwelling sons.

It would be wrong to deny the existence of a value orientation in favour of the nuclear household; but compared to the joint household value orientation, the value orientation towards the nuclear household is quite insignificant. Of course, there are some educated urbanites with a high degree of individualism who have accepted the values associated with the nuclear household. These are the people who have no parents alive, and whose sons, if any, are still unmarried and are expected to move away from their parents' household at the time of their marriage and to establish their own nuclear households in a separate residence. Because these people have accepted the Western idea of neolocal residence,

they have given and are giving their sons similar orientations so that they become highly motivated to establish nuclear households after their marriage. Here the parents do not expect any financial help from their employed sons who, in turn, do not feel any obligation to do so. Even these nuclear households cannot, except in a rare few cases, continue to maintain the perfect nuclear form because some additional members such as unmarried brothers, sisters etc., can be seen to live in them. This type of household may be termed an extended or supplemented form of nuclear family or household.31

Coming back to the question of domestic cycle, this process in a household may be seen to work as a factor, on the one hand, for the break-up of some patron-client ties and horizontal alliances previously existing between kinsmen living in the same household and on the other hand, for the growth of new type of patron-clientage and horizontal alliance through the establishment of matrimonial alliance. So it can be seen that when a joint household breaks up into some nuclear households, the former patron-clientage or horizontal ties existing between members of that household are, to some extent, disturbed because in most cases the question of partition of movable and immovable properties of the father creates some degree of tension and often open conflict between brothers. This factor at least partly becomes a cause of the breach in the former patron-client ties and horizontal alliance existing between the members of that household. But this conflict often helps in the growth of patron-clientage as well as horizontal ties outside

31. See Kolenda, P.M., op.cit., p.52; also see Vatuk, S., op.cit., p.59.
the household because the conflicting brothers forming their own nuclear households may try to gather their strength by binding themselves in patron-client ties and horizontal alliances with people outside the household.

However, in some cases patron-client ties continue to exist between brothers having unequal access to politico-economic power. If a brother is in an elitist position, if not all, at least some brothers would listen to his advice because they are able to secure patronage and favours from him in exchange for their loyalty and services. Similarly, two or more brothers of comparable socio-economic or political standing may continue to maintain their horizontal type of exchange relationship.

But a more important point is that in the process of transformation of a nuclear household into a joint household, the head of the household can form or expand his patron-client network and horizontal tie with new affinal kindred created through the marriages of his sons and daughters. The father can act as wife-receiver and wife-giver. He may as well act as receiver of a son-in-law in a system of ghar-jamai (son-in-law, living permanently in father-in-law's household), not uncommon both among the Muslims and Hindus. The position of the father vis-a-vis his affinal kindred in the exchange relationship is governed by the principle shown in Table 1 (see p.147).

In general, the marriage of a daughter does not help in the transformation of a nuclear household into a joint household because, as has already been mentioned, she leaves her father's household. But when a daughter is given in
marriage to a man in the ghar-jamai system, this marriage becomes an important factor in the transformation of a nuclear household into a joint household; and at the same time, it facilitates the emergence of patron-client relationship between the father-in-law and the son-in-law because here the socio-economic superiority of the father-in-law is reinforced by his kinship status superiority as in almost all cases a ghar-jamai comes from inferior socio-economic position. If the parents do not have any son, they often bring the husband of the daughter, especially when there is only one daughter, to their residence through the ghar-jamai system. The son-in-law generally takes the place of a son.

Among the Muslims, a nephew is preferred as a ghar-jamai as he would be in a better position to perform the role of a son as well as a son-in-law because of his former closeness with his maternal uncle who, at least in theory, is regarded as the protector of a nephew, especially when the nephew is economically handicapped. But a Hindu ghar-jamai must not be a nephew because of the strict prohibition on cousin marriage.

Generally, a ghar-jamai is actually brought into a bride's parents' house as a client. He is patronized by his father-in-law in various ways in exchange for his services to the former who acts as his guardian and gives him advice on his affairs. It is expected that a ghar-jamai should discuss most of his problems with his father-in-law before he takes any decision on them, because on his decision not only his own fate but also the fate of his wife depends. Thus a ghar-jamai loses much of his freedom of action and
becomes dependent upon his father-in-law. Our data show that 10 Muslim and 1 Hindu elite members are *ghar-jamais*. Of these 10 Muslim elite *ghar-jamais*, 6 are married to their maternal cousins, 1 to a paternal cousin and the remaining 3 have no former close kinship ties with their fathers-in-law. All these elite *ghar-jamais* were in a poor economic condition when they accepted those positions. But being helped by their fathers-in-law they have become successful and are now occupying important elitist positions. This has enabled them to have greater access to wealth and power than their one-time patron father-in-law. In some cases, the position has become such that these *ghar-jamais* have assumed the responsibility of patronizing their fathers-in-law and other affinal kinsmen. Thus it may be argued that the system of *ghar-jamai* not only makes the *ghar-jamais* clients to their fathers-in-law – though it initially does so – but also may subsequently reverse the situation, especially when a *ghar-jamai* is able to occupy an important elitist position.

It has been mentioned earlier that the type of control exercised by the head of the household may also be the basis of classification of the household into: (a) autocratic household and (b) democratic household. In the first type, the head of the family keeps a rigid control over the activities of the members of the family. He generally takes the decisions himself without any actual consultation with other members and tries to impose them on the members of the family. Individual likings and dislikings are to be sacrificed at the altar of the personal will of the family head. Violation of his orders by any member is rarely tolerated and deviants are punished in various ways. He is
the great patron because he controls the wealth of the family and distributes this among other economically inferior members of the household and in return he must have the services, loyalty and obedience of the family members ensured. Thus the kin patron who takes the other members of the family as his subservient clients does not like to see his authority challenged by any other members. In any case of challenge, coercion follows and often the challenger is expelled from the family and is deprived of all material benefits. In this type of household an atmosphere of fear, coercion and regimentation prevails. But this situation can arise only when the family head has absolute control over the wealth of the family and when all other family members are politically powerless and economically handicapped.

Our data show that there are very few autocratic households or families of this type in Rajshahi town, but there are many families where the family head exercises some amount of autocratic control over the female members who, being largely dependent on him, have to surrender to his will.

In a democratic household, the head of the family tries to ensure maximum participation of the adult family members in making decisions on family affairs. This creates an atmosphere of maximum communication and opens up channels for ventilating the grievances of both the male and female members. The head of the household always tries to find out ways to accommodate the opinions of the members. If he fails in his endeavour, he gives his verdict on the matter and expects that other members should obey him. In some cases, things do not move so smoothly and the intensity of conflicts creates serious problems threatening the disintegration of a family. Even
in this type of family where the ideals of liberalism and individualism get prominence, patron-client relationships never cease to function. The head of the family as co-ordinator plays the role of a patron provided that he is politico-economically more powerful than other members and contributes the most to the family budget. He receives special treatment from all other family members who show their allegiance, loyalty, support and often obedience to him and in return receive patronage in one form or another.

The relationships that exist between the father and son, and the husband and wife provide good examples to show the emergence of patron-client ties within the family. Giving a little thought to the prevailing relationship between the father and son would reveal that this relationship also assumes the character of a patron-client tie reinforced by the presence of a high degree of affectivity between them. The father occupies the position of a patron when he provides financial and social support to his son, especially when the son is not gainfully employed and is fully dependent on his father for his maintenance. He expects that in return for his patronage his son will provide him with some material support when he (the son) enters an occupation and also will stand as his old-age security. Moreover, the son (as long as he is dependent on his father) would remain loyal and obedient to him and provide some services to the family. This does not, however, mean that the son will not remain obedient and loyal to his father after his economic dependency is over. But in some cases when the son occupies an elitist position and becomes the effective head of the family, keeping the
father as the decorative head, the father can be seen in the position of a client to his son who gives him financial support and even higher social status. The son's higher socio-economic status enhances the position of the father along the social ladder. The father is identified as the father of such an important elite member. For example, in Rajshahi town Hasan Ali, father of Badiuzzaman, the President of the Rajshahi Chamber of Commerce is a retired clerk. Because of Badiuzzaman's elitist position, he is always identified as the father of Badiuzzaman, not as Hasan Ali, the retired clerk.

Muslim Marriage:

Although the purpose here is to discuss how marriage facilitates the growth and expansion of patron-client relationships and horizontal alliances, it is necessary to examine the pattern of marriage. The institution of marriage is very much connected with religious rites and rituals; and hence religion plays an important part in prescribing marital duties and obligations on the part of both the husband and wife.

In Islam, marriage is said to be a contract signed by two parties for each side. The consideration of the contract is maharana (a fixed amount of money to be paid to the wife by the husband at the time of marriage) and khorposh (maintenance allowance to the wife). In a case of divorce, the husband pays the maharana if the documented amount in the kabin-nama (marriage deed) has not already been paid, but khorposh is discontinued. But in reality, very little of the maharana is paid to the divorced wife on the plea that she is the root cause of the divorce. The amount of maharana and
khorposh not being fixed by law varies from situation to situation. As they are no longer regarded as bride-prices, as they were in old Arabic law, and the azen (consent) of the bride is one of the requisites of legal marriage, one might get the impression that there is nothing in Muslim marriage that smacks of the old idea of purchase and consequently property in women. If maharana and khorposh are to be paid to the bride in cash or kind, they may be treated as payments for purchase of the bride, though the question of purchase has been pushed aside by the disapproval of the concept of bride-price. The association of maharana and khorposh with sexual right can be established when it can be seen that the amount of maharana and khorposh is considerably higher if the woman is a virgin than it would be if she is a widow or a divorcée. The amount of maharana and khorposh also varies with the social status of the bride's family. A bride coming from a higher status family or elite parentage will have greater market value for marriage and hence would have to be given higher maharana and khorposh. Thus the amount of maharana and khorposh simultaneously shows the economic power of the husband and his family, and the demand for the bride and her family prestige and power. But the idea of property in women, exchangeable for cash or kind is clearly manifested through the prevailing system of maharana and khorposh.

Although Islam at least theoretically professes equality of wife and husband, it could not fully negate the patron-like superiority of the husband to his wife. A careful study of the talaq (divorce) laws in Islam would show the inferior

position of the wife. As the formula for dismissal has to be repeated three times before the divorce is completed and irrevocable, a woman might be kept in a state of being neither wife nor a divorcée. But the husband may delegate to his wife at the time of marriage the power to divorce herself and thus the wife is said to have right to divorce at her will. But Mulla says,

"Such a divorce, though it is in the form of a divorce of the husband by the wife, operates in law a talaq of the wife by the husband". The law of divorce, therefore, asserted the husband's domination over his wife. The situation discussed above is true for both the elite and non-elite members of Rajshahi as elsewhere in Bangladesh. Our data show that out of 287 Muslim married elite members, 270 treat their wives as inferior to them, and only 17 are willing to give their wives status equal to them in terms of rights and duties, but not in terms of socio-economic position.

In Islam, polygyny is permitted up to four wives on condition that the husband must give equal treatment to each of his wives. Because this condition is difficult to maintain, those who take more than one wife give importance to the first part of the Islamic injunction and avoid the condition altogether. Thus, Islam restricted polygyny but was, or is, never completely against this practice. Consequently, in the

33. The sentence: Ami tomaro talaq dilam (I divorce you) must be uttered three times. The first utterance means ake talaq (first phase of divorce), the second utterance means duj talaq (second phase of divorce) and the third utterance i.e., tin talaq (third or final phase of divorce) completes the process.

Muslim community side by side with monogamy, polygyny is also practised, although the number of such polygynous marriages is very much restricted because of the impact of various factors, viz., the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance (1961), some degree of awakening amongst women about their rights, the encouragement of female education, the disturbance of family peace and the emergence of conflicts and the change of social values, as initiated by the British rule in India.

Our data reveal that among the Muslim elite members, the practice of polygyny is very rare, but it is not altogether absent. Out of 287 elite members, 3 have taken second wives. In one case it is a love marriage, but in the other two cases the second marriages are politically motivated. The husbands in these cases, being members of the ruling political elite, could see the benefit in recruitment of more political supporters through the execution of their second marriages with two daughters of two rich contractors of the town who are believed to have large networks of patron-clientage. Both wife-giving fathers have been largely successful in securing political protection and patronage from their politically influential sons-in-law in exchange for their daughters and political support and services to the latter. Although the second marriage often provides the husband with scope for the expansion of the network of his affinal kinsmen who are expected to support him in time of need, and vice versa, polygyny is not generally practised because the establishment of new affinal linkage is likely to damage the formal affinal ties, established through the first marriage, especially when the first wife and her kinsmen are against the second marriage
of her husband. But the possibility of reconciliation is not altogether ruled out. In all the above three cases some sort of reconciliation has been worked out, but occasional conflicts between the first and second wife have become a constant feature of these three families.

In theory, a Muslim male can marry any woman from any status group except the following kindred: i) a sibling or a step sibling, ii) a descendant or a descendant of a sibling, iii) an ascendant or sibling of an ascendant, iv) wife's mother, and wife's sister (during the lifetime of the wife). He can even marry a woman from another religious community, provided the bride is converted to Islam, which is never opposed as exogamy. But in practice, endogamy can be observed among the Muslims of Bangladesh, mainly due to the influence of Hindu caste endogamy. But this practice is never rigid and formal among the Muslims as is found among the Hindus. According to Kapadia,

"Muslims also recognize in practice, though not in theory, endogamous rules. The two broad sections, the Sunnis and Shias, do not intermarry. Also among the Sunnis there are various groups – Vohras, Tias, etc., which are endogamous. Further, a Saiyid prefers to marry a Saiyid, a Sheikh a Sheikh, a Mughal a Mughal and a Pathan a Pathan. Many lower castes, especially the occupational classes are strictly endogamous and marriage outside the closed group entails excommunication. Some castes have endogamous subdivisions too". 35

Kapadia's observation was possibly true for the nineteenth century Muslims in Bengal. But in 20th century Bangladesh the situation is different because of the fact that in

Bangladesh today rigidity of the practice of endogamy among various Muslim caste-like groups has been largely broken down. The main reason for this change is that nowadays marriage is treated as a means or part of the exchange relationship in which both the wife-giving and wife-receiving parties try to secure maximum benefits, either in terms of social status or politico-economic patronage. Thus when the fathers, belonging to an upper caste-like group with nobility of birth but declining socio-economic status have marriageable daughters to dispose of, they prefer to give their daughters in marriage to those persons who are politico-economically powerful. Such sons-in-law would be able to help them in gaining some material benefits that will save them from total economic decline and give them an opportunity to have indirect linkage with the power structure of the community, no matter whether they (the sons-in-law) belong to lower or upper caste-like groups. They would expect that their sons-in-law would help their sons in their endeavour for upward mobility. Similarly, because these politico-economically powerful and influential persons are largely recruited from families with ordinary social backgrounds they are quite keen to establish matrimonial connections with declining higher status families, believing that this will

36. According to Bertocci, "even among the titled lineage the absolute majority of marriages are with the non-titled lineages. In short, mobility between higher status and non-higher status groups is clearly evident". See Bertocci, P.J. 'Community Structure and Social Rank in Two Villages in Bangladesh', Contributions to Indian Sociology, No.VI, 1972, p.47.
enhance their social status and connect them with persons having nobility of birth. This motive induces them to bring women of noble parentage as their wives in exchange for their patronage in the form of material goods, services, manipulation, protection etc. They also expect and get support and some services from their affines. However, some prestations in the form of household items, gifts to the bridegroom etc. do come from wife-giving families. These prestations are given to the bridegroom in the hope that the giving of some prestations along with a woman would bring more favourable response from the wife-receiver and his parents. Similarly, in addition to patronage to the wife-giving family, the wife-receiver and his family have to give prestations in the form of ornaments, costly dresses etc. to the bride. But the wife-receiving and wife-giving families have to give feasts to each other and to each other's kinsmen. Thus the flow of prestations is not a one-way affair. It is generally mutual, but in this situation the major part of prestations comes from the bridegroom and his family of orientation to the bride and her family of orientation. The diagram overleaf may clarify the above statement.

37. In a different situation the wife-giving family may have to bear the main burden of prestations.
A = Wife-giving family belonging to higher caste-like group, with nobility of birth, but declining socio-economic and political status.

B = Wife-receiving family belonging to medium or lower caste-like group having no nobility of birth, but politico-economically powerful.

Cousin-marriage among the Muslims:

Marriage between the kindred, especially cousin-marriage can be observed among the Muslims. Traditionally, the preferred marriages for Muslims have been between paternal cousins. In the Middle East, among nomadic herds when a daughter took her rightful inheritance under Islamic law, marriage between a woman and her father's brother's son kept her animals in the herd of the patrilineal kin group. Even today preference for patrilateral parallel cousin marriage can be found in some parts of Pakistan. According to Alavi,

"The Punjabi Muslim kinship system is structured on the principle of preferential patrilateral parallel cousin marriage. Marriage with father's brother's daughter is most preferred. Although Muslim law does not prohibit exchange in marriage outside the patrilineage (nor does it enjoin preferential marriage with FBD, the local custom and value system require that marriages be confined within the biradari. It is convenient therefore to refer to the system as one based on biradari endogamy although it is not an absolute jural prescription but a customary and preferred condition". 38

38 Alavi, H.A., op.cit., p.5.
This contrasts with Bangladesh where there is a general preference for maternal cross-cousin marriage. But marriage with any other types of cousins, though in lesser degree, can also be found both among elite and non-elite people of Bangladesh. The following table shows the pattern of cousin-marriage and marriage with other relatives among 287 married Muslim elite members of Rajshahi town:

**TABLE 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wife's former kinship tie with the husband</th>
<th>No. of elite members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cousin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother's brother's daughter</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother's sister's daughter</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father's brother's daughter</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father's sister's daughter</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Relatives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elder brother's wife's younger sister</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sister's husband's sister</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal uncle's wife's brother's daughter</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Distant Relatives</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-relatives</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the table shows that there is a preference for maternal cross-cousin marriage among the elite members who are married to their cousins, it is never prescriptive. A nephew is not by any means obliged to marry his maternal uncle's daughter except in cases where he is financially or otherwise helped by his maternal uncle (i.e., in a case of dependency upon his maternal uncle before marriage),
and the maternal uncle is not in any way obliged to give his daughter in marriage to his nephew. But that the maternal uncle's daughter is generally preferred as a marriage partner cannot be denied, especially when the maternal uncle is socio-economically in a better position than his nephew's parents. In such a situation, the maternal uncle is likely to be a protector and a patron of his nephew's parents' family. Moreover, when a nephew's father is dead his maternal uncle, especially a socio-economically or politically powerful one, has a great role to play in the family affairs of his (nephew's) mother. It is the maternal uncle who is consulted in most family matters, including the marriage affairs of his nephew and niece. If a sister is unable to maintain her children, it is her brother who is expected to take the responsibility to look after his sister's children. This has been reflected in a Bengali proverb: "Mamar bhate bhaigna manush" (a nephew has a share in his maternal uncle's bread).

Our data show that out of 287 married Muslim elite members, 56 have one or more nephews living in their families and 26 are bearing the educational expenses of their nephews when they are studying in colleges and universities outside Rajshahi town. These nephews for whom the maternal uncles do so much gradually develop a feeling of obligation to return back at least a part of the favour shown to them. Generally, they find the best way to do it is to marry their maternal uncle's daughters. Moreover, while living in the same house or visiting it quite frequently, they develop a fascination for and intimacy with their maternal cousins who, knowing well that the former are their potential husbands, generally become
co-operative, within limits. Sometimes there is direct exchange of daughters between the maternal uncle's family and his nephew's parents' family i.e., a brother's daughter is brought as a son's wife and a daughter is given as wife to a brother's son.

In addition to cross-cousin marriage, there are marriages between parallel cousins i.e., marriage between paternal parallel cousin and between maternal parallel cousin. The paternal parallel cousin-marriage may be a one-way affair in which one brother gives his daughter in marriage to his brother's son; but sometimes it becomes a two-way affair in which two brothers exchange their daughters as each other's son's wife. Here a wife-receiver is also a wife-giver. But this type of direct exchange of women in paternal parallel cousin marriage is rare. The paternal parallel cousin-marriage is often used to end the family feud or to minimise the possibility of such a feud, especially feud over inheritance and possession of property as well as to gain political strength, patronage and services.

In maternal parallel cousin-marriage (in which a sister's daughter is given in marriage to her sister's son) the exchange of wife may be a direct one in which one sister gives her daughter in marriage to another sister's son and simultaneously brings her sister's daughter as her son's wife. Though this type of direct exchange of women is rare, it is not absent. Our data show that only one elite member has married his mother's sister's daughter and his sister has been married to his wife's brother.
In cousin marriage, as in other types of marriage, exchange of prestations or making of gifts is always a two-way affair in which the bride generally receives gifts from her father-in-law and his relatives in the form of ornaments, wedding dresses, cosmetics etc. She also receives some gifts from her parents and relatives. The bridegroom is also presented with some gifts such as a sofa-set, a wrist-watch, a radio etc. The wife-giving and wife-receiving families also exchange prestations. The nature and volume of prestations from one party to the other depend upon the socio-economic and political status of the parties involved. From the above discussion it may be evident that only co-operative aspects between kin groups involved in matrimonial alliance have been emphasized. Although the relationship is generally of a co-operative nature, there are cases where it is one of conflict and jealousy. Conflicts and jealousies arise when one party having power to distribute patronage and favours does not show any favour to the other party lacking access to such resources, but requiring them. As a result, the frustrated party becomes antagonistic to the other party. Often this conflict between the wife-giving and wife-receiving parties may affect the conjugal relationship between the husband and the wife, each accusing the other of siding with the opponent group. In this situation divorce is not unlikely; and in fact, it is one of the important causes of divorce. But the wife-giving family (except in a few cases) is always resistant to divorce of its daughter because there is a strong social stigma attached to the divorce of a woman. It is difficult for a divorced lady to get a suitable husband because a prospective

husband usually will not marry a divorced lady if he is not emotionally involved with her. But a divorced husband, especially an elite husband, does not face much difficulty in marrying a virgin woman. The only thing he has to do is to exchange valuable prestation either in cash or ornaments to the bride as well as patronage to the father of the bride and some other members of her family.

Among the Muslims of Bangladesh, in most cases marriage is a systematically organized affair which forms part of a series of contractual as well as non-contractual exchanges between the wife-giving and wife-receiving families. Some other kinsmen, especially close kinsmen of these families, are also involved in this exchange relationship. Marriage is very rarely the concern of the actual partner of the marriage i.e., the bride and the bridegroom, even though they are also involved in these exchanges. The marriage is hardly treated as a personal affair between an individual male and female; it is considered as a social duty toward the family. This largely minimises the scope for the recognition of any personal factor, individual interests and aspirations of two marital partners. This is largely true both for elite members and non-elite people of the district. Thus arranged marriage remains the pattern in town as well as in the village. Generally, elderly people such as kinsmen, patrons, clients and friends arrange marriages. Although most of these people are males, a few elderly women of the bride's and bridegroom's family may also take part in the arrangement of a marriage. When boys and girls reach marriageable age, the parents begin to talk
about their marriage. The concern of the parents becomes much more prominent when their daughters are to be married because the girls are generally expected to marry as soon as they are fit for cohabitation. But the simple concern of the parents is not sufficient to arrange a marriage. In order to do so a man needs information about an appropriate spouse for his son or daughter i.e., the age, character, education, occupation and family background of the would-be spouse. Moreover, there is the problem of establishing communication between the prospective wife-giving and wife-receiving families. This problem is largely solved by professional and non-professional ghataks (match-makers) who may be recruited from both kin and non-kin groups. We shall discuss the role of ghataks later in Chapter 6.

Among the peasants, especially the uneducated peasants, the couple to be married are rarely consulted. The bridegroom is told about his marriage, but only in a very few cases is his opinion sought. The bride is hardly consulted; she is just informed by an elderly kinswoman that she is going to be married to someone. As a result, the couple usually do not get any chance to see each other before their marriage. But among the educated and elite section of the people, the couple are consulted before their marriage and often arrangements are made to see each other, of course, with little scope to talk to each other, except in the few cases where the couple arrange their own marriage.

For both the Muslim elite members and non-elite population of the community, marriage is an important event in the life of an adult male and female. Life is not
complete without marriage. Universality of marriage is an established fact; and it is a disgrace to remain single after a certain age. As has already been mentioned, through marriage there develops a network of affinal kinsmen who become involved in an exchange relationship within the frameworks of patron-clientage as well as horizontal alliance.

Sometimes patron-client ties develop between the wife-receiver (i.e., the bridegroom) and some of his socio-economically inferior affines. For instance, if a dulabhai (elder sister's husband) holds an important elitist position, he is likely to show favours to his shalok (wife's younger brother) provided that the latter renders services and support and remain loyal to him. This shows that the affinal bond is not sufficient to lead to the growth of the subsequent exchange relationship between two affinally related partners. However, it creates a congenial atmosphere for the smooth functioning of that type of relationship. For example, in the University of Rajshahi, a former Vice-Chancellor (V.C.) had shown favours to his shalok by appointing him to a post he possibly does not deserve and for which there were many highly qualified candidates. The V.C. did it not only because of his affinal tie with the candidate, but mainly because he needed the services of his shalok. However, in order to avoid criticism from the public who were, of course, aware of the fact of the V.C.'s nepotism and favouritism, the V.C. had delegated the responsibility of the selection to a board, of which he was the chairman. The chairman had control over the members of the selection board because

40. See p.146.
the members were nominated by him from among his influential clients in the university who enjoyed and were expecting to enjoy more patronage from the V.C. Although the V.C. was the chairman he did not attend the meeting of the board on the plea that his brother-in-law was one of the candidates for the post. The members of the board were aware of the fact that the V.C. was interested in the appointment of his shalok because this was directly or indirectly communicated to them by the V.C. himself or by some of his agents. And they went with their patron's desire.

The analysis of such a favourable treatment to an affinal kinsman reveals that it is a kind of patronage distributed to an affinal relative by a patron in exchange for his loyalty, support and services in case of his need. Moreover, a client brother-in-law is expected to be an effective dalal (broker) to keep the V.C. well informed about the activities of his opponents, to glorify the activities of his patron and to secure new clients for him. In the process, because of his intimate and direct connection with his patron (i.e. the V.C.) he will be able to build up a network of patron-client relationship in which he would play the role of a patron to a number of clients with the promise that he would be able to get things done by his patron dulabhāi for his own clients who will also be indirectly linked up with the patron of their patron. In addition, his direct linkage and intimate relationship with the V.C. will provide him with an opportunity to establish exchange relationships with some of the guardians of the would-be students of the university because he will be able to secure admissions of these students by manipulation.
Matrimonial alliance when motivated by political consideration plays a significant part in facilitating the growth of patron-clientage between the members of the families who are affinally connected with each other. When the marriage is largely considered as a family affair, the fathers who are already in politically important positions or are eager to reach them often try to arrange marriages of their sons and daughters with the families which have larger networks of kinship ties and whose members would accept the positions of clients, often playing the role of dalals (brokers). Similarly, those fathers who want to secure patronage of some powerful ruling elite members try to establish matrimonial connections with the families of these elite members and become clients with the assurance that they would provide strong political support to their affinally related patrons when such political support is needed by them. Some of them will also be able to act as dalals to their patrons in the expansion of their patron-client networks. For example, in Rajshahi town, the recent matrimonial alliance between A. Hossain's family and K. Ahmed's family allows us to see how the matrimonial alliance has facilitated the growth of patron-clientage between a politically important and powerful family and a rising trading family. However, it is necessary to point out that the patron-client relationship, in this situation, is not only limited to the two families involved in a matrimonial alliance, but also extends to the families of some of their kindred. A. Hossain is a politically important man; he is one of the vice-presidents of the ruling Awami League at the national level. He is politically mobile and has close
connections with the ruling elites, both at local and national levels. His son, Z. Hossain is an advocate at the local bar and an aspirant to a political position. He is not yet married; but his father is trying to get him married to a family which would be of some help to him as well as to his son in the fulfilment of their political ambitions. K. Ahmed, on the other hand, is a rising trader; he deals in spices and cosmetics on a wholesale basis. He is very eager to build up a large-scale business and hence is badly in need of patronage in the form of licences and permits. Although K. Ahmed through his wholesale business has created a group of clients who are mostly engaged in retail trade, he and his family members do not mind becoming clients to a politically influential family or an individual who will help them in securing licences and permits and give them political protection. In return, they are ready to work for their patrons in securing more and more potential clients and to provide political support when such support is needed by their patron(s). For some time, K. Ahmed was thinking about the possibility of a marriage between his daughter and A. Hossain's son. So he and his family took the initiative to have a matrimonial alliance with A. Hossain's family. A ghatak was engaged. He began to make frequent visits to the house of A. Hossain and ultimately made the proposal for a marriage between A. Hossain's son, Z. Hossain, and K. Ahmed's daughter, Nasrin Begum, and arranged a meeting between the two fathers. A. Hossain and his family could see the benefit of such a matrimonial alliance in the form of political support from K. Ahmed's family, his kindred's families and a good number of his clients. Thus on the basis of mutual expectation of services and support the marriage took place.
Now that the two families have already been connected with each other through affinal kinship bond, K. Ahmed and his family have accepted the position of client to A. Hossain and his family. In this particular example, the wife-giving family can be seen to be in a politico-economically inferior position to the wife-receiving family. From the above case one should not, however, assume that the wife-receiving family is always superior to the wife-giving family. There may well be cases where because of a superior politico-economic position, a wife-giving family may play the role of patron to a wife-receiving family. Moreover, the wife-giving and wife-receiving families may be of comparable politico-economic standing and develop a horizontal type of relationship.

Thus being in positions of clients, K. Ahmed and some of his family members are getting help from A. Hossain and his family in securing profitable licences and permits from the authority in charge of actual distribution of those privileges. This situation has led K. Ahmed and some of his family members to develop an exchange relationship within the framework of patron-clientage or horizontal alliance with some bureaucratic elite members who are in charge of the issuing of permits and licences. They offer these bureaucrats some material benefits usually in the form of gifts in exchange for licences and permits. But the important point is that this exchange relationship has also been facilitated by the affinal kinship bond existing between A. Hossain's family and K. Ahmed's family because K. Ahmed and some of his family members' access to the bureaucratic elite members was possible because of the recommendation of A. Hossain and a few of his family members who have close linkages with these bureaucrats.
In return for all these favours from A. Hossain and some of his family members, K. Ahmed and some of his family members working as agents, have been successful in recruiting some political clients and thereby ensuring some amount of political support to A. Hossain and his politically aspirant son, Z. Hossain. This has, no doubt, strengthened their political position in the town. As A. Hossain's patronage has created immense opportunities for K. Ahmed to accumulate plenty of money, he is often seen to provide A. Hossain with financial support for his political campaign. But the financial support from a client to a political leader for political purposes does not alter the previous pattern of patron-clientage between them. The client has to do it for the continuance of his patron's influential position, with which his larger interest in the accumulation of money is intimately tied up.

Now it may be worth comparing the caste-like and socio-economic group affiliation of the father of the wives of the elite members with that of their own father because this will enable us to see the extent of mobility in matrimonial alliance between different groups. The following table shows the caste-like group affiliation of the father of the elite members as well as the father of the elite members' wives:
TABLE 3

Muslim elite's father's caste-like group affiliation classified by that of their wife's father. (Figures in percentage).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elite's wife's father's caste-like group affiliation</th>
<th>Elite's father's caste-like group affiliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sharif or Ashraf (26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharif or Ashraf</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atraf</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arzal or Azlaf</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note: 10 unmarried Muslim elite members have been excluded from the table. In three cases where the elite members have two wives each, only their first wife has been included in the table. In all three cases, the second wife comes from the Atraf caste-like group).

The table demonstrates three important facts. First, a vast majority of the elite sons of Atraf fathers have brought their wives from the women of Atraf parentage. Secondly, a good proportion of the sons of the Atraf fathers have become successful to marry the daughters of the sharif fathers. Thirdly, a higher proportion of the sons of the Arzal fathers have married the daughters of the Atraf fathers, but an insignificant proportion of them have married the daughters of the Sharif fathers.

However, the predominance of the wives coming from Atraf parentage does not mean that the elite members of the Atraf fathers want to marry the daughters of the Atraf fathers because our data suggest that these elite members, except a few, tried to secure wives from the Sharif parentage but could not find a woman from that group whose membership was gradually getting restricted due to degeneration.
It may be interesting now to classify the elite's father's socio-economic group affiliation by that of their wife's father to see the degree of mobility in matrimonial alliance between different socio-economic groups. The table given below shows the pattern.

**TABLE 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elite's wife's father's socio-economic group affiliation</th>
<th>Elite's father's socio-economic group affiliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Old generation declining elite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old generation declining elite</td>
<td>(26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparatively senior new elite</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New elite</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maddhabitta</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nimnabitta</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note: In one case the second wife comes from the maddhabitta category, but in other two cases they come from an elite group. See also the note below Table 3, p.194.

Data in the above table clearly show that a vast majority of elite members of maddhabitta parentage (i.e. 76%) have secured their wives from among the daughters of the maddhabitta fathers. This suggests that the Muslim elite members are predominantly involved in affinal kinship ties with the people of the maddhabitta category which is also the main base of their own recruitment.
To explain the predominance of wives coming from the maddhabitta category, it may be said that many of these elite members were already married before they could reach their present elitist positions. Moreover, with the partition of Bengal in 1947 and the subsequent exodus of Hindu elite members, many Muslims came to occupy elitist positions. A good number of these newly emerged elite members who were not married earlier could not find sufficient number of wives of elite patronage because, before the partition, there were not many Muslim elite members to meet the demand for wives of many of these elite members. As a result, many of them had no alternative but to have their wives from the maddhabitta category. In addition to this, prevalence and preference for cousin-marriage had, to some extent, contributed to the process of recruitment of wives from the maddhabitta category because some elite members who were indebted to their maternal or paternal uncles belonging to the maddhabitta category for their help, especially financial help, when they were not in elitist positions married their cousins. However, in a very limited number of cases (i.e. 6 cases) they were also financially and otherwise helped by the elite brothers of their wives before they could come to their present elitist positions.

However, some elite members of maddhabitta parentage (i.e. 18%) were successful in recruiting their wives from among the daughters of the old generation declining elite

42. See pp.181-85
members who belong to the Sharif caste-like group.

It is interesting to note that the number of wives coming from the nimnabitta parentage is very insignificant. This has happened because most of the fathers of the women belonging to this socio-economic group have neither politico-economic power nor higher caste-like group status to attract the elite members to marry their daughters. Those few elite members who have their wives from the nimnabitta category married the daughters of their kinsmen who gave them financial support when they were in colleges or universities.

The table also demonstrates that a very high proportion of elite members descending from elite or old generation declining elite parentage have secured their wives from among the women of elite parentage. This is possibly an indication that the elite members prefer to exchange women among themselves when the demographic factor of non-availability of prospective marital partners does not intervene and when the preference for cousin marriages is not so strong as to alter the pattern radically. This happens possibly because of the urge of elite members for extending the network of matrimonial alliance among themselves, so that they may remain connected with each other both from kinship and politico-economic considerations and thereby achieve each other's co-operation in their activities in the community.

Our data show that 95% of the Muslim married elite members are in favour of their daughters' and sons' marriages in elite families, but the remaining 5% think that the marital partners should be well qualified, no matter whether they belong to the elite or non-elite families. The data also show that 82% of the unmarried elite members (i.e. 10) prefer to marry in the elite families or daughters of elite fathers.
The above statement does not, however, mean that there is no conflict between the elite members interlocked in a network of affinal kinship ties. There is no denying of the fact that there is conflict between matrimoniaally connected elite members. But the point is that such a conflict can develop only after the matrimonial alliance has been established because if conflict develops between the elite members negotiating for the matrimonial alliance and no way is found for a reconciliation, the negotiation is dropped and the question of affinal ties does not arise. However, in a normal situation, both the wife-giver and wife-receiver always think in terms of co-operative exchange relationship with each other.

**Hindu Marriage:**

The aims of Hindu marriage are said to be *dharma* (religious duty), *proja* (progeny) and *rati* (sexual pleasure). Though sex is one of the functions of marriage, it is given a third place, indicating thereby that it is the least desirable aim of marriage. There are certain rites which must be performed for marriage to be complete. The main rites are *homa* (offering in the sacred fire), *panigrahana* (taking the hands of the bride) and *saptapadi* (the bride and bridegroom going seven steps together). All these rites are performed by a Brahman in the presence of the sacred fire and are accompanied by the Vedic *mantras*. Thus Hindu marriage is a sacrament. It is considered as such because it is said to be complete only on the performance of the sacred rites accompanied

43. For a detailed discussion on this issue, see p.185
by the sacred formulae. The Hindu marriage is, at least theoretically, irrevocable as it is sacred and not a civil contract. The parties to the marriage cannot dissolve it at will through divorce. The husband and wife are tied to each other until the end of one's life by death and the wife is supposed to be spiritually bound up to the spirit of the husband.

Traditionally in Hindu marriage, the husband and wife were not treated equally in their obligations and privileges. There was obvious discrimination made in their responsibility toward each other and for sustaining the marriage. The ideals of pati-bhokti (full devotion to husband) and pati-devota (angel-like image of husband to wife) not only implied fidelity to the husband, devoted service to the husband and some sort of worshipping of the husband, but made her fully dependent on the husband for her welfare in this and in the after-world. Her concern in life, at least in theory, was to see that all services needed by her husband were properly performed by her, the satisfactions of her husband were being her joy of life. Again, theoretically as the husband was the centre of her activities and interests in life, there was no question of her raising a word against him. But nowadays there are some important changes in the traditional relationship between a Hindu husband and his wife, especially regarding the traditional ideals of pati-bhokti and pati-devota in the sense that the husband's superiority over his wife is largely governed by the socio-economic superiority of the former to the latter, who is highly dependent upon her husband for protection and economic support. This has created a situation in which the ideals of pati-bhokti and pati-devota have largely
lost their traditional force, especially in urban areas. This has happened possibly because of certain changes in traditional Hindu values regarding marriage and marital relations between the husband and wife.\textsuperscript{44} Thus a Hindu wife because of her economic dependence on her elite or non-elite husband has to play the role of a client to the latter. The wife as a client secures economic support and some other material and non-material benefits in exchange for her services and loyalty to her husband. The traditional ideals of \textit{pati-bhokti} and \textit{pati-devota} as well as mutual attachment and emotional involvement between the husband and wife strengthen this patron-client tie.

In Rajshahi, as elsewhere in Bangladesh, each elite and non-elite Hindu is a member of a named marriage-restricting group; it is larger than a village or a small town and usually represents only a part of the village's or town's population. This refers to his \textit{jati} (caste) which does not necessarily mean a corporate group. In every caste, there is a specifiable set of families within an area in which they live. Each such group is known as a \textit{samaj} which actually enforces the marriage rules of its member families. There is strict sanction against the violation of marriage rules as upheld by the \textit{samaj} which is constituted by the families belonging to the same caste, but not necessarily to the same \textit{gotra}. In fact, in most cases, each \textit{samaj} contains a good proportion of families coming from different \textit{gotras}. Thus for any given village or town, the geographical distribution

\textsuperscript{44} See The Hindu Marriage Act of 1955, Govt. of India; see also Kapadia, \textit{op.cit.}, p.174.
of the marriage circle of any caste is - in principle at least - independent of that of any other caste. Although marriage rules may vary from caste to caste, the Hindus of different castes practise the system of arranged marriage as the Muslims do.  

However, the search for a bride or a bridegroom is complicated by the involved rules relating to caste, gotra or bangsho. The main feature of these rules, except with regard to caste, is the requirement of exogamy. Each caste is an endogamous group. That is, a Brahman must marry a Brahman, a Kayastha a Kayastha, and so on.  

The rule of caste endogamy is required to be followed strictly; and the samaj is there to enforce these rules, and violations are generally punished by ostracism. The violation of this rule amounts to either hypergamous or hypogamous marriages which are never accepted as a normal pattern of marriage.  

Sometimes it is said that a Hindu marriage must take place within the kin-group in the sense that all the members of the same caste are related to each other and descendants of the same founding ancestor or a small group of continuously intermarrying ancestors who have always shared a common set of beliefs and practices.  

This is undoubtedly a controversial point because a caste group is hardly treated as a kin group, at least by most of the Hindus in Rajshahi. The main reason advanced by them is that a caste group is geographically so dispersed and consists of such a large number of population that it is hard to consider a caste a kin group, although

45. See pp. 186-87.
47. Klass, M. 'Marriage in Bengal', American Anthropologist, 68, Nos. 4-6, 1966, p. 959.
there is a vague idea about the founding ancestor or ancestors of a caste group. Hence caste endogamy does not presuppose that all Hindu marriages take place within the kin group. But except for the prohibited kin, marriage can take place within other permissible kin groups. There is no strict rule which forbids marriage to affines, but matches with closer relatives by a close kinsman's marriage are generally discouraged, though it may happen. Thus two brothers may marry two sisters, or a brother and a sister may marry a pair of siblings. But the extensity of prohibitory regulation, regarding marriage between kindred is so pervasive that ego is forbidden to take his wife from many of his kindred. Unlike the Muslims and Hindus in some other parts of India in Rajshahi, as elsewhere in Bangladesh, the Hindus are forbidden to marry their agnatic and uterine relations. The actual marriage rule is that a person must not take his wife from his gotra or bangsho, and must also avoid marriage with the children of his mother's siblings and cousins and the children of his father's male and female cousins.

48. This contrasts with the prevalence of relation marriage among the Hindus of some parts of India. According to Karve: "The matrilineal cross-cousin marriage ... is not a compulsory form of marriage among Rajputs but it is quite frequent and is mentioned in many stories about the ruling houses of Rajputana, Kathiaward and Gujarat". (Karve, I., Kinship Organization in India, Poona, 1953, pp.142, 144).
For a detailed discussion of the prevalence of relation marriage (i.e., uncle-niece marriage and matrilateral cross-cousin marriage) among South Indians, see Karve, ibid., p.228.
In all the caste groups, cousin-marriage is considered to be sinful even if the cousins are removed from each other by three or four degrees. Our field data demonstrate that out of 33 Hindu elite members, none have brought their wives from families with which their families could trace any agnatic and uterine kinship ties. But 4 elite members have brought their wives from the families with which their families have previous affinal ties. In one case, there is a direct exchange of sister between two elite members and in another case, an elite member has married the daughter of his maternal uncle's wife's brother. The practice of caste endogamy and gotra exogamy and prohibitions on and discouragement of certain relation marriage have in fact dispersed the wife-giving and wife-receiving families in various parts of the district and often in different districts. In fact, caste endogamy simultaneously performs two functions. In the first place, it extends the affinal kinship network and exchange relationships of a man with his affines to geographically dispersed areas. This, of course, puts some sort of limitation on his frequent interaction with the latter. Our data show that out of 33 Hindu elite members, 24 have brought their wives from other districts and the remaining 9 have secured their wives from their home district. Secondly, it keeps the game of exchange of women limited to the caste group and thereby stops the possibility of the spread of affinal kinship ties between different caste groups. This means that the Hindu affinal kinship network is socially narrow. But if we look at the affinal network of the Muslim elite members, it gives a contrasting picture in the sense
that the Muslim network is geographically narrow but socially dispersed. Our data show that out of 287 married Muslim elite members, 275 have brought their wives from their home district and the remaining 12 have secured their wives from other districts. Moreover, because of the prevalence of matrimonial alliances between different caste-like groups, the Muslim affinal network has become socially dispersed.

Once dowry was a necessary component in a Hindu marriage. It was locally known as the *pan-protha* (dowry system). At that time, it was hardly possible for the father to dispose of his daughter without dowry. The system is that a certain agreed-upon amount must be paid to the father or guardian of the bridegroom before the *bibaha montras* (marriage formulae) are recited by a Brahman. It used to express the inferiority of the wife-giving family vis-a-vis the wife-receiving one. But today this type of attitude is no more because: first, the socio-economic factor determines the superiority-inferiority (not in caste and kinship terms) of the involved families; and secondly, the system has undergone certain changes in that it is not a necessary component in the marriage. Many fathers can dispose of their daughters, especially when the daughters are well qualified, without any dowry. However, the making of gifts to the bridegroom and the bride and the exchange of prestations between the wife-giving and wife-receiving families are both present. The pattern is more or less the same as found among the Muslims. 49

Inter-caste marriage is very limited. It is never treated as a normal pattern of marriage.\textsuperscript{50} Caste endogamy is more or less strictly maintained by the Hindus in Bangladesh, irrespective of their higher or lower caste affiliation. One of the important factors working as an effective deterrent to inter-caste marriage is the fear of informal punishment in the form of social ostracism and expulsion from the samaj and caste group, and the practice of tajjaya-putra and tajjaya-kanya (the expelling of a son or daughter and the severing of all connections with him or her by their parents). Moreover, the existing restrictions on social interaction and commensality (though weakened by Western forces)\textsuperscript{51} and prohibitions on entry into inner-house and rooms, especially bed and dining rooms and kitchens of one caste group by the other create certain practical difficulties in inter-caste marriage, especially marriage between the higher and the lower castes. Although among the educated section of Hindu population in urban areas there is some sort of laxity of restrictions on commensality and free-mixing due to the necessity of socio-economic and political interaction between members of different caste groups, the motive is not to break the barrier on inter-caste marriage. In fact, they do not want the end of caste endogamy. Our data demonstrate that all the Hindu elite members, except only two, are of the opinion that caste endogamy is essential for practical reasons and it should not be disturbed in any way. The

\textsuperscript{50} See Vatuk, S., \textit{op.cit.}, p.92.
\textsuperscript{51} Chapter 4 contains a discussion on this point.
question of inter-caste marriage is very much connected with the hypergamous and hypogamous types of marriage. In a hypergamous marriage, a bride is recruited from a lower caste group by a man belonging to a higher caste group; but in a hypogamous marriage, the bride's caste is higher than that of the bridegroom. The existence of hypergamous marriage in different parts of India has been mentioned by various authors. Thus, Bouglé says,

"Many families seek husbands for their daughters in higher castes; 'hypergamy' then overcomes endogamy".\(^52\)

Karve also mentions the existence of hypergamy among the higher castes in some parts of India when she says,

"The hypergamous marriage can exist without cross-cousin marriage as it does in fact in the case of certain Northern Brahman castes and among certain Gujarat castes and among Rajput themselves".\(^53\)

From the above quotations, it seems to me that the authors are speaking about Hindu cultures of certain areas which have accepted hypergamy within the fold of the normal pattern of marriage. And some northern Brahmans themselves are involved in such a network because this type of marriage gives them plenty of dowry on which they can make a good living. Thus a Brahman exchanges his higher caste status for a dowry through his marriage with a lower caste woman whose parents may feel elated for having a matrimonial alliance with a higher caste family. This may give them an honourable position in the community. But in Bangladesh the Hindu culture is opposed to hypergamy and hypogamy, and the samaj enforces sanctions against the violation of this rule.\(^54\) But, in spite of this fact, there are a few cases

\(^52\) Bouglé, C. 'The Essence and Reality of Caste System', Contributions to Indian Sociology, No.11, 1958, p.25.

\(^53\) Karve, op.cit., p.144.

\(^54\) See pp.200-1.
of hypergamous and hypogamous marriages among the Hindus of Rajshahi as elsewhere in Bangladesh. Because this is a deviant form, the two partners in this type of marriage take the initiative and a few of the bridegroom's friends help them in this matter. In most of these cases, the bride and bridegroom are seen to be emotionally involved with each other. In this situation, because no Brahman will be available to bind the couple together through Hindu marriage rites and rituals they are forced into a court-marriage or civil marriage where a magistrate, in the presence of some witnesses, declares them married, according to law, provided both the partners are over 18 years of age.  

Our data show that out of 33 Hindu elite members, only 2 have married women from different caste groups. Khiro K. Ray, a Kayastha by caste and a rich mango trader, has married Kumudini, the daughter of N.N. Bagchi, a Brahman by caste and a high school teacher in Natore town. The couple were emotionally involved and had to contract a civil marriage. They have been expelled by their respective families and have no connections with their samaj. This is an example of hypogamous marriage which has caused the expulsion of both the bride and bridegroom from their parents' families and their samaj as well as caste groups. In the second case, Paritosh Sen Gupta, a Baidya by caste, and an Associate Professor of Rajshahi Engineering College, has married the daughter of a Namasudra i.e., B.R. Das, a prominent lawyer of a neighbouring district town. The

55. Court-marriage can also be found among the Muslims in such a situation when the emotionally involved couple marry without the consent and against the will of their parents.
couple were also emotionally involved before marriage. This is a case of a hypergamous marriage. Also in this case it was never a normal Hindu marriage; and the couple had to have a court-marriage. The process of ostracism and expulsion is the same as has been mentioned above in the case of a hypogamous marriage.

In both the cases, the question of dowry as well as exchange of any prestation between the families of the two partners was ruled out because the family of the bride's parents and the family of the bridegroom's parents were not participants in this type of marriage. Consequently, no exchange relationships and affinal ties are established between these families. The couple are more or less free from any affinal kinship obligations. The above examples also show that the elitist positions of the bridegroom did not give them any advantage in escaping the sanctions of the samaj and family.

Like inter-caste marriage, inter-community marriage, especially marriage between the Hindus and Muslims, is highly discouraged by both the communities. The Hindus do not want their sons and daughters to marry a Muslim. From the point of view of Hindu dharma, it is a highly objectionable and a sinful act; and the violation of this restriction is treated as an act against dharma, caste, samaj and family.

The Muslim attitude, however, on this issue is guided by the consideration of religious conversion. Thus when a Muslim young man is involved with a Hindu girl, there is not much uproar in the family of the man if the girl belongs to a higher caste group and is converted to Islam prior to her
marriage. His community hardly objects to such a marriage, as by converting a Hindu girl to Islam and marrying her, he has helped in the spread of Islam; and he himself has acquired some religious virtues that will help him in future salvation. Similarly, a Muslim girl can easily marry a Hindu young man provided that he is converted to Islam before marriage. In both situations, only the Muslim partner's family and community participate in the marriage. The Hindu partner is immediately expelled from his or her father's family, samaj and caste group.

Although both Hindus and Muslims are against Hindu-Muslim marriage, there may be a few cases of such marriages (contracted in the court) in big cities where some amount of anonymity and secondary type of social relations prevail. But it is very difficult for a religiously mixed couple to live in rural areas and district towns because they will be socially ostracised by both the communities as violators of religious injunctions and cultural traditions. Our data do not show a single case of religiously mixed couple.

However, whereas the Muslim elite members are predominantly affinally connected with the maddhabitta category, the Hindu elite members have a large number of their affinal relatives in elite or old generation declining elite families belonging to their respective caste groups, except in two cases of elite members who have married women from caste groups other than their own. Because this deviant form of marriage does not lead to the establishment of affinal kinship ties between the families of the bride and the

56. See pp.207-8.
bridegroom, we have excluded them from the following table which shows the socio-economic group affiliation of the fathers of the Hindu elite members as well as that of their wives' fathers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elite's wife's father's socio-economic group affiliation</th>
<th>Elite's father's socio-economic group affiliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Old generation declining elite (20)</td>
<td>Comparatively senior new elite (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old generation declining elite</td>
<td>New elite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparatively senior new elite</td>
<td>Maddhabitta (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New elite</td>
<td>Nimnabitta (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maddhabitta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nimnabitta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The pattern shown in the above table can be explained by the fact that there were sufficient numbers of marriageable daughters of the old generation declining and comparatively senior new elites who once constituted the bulk of the elite members of the community. The table also demonstrates that 75% of the Hindu elite members of maddhabitta parentage have secured their wives from among the daughters of elite fathers. This suggests that, in spite of the fact that these elite members have descended from the maddhabitta fathers, their

57. See Chapter 2, p. 104.
elitist positions have enabled them to marry the daughters of the elite fathers. No elite members have taken a wife of new elite parentage because the daughters of the new elites have not yet come to marriageable age. Another point is that there is no wife of nimnabitta parentage. This happens because, as among the Muslims, the nimnabitta fathers have no politico-economic power to attract elite husbands for their daughters.

To conclude the section on Hindu marriage, it may be said that the process and functioning of the exchange relationship (i.e. patron-clientage and horizontal alliance) between affinal relatives created through a Hindu marriage are more or less the same as have been found among the Muslims. But unlike the Muslims among the Hindus the affines must come from the same caste group but not from the same gotra or bangsho as well as various categories of cousins. Like the Muslims, matrimonial alliances are often established between the Hindu elite members of the same caste for political purposes. But the incidence of this type of matrimonial alliance occurring within Rajshahi town is very low among the Hindu elite members because their matrimonial alliance is geographically dispersed, frequently transcending the community boundary and extending to other districts as the rules of caste endogamy, gotra or bangsho exogamy and prohibition on other relation-marriage impose limitation on exchange of women among the Hindu elite members of the town. Like the Muslims there may develop conflicts between the Hindu affines on various issues.
Before taking up the discussion on the fictive kinship, it may be fruitful to show the close kinship linkage of a few political leaders of the ruling party with the elite members of the community because this will give us some idea about the pattern of such a linkage. This kinship linkage may be helpful for the political leaders for the mobilization of political support and the formation of political alliance.\footnote{We shall discuss the role of kinship in the political process later in Chapter 7.} For limitation of space, we have given only the following three charts:
The Awami Jubo League

13 = A. Sattar, Executive Committee Member
12 = L. Hassan, President
11 = M. Ahmad, Director
10 = M. Uddin, Vice-President
9 = K. Kabir, Member
8 = Mahabuddin, Student Leader

5 = S. Hossain, Director
4 = S. Hossain, Contractor
3 = S. Hossain, Engineer
2 = A. Hossain, Trader
1 = A. Hossain, Lawyer

7 = Kabir Uddin Ahmed, Leader
6 = Mohiuddin, Proprietor, Engineering Firm
5 = T. Azad, Director, Co-operative Bank
4 = T. Azad, Manager, Trading Union Leader
3 = S. Hossain, Director
2 = A. Hossain, Trader
1 = A. Hossain, Lawyer

Ego = Mehboobuddin, General Secretary, District Awami League
Fictive Kinship:

Outside the actual kinship system there is a type of kinship structure which may be termed as fictive kinship. Fictive kinship has been found to be, to some extent, connected with the network of exchange relationship in the community. The concept of fictive kinship has received considerable attention in the social anthropological literature on Indi (Babb 1970; Berreman 1963; Freed 1963; Marriott 1955; Mayer 1960; Minturn and Hitchcock 1966; Vatuk 1969; Jay 1973) and elsewhere (Davila 1971; Edmonson 1966; Foster 1953; Ishino 1953; Mintz and Wolf 1950; Norbeck and Befu 1953; Okada 1957; Chapman 1971). In his study of 'Caste and Kinship in Central India', Mayer reports that in Malwa there are several forms of ritual kinship linking people as fictive brothers, sisters, brother and sister or father and daughter. Our main purpose here is to examine the role of fictive kinship in the interactive process of the elite members of the community. In some cases the relationship is established in the name of religion where the partners may not have to undergo any ceremonial rites. The growth of fictive kinship can be found in the event of its necessity in the marriage pattern of the Muslim community in Bangladesh. But when fictive kinship grows due to the emergence of 'ceremonial' friendship i.e., bandhutta.

59. For a detailed discussion, see Mayer, A.C. Caste and Kinship in Central India, London, 1960, pp.139-44.
60. The word 'ceremonial' has been adopted from E.J. Jay. According to this author, "The word 'ceremonial' has been chosen because this relationship is established by a definite type of ceremony and carries with it certain ritual obligations absent from ordinary friendship". See Jay, E.J. 'Bridging the Gap between Castes: Ceremonial Friendship in Chhattisgarh', Contributions to Indian Sociology, No.VII, 1973, p.144.
(friendship between two males) and shokhitta (friendship between two females) some type of ceremony attached to certain ritual obligations has to be performed to have an effective ceremonial friendship which largely differs from an ordinary informal type of friendship.

As regards the purpose of effecting such fictive kinship ties, our field data reveal that through these ties the partners along with their kindred can acquire certain benefits from each other. However, the rate of benefits a partner and his or her kinsmen get from the other partner and his or her relations varies according to the socio-economic positions of the partners and their relations. In most of the cases, the relationship assumes the character of a patron-client tie, reinforced by the bond of fictive kinship.

For example, analysis of the fictive kinship tie between dharma bap or ma (religious father or mother) and dharma chele or meye (religious son or daughter) shows that the relationship of patron-clientage develops between the partners on the basis of their superiority-inferiority along the socio-economic scale. If the relationship is established between a dharma bap and dharma chele or meye, the wife of the dharma bap automatically becomes the dharma ma of her husband’s dharma chele or meye. Similarly, a dharma ma’s chele or meye will be dharma chele or meye of her husband. The actual chele or meye if any of a dharma bap or ma will be bhai or boun (brother or sister) of his or her dharma chele or meye and therefore unable to marry the latter. The dharma bap or ma would be regarded as bhai or boun of the real bap or ma of his or her dharma chele or meye. Similarly, two individuals

61. These terms are common to the Hindus and Muslims.
can bind themselves as dharma bhai or dharma boun or dharma bhai-boun. Their parents would be regarded as each other's parents. There cannot be any marriage between a dharma bhai and dharma boun.

Although this type of fictive kinship is established in the name of religion, there is no formal religious ceremony attached to it and no moulvī or priest is required. It is simply a verbal religious commitment of the parties concerned. Thus the relationship is always temporary and can be terminated by any partner. But one may prefer to call it a simple informal religious ceremony in which the initiating party declares his wish in the name of religion to bind himself with another party and urges upon the latter to accept the proposal.

This type of fictive kinship is not popular among the elite members. Out of 330 elite members only 9 are involved in such a relationship. Most of the elite members think that the obligation effected through the tie is difficult to maintain; and moreover, it imposes a limitation on the normal range of exchange of women in the matrimonial alliance.

Fictive Kinship also develops through the Muslim marriage system in Bangladesh. It is a compulsory provision in the Muslim marriage that a married man should be found to act as an ukil (marriage pleader) for the bride. The ukil develops

62. This contrasts with the concepts of 'godparents' and 'godchild' of Milocca as described by Chapman because the relationship between the 'godparents' and a 'godchild' is established at the time of the birth of the child and assumes a permanent character in the sense that once the relationship is established, it can never be terminated by one party or the other. See Chapman, C.G. Milocca: A Sicilian Village, London, 1971, pp.115-17.
a fictive kinship tie with the bride and her parents' family and through the bride with the bridegroom and the members of his family of orientation. He becomes the ukil-bap (marriage pleading father) of the bride and the ukil-shashur (marriage pleading father-in-law) of her husband. The tie is extended to other members of the families of the involved parties. This type of fictive kinship tie is quite popular among the elite members of the community. Our data show that out of 287 married Muslim elite members, 200 have such fictive kinship ties. But interestingly enough, all the Muslim political leaders have such ties with a varying number of parties ranging from 5 to 10. To cite a specific example, K. Zaman, the Industries Minister, has 9 ukil-meyes (daughters by ukil relation) in the district. The political leaders find this a useful device to extend the horizon of their known arena for the mobilization of political support. And the parties connected through such fictive kinship ties are also able to seek favours from those political leaders in exchange for their support and services.

There is still another area where fictive kinship is effected through the system of bondhutta (establishment of ceremonial friendship between two males) and shokhitta (establishment of ceremonial friendship between two females). This type of ceremonial friendship is not the ordinary type of friendship that exists in the community. It is effected through negotiations and ceremonies and usually becomes the family affairs of the two partners. Initiative for effecting such a tie may be taken by the partners themselves or by their parents when the partners are children.63

63. See Jay, op.cit., pp.144-46.
In establishing ceremonial friendship in Rajshahi district, no moulvi or priest is required. It is the affairs of the two parties involved. When the whole negotiation has been completed, two feasts - one by each party - are arranged. Usually all the family members, some kinsmen and a few friends of both the parties are invited by them to witness the ceremony. It may take place at any time but most commonly is planned for a festival season. When the feasts are over and the ceremony is complete, the two partners are supposed to maintain cordial relationship with each other and to support each other in time of need. They always invite one another to life cycle rites and other important ceremonies occurring in their respective households. On ceremonial occasions, they often exchange gifts of some kind. Once the ceremonial friendship has been established, the partners must not address each other by given names. Instead they address each other by the words bondhu (used for the male) and shoi or shokhi (used for the female). They try to avoid offending each other, but it is hard to have this ideal situation, and sometimes difference of opinions create problems. However, there is always a sincere effort to adjust to each other's deficiencies. But when all attempts at adjustment fail, the friendship usually breaks down.

64. It is analogous to the finding of Jay in Chhattisgarh when he says, "The ritual establishing a ceremonial friendship is simple and is performed by the parties themselves without the aid of a pandit or other specialists". Ibid., p.147. But in Rajshahi district there is no exchange of any sacred things between the two partners. Of course, there are mutual exchanges of some gifts. This contrasts with the type of ceremony described by Mayer. Here the ceremony is performed by a Bairagi guru. See Mayer, op.cit., p.139.
In the case of married friends, the spouses of the ceremonial friends are required to assume more or less the same sort of obligations toward each other, even if the relationship was established prior to their marriage. Toward the spouse of a ceremonial friend, one's relationship is generally of cordial and joking type. The two ceremonial friends address each other's parents as father/mother and other kindred, according to prevailing kinship terminologies such as mama (maternal uncle), bhai (brother), apa or didi (sister) etc.

All obligations incurred by ceremonial friendship are supposed to be mutual within the framework of horizontal type of relationship. But there are instances of asymmetry because of friendship between the two partners having unequal access to wealth and power. However, the nature of these ties with their emotional warmth, mutual affective obligations, informality and other solidary qualities is more or less similar to the class of kinship relationships usually termed "friendly helpful" in the literature. In behavioural terms, it is warmer and more personal than kinship relations often turn out to be.

The ceremonial friendship may be regarded as a kind of fictive kinship because one's friend is: (a) invited to all of the life cycle rites and other household ceremonies to which kinsmen normally are invited, (b) expected to observe mourning upon one's death, (c) expected to observe a type of kinship relationship with respect to one's spouse, parents and other kindred, (d) required to provide gifts on ceremonial occasions and aid in time of need. Hence ceremonial
friendships are 'kinship' relationships established neither by birth nor by marriage, usually contracted with persons whom one could not count among kinsmen in any other sense.65

Although the establishment of ceremonial friendship is common among the general mass, especially in rural areas of the district, it is not popular with the elite members of Rajshahi town. Our data demonstrate that out of 330 elite members, only 12 have such friendship; and in 9 cases the tie was established through the initiative of the parents when they were minor. Most of the elite members think that ceremonial friendship creates such obligations as are often difficult to maintain in reality, and the non-fulfilment of these obligations by one party or the other or by both not only terminates the relationship but may give rise to conflicts and jealousies between two former ceremonial friends. Moreover, when ordinary friendship is potent enough to facilitate an exchange relationship, they do not find much need to have ceremonial friends.

Analysis of the fictive kinship ties discussed above reveals that material considerations play an important part and mutual expectations of material goods, services, support and allegiance predominate in giving rise to a kind of patron-client relationship in which the fictive kin-clients can have easy access to, and informal relationship with, their patrons. These clients approach their patrons for various kinds of help, favours and protection in exchange for their services and allegiance. As long as patronage flows to them, they

65. See Jay, E.J. op.cit.
allow themselves to be used by their patrons for achieving their own designs. However, it would be wrong to assume that the relationship is purely a materialistic one, and there is no existence of affectivity in it. In fact, because of the presence of an informal type of interaction, face-to-face contact, some affectivity and mutual attachment develop between the partners. This is manifested in the pattern of their behaviour to each other, as well as in their social interactions. The fictive kin-clients often can be seen to be highly dependent on their patrons and may not take any decision even in their family affairs without consulting the latter.

In the conclusion of this chapter, we may say that the kinship norms of both the Hindus and Muslims of Rajshahi and elsewhere in Bangladesh clearly show kinship status superiority or inferiority of one kin vis-a-vis the other, as well as more or less comparable kinship status of two kinsmen (i.e. between the father of the bride and the father of the bridegroom who address each other as beai). These kinship norms imply that a superior kin should be respected by an inferior kin who is to be shown affection by the former, even if, in some cases, the relationship may be of a cordial and joking nature. But when two kinsmen have more or less equal kinship status, they are expected to show respect to each other and behave with each other as more or less equal partners in kinship terms. These kinship norms often define the mutual obligations of the kinsmen. Thus the system of values or norms and positions in the Hindu-Muslim kinship structure ideally provide a patron-client model in the
exchange relationship of the kinsmen in which the superior kin will play the role of a patron to the inferior one. But our study suggests that the kinship system can provide such a model as long as the factor of socio-economic differential of the partners does not intervene. When such a factor is taken into consideration, the socio-economically superior partner assumes the role of patron to the inferior one, no matter whether he is superior or inferior to the latter in kinship status. However, the kinship norms influence the behaviour pattern of the partners because a superior kin should be shown respect by the inferior one, even if the latter is a patron to the former. Although the marriage pattern of the Hindus is different from that of the Muslims in both the communities marriage facilitates the emergence and expansion of the network of exchange relationship between affinal kinsmen. But among the Hindus, the exchange relationship between the affines is limited to their respective caste groups because of the restriction on inter-caste marriage. On the other hand, the Muslims, being largely free from any strict restriction on inter-caste-like group marriage, have networks of exchange relationships with their affinal kindred, coming from various caste-like groups. The affinal network of the Hindu elite members is geographically dispersed, but socially narrow, whereas the pattern is reversed for their Muslim counterparts. Generally, in both the communities the exchange of women is considered as a part of a series of exchanges between the wife-giving and wife-receiving families. While cousin-marriage is freely practised by the Muslims, the Hindus regard it as a sinful act. In both the communities, a husband's socio-economic
superiority to his wife enables him to play the role of a patron to the latter. Most of the Hindu elite members have recruited their wives from elite parentage, whereas most of their Muslim counterparts have brought their wives from non-elite maddhabitta parentage.

In both the Hindu and Muslim communities the predominance of the joint family system, or joint household, creates a congenial atmosphere for the emergence of the patron-client tie between the politico-economically powerful members and the members having little or no such power. The presence of the 'domestic cycle' in the family or household on the one hand, breaks up the old networks of exchange relationships, but on the other hand, facilitates the emergence of new ones.

Normally the kinship networks facilitate the growth, expansion and functioning of the exchange relationship. But when an elite member becomes involved in a conflict with one or more of his kinsmen, no exchange relationship can develop between them as long as such a conflict continues; and the previous exchange relationship is terminated. Moreover, this conflict often induces both the conflicting parties to look for exchange relationships with other parties which will give them support against their kin opponents.

Lastly, we may say that the prevailing system of fictive kinship also facilitates the growth and expansion of exchange relationship between two or more fictive kinsmen. The nature of this exchange relationship and the factors determining the positions of the involved parties are more or less the same as in the actual kinship system. However, the establishment of certain types of fictive kinship imposes restriction on marriage between fictive kindred, and such ties are rare among the elite in Rajshahi.
CHAPTER 4
Caste Systems

We have divided this chapter into two parts. The first part deals with the Hindu caste system, and the second one is concerned with the caste-like system among the Muslims. Our aim in this chapter is to examine how the Hindu caste phenomenon and the Muslim caste-like system enter into the interactive process and the network of exchange relationships of the elite members of the community. We shall begin our discussion by examining the Hindu caste system.

Hindu Caste System:

In the community there is a process of change in the caste system because of various factors, which we shall discuss later, in the direction of standardization of the behaviour pattern of various caste groups in some respects; and this has gone a long way to introduce a good deal of flexibility in the traditional rigid caste structure. Some old caste ideals are giving way to new ways of life as demanded by the changing politico-economic structure of the society; and the scope of traditional caste rules and practices is gradually getting limited to some socio-cultural aspects such as kinship, family, marriage etc. The application of rigid caste rules in politico-economic structure is losing its grounds. In this arena members of various caste groups are guided mainly by material considerations and political strategy, and the caste rules and practices which are antithetical to such objectives are generally put aside. And this process has created a congenial situation for the reduction of the structural distance and corresponding increase in the degree of interaction between various caste
groups. Thus there are certain changes in the life-style of the members of these caste groups due to the impact of the changing politico-economic condition of the community which has given rise to a type of exchange relationship that frequently cross-cuts the caste boundary. This new relationship brings some standardization in the pattern of behaviour of the involved parties coming from different caste groups. Thus the Hindu elite members recruited from various caste groups are often seen to make a common cause to maintain their privileged positions. Here their behaviour is largely governed by the fact that they belong to the same elite group in a broader sense. Similarly, two elite members of the same caste may be involved in a conflict over certain issues affecting their power and privileges. But the process of standardization does not mean the end of the caste identity of the Hindus. True, in many spheres of their interactions amongst themselves as well as with other non-elite Hindus coming from different caste groups, the elite members do not give much importance to some traditional caste rules and practices such as restrictions on contacts, the concept of pollution, rules relating to commensality etc., but in some other spheres, especially on the question of marriage, they follow the rule of caste endogamy quite rigidly.\(^1\)

However, that the training, orientation and the schooling of the elite members weaken caste rules and practices in some spheres mentioned earlier cannot be denied. But in spite of these changes and flexibility, the caste system with its hierarchical arrangement has not disappeared.

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1. See Chapter 3, p.201.
In the introduction of the caste system, we have talked about caste and its changing pattern but have not yet discussed the concept of caste and the factors causing certain changes in the system. First, we shall take up the problem of the concept of caste and then try to spell out the factors responsible for the changes in caste practices. There is a controversy on the concept of caste among various scholars.² We shall not, however, enter into the discussion of this controversy which is still being debated. However, traditionally the concept of caste implies, in the first place, the idea of hereditary specialization i.e., the occupation of the father must pass on to his son. Secondly, it refers to the existence of hierarchy which means that people are given ritually superior and inferior positions, attached to the unequal distribution of privileges, rights and obligations, along the social ladder. Thirdly, there are restrictions on the contracting of alliance between the members of different caste groups. These three ideas are found in most of the definitions of caste. After listing the criteria of caste as: (a) hereditary occupations; (b) separation in matters of marriage and contact whether direct or indirect; (c) division of labour each having in theory or by tradition a profession from which its members can depart only within certain limits; and (d) ... a hierarchy which ranks the groups as relatively superior or inferior to one another,³ Dumont speaks of the nature of

³ Ibid., p.57.
Indian ideology by suggesting that holism and purity-impurity underlie the hierarchy of castes. These two factors are the problematic of caste ideology; they are taken as given as the "real" foundation of caste organization. He further argues that ritual status is derived from the principle of hierarchy, the opposition of pure and impure.

From the above discussion, it seems to me that if we insist on the presence of all the above-mentioned criteria, we are faced with great difficulty in classifying a particular group or individual under a specific caste heading because it is hard to find any group fully conforming to these criteria, and because deviations from caste principles have taken place to a significant scale. For example, there have been important changes in the occupational criterion because with the introduction of some elements of commercial economy in the urban sector of the society by the British rule and the subsequent rise of various groups of indigenous elites, white collar employees and workers coming from various caste groups, the working of the principle of hereditary occupation has become very difficult. The Hindus, irrespective of their caste affiliation, came forward to take advantage of these new opportunities and positions which ensured higher politico-economic power but had nothing to do with their traditional occupation. Moreover, the Western economic influence has made the principle much more difficult to practise because sometimes old occupations have gone and new occupations have

5. Ibid., p.153.
come so rapidly that the decisions were not made on caste basis, but by individual, with the result that the members of a given caste have become occupationallly dispersed.\(^7\)

Furthermore, modern technology is so complex that many occupations require elaborate education and training which cannot be supplied by one's parents or given to people below certain capacity. Entrance into such occupations cannot be purely on the basis of birth.

Moreover, because of the intervention of demographic factors, the criterion of hereditary occupation can hardly be fully maintained. To have each caste performing its own unique occupation and occupying the same rung generation after generation, a uniform rate of population replacement would be necessary for each and every caste group. But the very notion of caste implies that there are different caste customs, and some of these customs will unavoidably affect fertility and mortality, and hence natural increase.\(^8\)

Some castes will expand in population and others will contract. For those that expand some new occupations must be found, because their increased membership could not find employment in the old. For those that contract, replacement from other castes must be found to carry on the occupation.\(^9\) Moreover, when many occupations, mostly artisans, are overwhelmingly identified with particular castes, the main occupation - agriculture - is open to all. There have always been soldiers who were not Kshatriyas, government servants have been of

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8. For a detailed discussion on this point, see Davis, K. The Population of India and Pakistan, Princeton University Press, 1951, pp.73-74.
various castes. There are instances where the whole caste group has discarded their traditional occupation.

Our data show that in Rajshahi town there is large-scale violation of the criterion of hereditary occupation. In this town most occupational groups are composed of people from various castes and communities. Even in elitist positions, there are people from different caste groups. The provision of reserved seats for some members of lower castes in some government jobs has, to some extent, facilitated the process of break-down of the myth of hereditary occupation.

In the field of caste endogamy, there is a little change. The practice of caste endogamy is highly valued by the Hindus in Rajshahi and other parts of Bangladesh. Although some Western educated Hindus in Rajshahi town claim that inter-caste marriage is increasing, it cannot be shown empirically, even among the Hindu elite members of the community.

The criterion of restriction on contact between various caste groups, especially the contact between the higher and lower castes, cannot be fully maintained. Our data demonstrate that there is some amount of interaction between different caste groups in socio-economic and political arenas in the form of co-operation, conflict and exploitation. This has largely weakened the concept of pollution. In fact, when

10. See Census of India, 1911; see also Meillassoux, op.cit.
12. See Klass, M. 'Marriage in Bengal', American Anthropologist, 68, Nos.4-6, 1966; see also Vatuk, S. Kinship and Urbanization, University of California Press, 1972, pp.91-92.
the question of material gain and acquisition of political power becomes dominant, the consideration of caste restriction on contact and the concept of pollution are generally pushed aside. However, even today a few orthodox Brahman priests can be seen to undergo purificatory rites to eliminate the polluting effect if they happen to have physical contact with some lower and lowest caste people, especially the untouchables.

If commensality is considered, in the traditional system the unit of commensality was defined quite elaborately and rigidly in terms of caste affiliation. But in recent decades there has been gradual expansion of this unit and frequent violation of the rules regarding commensality has become a common practice with many in their city life. However, in a semi-urbanized town like Rajshahi, the rules regarding commensality are to some extent maintained, at least by some Hindus, though the violations are commonly observed. But if possible the higher caste Hindus try to avoid inter-dining with, or taking cooked food from the lower and lowest caste people. However, in rural areas of the district the commensality rules are more strictly observed because of fear of ostracism and family pressure. But interestingly enough, most higher caste Hindu elite members, even some elite Brahmans do not give much importance to commensality rules when they interdine with Muslim elite

members because it facilitates the process of their interactions and networks of exchange relationships in político-economic spheres.

In addition to the above-mentioned changes in the traditional concept of caste, there are other forces generated by Western thoughts and largely introduced by the British rulers which have weakened the rigidity of the caste system.

The British Government was responsible for the introduction of Western education which serves as an avenue of individual advancement, on the theory that productive achievement is to be rewarded with enhancement of status. In so far as it has gained ground in Bengal and other parts of India, it has tended, at least partially, to work against the perpetuation of rigid caste system.19

One important effect of the British administration in India was to remove much of the legal autonomy that once played a very important role in the socio-political system of India. Since the stronghold of caste was the isolated and nearly self-sufficient rural areas where caste and village panchayats used to govern most of life, the British effort for the centralization of government adversely affected the structural-functional arrangements of the caste system.20

Another significant step against the caste system was the introduction of many aspects of the British legal structure in India. This led to the dissolution of the Brahman’s traditional legal monopoly. Another change was the unwillingness of the British-introduced law courts to take notice of,

19. For an elaborate discussion on this point, see Sharp, H. Selection from the Educational Records, part 1, 1835, pp.112-117; 'T.B. Macanlay Minute', dated Feb.2, 1835; and Davis, K., op.cit., p.171.
or enforce rules giving jurisdiction or power to castes as such. Consequently, the Calcutta caste cutchery was abolished. The introduction of the British legal system was possibly necessary for the British rulers to facilitate or protect their economic interest, which might not be possible if the legal power remained with the caste organizations. But more importantly, the very basis of caste, i.e., the inequality of human beings was shaken with the adoption of the Western principle of equality before law.

In the past, the caste panchayat had legal power to prevent violation of caste rules. But now the violators are not legally bound to abide by the decisions of the caste panchayat which has lost its power of legal sanction, though the fear of social ostracism induces them to obey a major part of the informal decisions of the caste-prodhans (headmen) in certain socio-cultural arenas such as kinship, marriage etc.

The growth of urbanization leading to the emergence of some degree of anonymity, mobility, secularism, high degree of congestion, problems of transport, and changeability of the city makes the operation of caste in a traditional sense very difficult.

Now a question may arise why the caste system (even in a modified form) based on the principle of the inherent inequality of human beings still remains in Hindu society where there are so many forces generated by Western thoughts and ideologies, opposed to the system. One of the important reasons for the persistence of the caste system is the settled

agricultural economy. While, like India, Bangladesh has seen the growth of cities and industries, to some extent it is still an agricultural area. As long as the village predominates, caste will be hard to eradicate. In addition, castes are showing a certain amount of adaptability to modern conditions. Since 1900 A.D. they have been forming caste samitis (associations) that use modern methods in pursuing the interests of the caste. Their main purpose is to further the general interests of the caste and particularly to guard its social status in hierarchy from actual or potential attacks of other castes, as well as to try to regulate certain customs of the caste. Although we have no statistics to show the proportion of Hindus favouring the persistence or disappearance of the caste system, our data show that most of the elite members of the community (i.e., 29 out of 33) do not want the total disappearance of the caste system, but they are not opposed to the modifications in certain caste rules such as the concept of pollution, hereditary occupation, commensality etc. Our finding does not lend support to Srinivas' opinion when he makes a general statement that

"in this country (India) only a small minority which is numerically insignificant but which may be - and probably is - powerful really desires that caste system ought to go".24

However, the emergence of status groups based on factors like education, occupation or profession and income has, to some extent, been successful in bringing about flexibility in some aspects of the traditional caste structure and inter-caste relations, but it could not take the individuals

constituting such status groups out of their caste identification and some of their caste practices; and above all, it could not in any significant way affect the system of inequality manifested in the ritual hierarchy as created and perpetuated by the caste system which is bound up with Hinduism and Hindu philosophy. This, in turn, gives positive support to the perpetuation of inequality in status, especially ritual status, and differential distribution of privileges through the doctrines of \textit{karma} and \textit{dharma}.\textsuperscript{25}

Here the question arises, how far is the ritual hierarchy in conformity with the politically-economic hierarchy? This question has been partially answered by Srinivas when he says

"... there is very broadly speaking, a coherence between the ritual and economic aspects of the caste hierarchy. That is, the higher castes are generally better off than the lower. Many local exceptions may be cited to the rule, but they do not seriously affect the validity of the general proposition".\textsuperscript{26}

Srinivas' statement found support in Broomfield's historical study of elite conflict in Bengal when he has shown that most of the members of the politically-economically powerful Hindu bhadralok belonged to the higher caste group i.e., Brahman, Kayastha and Baidya. Many of them were in elitist positions, and the people of the lower castes, except a few, were politically-economically handicapped.\textsuperscript{27} Our data from Rajshahi

\textsuperscript{25} The doctrine of karma suggests that the status of an individual in this life is nothing more than the result of his own deeds in his previous life (lives). The doctrine of dharma signifies that one's own duties as divinely assigned are preferable. See Ray, R. 'Caste and Political Recruitment in Bihar', in Kothari, R.(ed.) Caste in Indian Politics, Delhi, 1973, p.234.

\textsuperscript{26} Srinivas, M.N., \textit{op.cit.}, p.92.

are in conformity with the findings of both Srinivas and Broomfield. Most of the Hindu elite members belong to the higher caste groups and have much higher politico-economic power than the lower and lowest caste people who are in many cases dependent upon the former. But the problem becomes a bit complicated when individual caste groups (i.e., Brahman, Kayastha and Baidya) under the broad category of the higher caste or individual members of these caste groups are taken into consideration. The Brahman caste is at the top of the ritual hierarchy, followed by the Kayastha and Baidya. Thus, by virtue of their ritual superiority, the members of the Brahman caste should have the higher politico-economic power and privileges than their counterparts in other two caste groups. But our data do not lend any support to this proposition. The number of Kayasthas in elitist positions far exceeds that of the Brahmans in those positions. At the individual level, it is difficult to find any systematic pattern of relationship between the ritual caste status of an individual member and his possession of wealth and power. For example, a Brahman having highest caste status may be economically or politically inferior to a Kayastha or a Saha, or even a Namasudra. The consequences of this situation on the pattern of interactive process and networks of exchange relationships of the Hindu elite members will become evident later. However, the lack of coherence between the caste status and economic status of the Hindu elite members of Rajshahi town can be seen from the following table:

28. See Chapter 2, Table 12, p.100.
TABLE 1

Monthly income of the Hindu elite members classified by their caste affiliation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monthly income</th>
<th>Caste Affiliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brahman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 - 699</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>700 - 899</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>900 - 1099</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1100 - 1299</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1300 - 1499</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1500 - 1699</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1700 - 1899</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900 - 2099</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2100 and above</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is evident from the table that 2 elite members belonging to the Saha caste which comes under the broad category of the medium caste have much higher income than many elite members coming from higher caste groups. More significantly, even the lone elite member recruited from a lower caste (i.e. Namasudra) has a higher income than some Brahman, Kayastha and Baidya elite members.

In the preceding section we have talked about the higher and lower ritual positions of the caste groups without spelling out the concept and problem of caste hierarchy. Here we shall discuss the issue. Historically, the Indian term associated with caste is varna. According to this scheme, there are four varnas namely, the Brahman (Priests), the Kshatriyas (warriors), the Vaishyas (businessmen), and the Sudra (artisan-labourers). Outside these four are the outcastes or untouchables. In early Vedic times the term varna, which means colour, was applied only to the fair Aryan people to distinguish them from
the dark Dasa people or peoples. It did not then refer to caste as it did later. Theoretically, all four varnas existed in all parts of India, but in fact there are many places in Bengal as for example, Rajshahi district, where there is no existence of the Kshatriya. In ancient law books, each varna is endogamous, and its members could share water and food together. In reality, however, the restriction lines are far narrower. First of all, caste is tied to locality so that Bengal Brahmans and Kerala Brahmans will not intermarry. They may on some occasions share food, but it is doubtful whether they would exchange visits to their homes. Again, the Brahmans of each region are subdivided into a number of sub-caste groups.

Sometimes, the higher caste Hindus are grouped under a broad term "bhadralok" and the people belonging to the lower castes are relegated to the positions of "abhadra". However, the bhadralok is not a closed category because an elite member of a lower caste origin can easily move into it. This shows that these two broad categories are not strictly tied to caste affiliation. This type of grouping may possibly be helpful to the understanding of the interactive process between the Hindu elite and non-elite members on a broader perspective. But for a fruitful study of the interactive process among the members of various caste groups in a hierarchical arrangement, it would be necessary to find out the commonly accepted hierarchical ordering of various castes in Rajshahi town.

In the 1961 census of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) the Hindus of Rajshahi have been divided into: (i) Caste Hindus, and (ii) Scheduled Caste Hindus. In the first category, all the Hindus belonging to higher and medium caste groups have been included, while the second category consists of the Hindus having lower and lowest caste status. This classification is too broad to use in any meaningful sociological analysis of the problem of caste hierarchy. The only important point which can be seen through this division is that the Caste Hindus are hierarchically above the scheduled caste Hindus and the former group enjoys more social, economic and political power and privileges than the latter which is backward, depressed and exploited. Their backward condition often prompts the ruling elites who are predominantly Muslims to distribute some special privileges to them in the form of the reservation of a certain number of jobs in the government services, a few seats in various academic institutions, some student scholarships and stipends, and the issuance of a limited number of permits, licences and dealerships. The main purpose of these favours is not that the ruling elites feel any moral obligation to improve their conditions. It is rather a device by which they try to develop a patron-client type of relationship to secure the political support of this important section of the Hindu population which constitutes slightly more than one-fourth of the total Hindus of Rajshahi town.

However, for the purpose of our analysis we have prepared the following chart showing the hierarchical arrangement.

33. Ibid.
of various caste groups in the community with the present but flexible occupational status within the three broad categories of: (1) Caste Hindus, (ii) Scheduled Caste Hindus and (iii) Untouchables, showing their affiliation to higher, medium, lower and lowest caste groups:

**CHART 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Castes</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Caste Hindus</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brahman</td>
<td>Members of the priesthood, landholders, government and private servants, teachers, lawyers, businessmen, cultivators etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Caste</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayastha</td>
<td>Every description of respectable jobs: executive, judicial and police officers, landholders, traders, lawyers, cultivators etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baidya</td>
<td>Physicians (by hereditary occupation), all types of occupation open to men of education, cultivators etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saha</td>
<td>Traders, money-lenders, landholders, teachers, lawyers, doctors, bankers, cultivators etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Medium Caste</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basak</td>
<td>Weavers, traders, money-lenders, landholders, cultivators etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suvarna Banik</td>
<td>Gold traders, bankers, white-collar jobs, cultivators etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Scheduled Caste Hindus</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yogi</td>
<td>Weavers, landholders, government servants, cultivators etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Napit</td>
<td>Hair-cutting, grocers, small landholders, cultivators etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namasudra</td>
<td>Cultivators, small shop-keepers, petty landholders, government servants etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumar</td>
<td>Potters and makers of earthenware idols, cultivators etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamar</td>
<td>Blacksmiths, cultivators etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tati</td>
<td>Weavers, small landholders, cultivators etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teli</td>
<td>Oil-pressers and sellers, small shop-keepers, petty landholders, cultivators etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### CHART 1 (contd.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Castes</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dhopa</td>
<td>Washermen, cultivators, school teachers etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goala</td>
<td>Milkmen and cowherds, small landholders, cultivators etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Caste</td>
<td>Fishermen, boatmen, clerks, cultivators etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaibarta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajbangshi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bagdi</td>
<td>Labourers, fishermen, cultivators etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charal</td>
<td>Labourers, cultivators etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Untouchables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muchi</td>
<td>Shoe-repairers and procurers of dead cattle skins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowest Caste</td>
<td>Burning of dead bodies, cultivators etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chandal</td>
<td>Swineherds and sweepers, cultivators etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hari-dom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methor</td>
<td>Night-soil removers and latrine cleaners, sweepers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to our informants, the above chart reflects the prevailing pattern of caste hierarchy among the Hindus of Rajshahi town.

Thus, in Rajshahi town the Brahmans, Kayasthas and Baidyas, being members of the higher caste group enjoy maximum privileges. In the past the Brahmans were the dominant caste. They took the lead in social and civic movements and also led in education, but had not come to the forefront so much as the Kayasthas and Baidyas owing to the munificence of Rani Bhawani of Natore, who created many brahmośtara (revenue free estate to the Brahmans) that the Brahmans had not been impelled by the need to seek employment. 

From the above statement, it may be assumed that while the Brahmins kept themselves, to some extent, away from the new employment opportunities created by the British administration and remained at least initially content with their control over land, the Kayasthas and the Baidyas took the opportunity in full and came to occupy elitist positions in various occupational and professional groups. But the Baidyas could not compete with the Kayasthas in supplying an adequate number of eligible candidates because the number of Baidya families in Rajshahi was very limited. However, some Brahmins subsequently came to occupy elite positions in various occupational groups. By the time they began to move to newly created elite positions, the Kayasthas already occupied a large number of those posts. Thus the Kayasthas' predominance in elitist positions gave them an advantage over the members of the other two higher caste groups because they had higher control over the power structure and decision-making in the community. They became more dominant and powerful than their counterparts in the Brahman and Baidya castes, as their patron-client network with the British rulers were much more extensive than those of the Brahman and Baidya elite members. This helped them to gain more access to official resource-bases of patronage than the elite members of the other two caste groups. This higher access to official patronage resources, supplemented by their private resources such as lands, enabled them to develop an extensive patron-client network with the people from various castes and communities. However, the numerical superiority and dominant position of the Kayastha elite members do not mean that they were dominating over the elite members from the Brahman and Baidya castes.
because a few Brahman and Baidya elite members were holding comparable elitist positions with their Kayastha counterparts; in some cases a Brahman elite member was more powerful than a Kayastha elite member. But in general, these higher caste Hindu elite members, having varying degrees of control over land and higher access to politico-economic power had built up a network of patron-client relationships with both the Hindus and the Muslims. They had plenty of resources such as lands, money, jobs, power of manipulation and recommendation, access to official resources in the District Board, Local Board, School Board, Co-operative Bank, Municipality etc., which they could use for the distribution of patronage among their clients and potential clients, in order to maintain as well as enhance their privileged positions and to facilitate their process of domination and exploitation over the general mass of the population. These elite members generally used to interact with their clients mainly through middlemen, though in some cases they had direct relations with them. But with the lowest caste clients, their interaction was totally indirect because these clients are untouchables. But today the situation is rather different because a higher caste Hindu political elite is commonly seen to have both direct and indirect exchange relationships with the people of the lowest caste groups for his direct approach to and communication with these people often count a great deal in his capturing or maintenance of a political position, competing with his rivals in an election in which these lowest caste people participate as voters. For the same reason, his interaction with his Muslim peasant clients which was mostly indirect because of the latter's
conversion from the lower and lowest caste groups, has also undergone certain changes; and the exchange relationship has become both direct and indirect, depending on the nature of the issue involved. The allegiance of the Muslim peasant clients to their higher caste Hindu patrons was based on secular and economic factors because the former got lands as pattani (lease) or barga from the latter as a great favour. In return, these Muslim clients gave their patrons support and services such as votes, personal services etc., in time of the latter's need, not objecting much at their exploitation by their patrons.

But in the case of the Hindu lower and lowest caste clients, secular and economic factors were combined with their ritual inferiority to make the patron-client relationship a solid one. The higher caste patrons could claim both politico-economic and ritual superiority over their lower caste clients. But nowadays the situation has changed a lot because the material considerations have become dominant in the relationship between these clients and their patrons. Consequently, when their demands for some favours relating to material benefits are not satisfied or met by their patrons, they do not hesitate to change their former patron for a new one who can distribute patronage to them or make promise for the distribution of the same in the future, no matter whether the new patron comes from the Brahman, Kayastha, Baidya, Saha or Namasudra castes or from the Muslim community. Even they do not hesitate to become involved in a conflict with their former higher caste patron, often taking the side of a Muslim patron. For example, when Arun Bagchi, the Assistant General Secretary of the Rajshahi district branch of the Jatiyo League
failed to meet the demand of his former client Charan Kapali, an influential matbar (headman) of the Namasudra caste, in securing agricultural loans for his client from the office of the deputy director of Agriculture, the latter, along with some of his followers, has found Alauddin, the Muslim President of the local branch of the ruling Awami League as a new patron who has not only secured agricultural loans for Charan Kapali but also assured him of future patronage because the latter has mobilized a good number of Namasudra voters as supporters of his patron. In doing so, Charan Kapali has openly shown his antagonism to his former Brahman patron Arun Bagchi.

The above example shows how material considerations induced a lower caste client to sever his patron-client tie with his higher caste patron. It also indicates that the factor of caste superiority-inferiority could not play any important role to stop the break-up of Charan Kapali's patron-client tie with Arun Bagchi and his establishment of a new patron-client relationship with Alauddin. This shows that the factor of ritual superiority-inferiority in the caste hierarchy alone cannot give rise to or maintain the patron-client relationship which is to a large extent based on the principle of mutual but unequal exchange relationships.

However, the caste hierarchy, to some extent, influences the network of patron-clientage between the members of different caste groups as well as the members of the same caste group. It generally reinforces the patron-client ties and brings about some sort of change in the behaviour pattern of both the Hindu clients and their patrons. This problem can be better analysed at three different levels: (i) when the patrons and their clients come from the same caste group; (ii) when the patrons'
caste hierarchy and ritual purity are higher than those of their clients; and (iii) when the patrons' caste hierarchy and ritual purity are lower than those of their clients. We shall take up these three points one by one below.

First, in Rajshahi not all the members of higher caste groups are in elitist positions. Most of the members of these caste groups are non-elite members engaged in various types of occupations and professions. Many of them are, in fact, clients of the elite members belonging to their own caste groups. This does not, however, mean that they are not at the same time clients of some elite members from other caste groups. However, here we shall try to see what type of influence is exerted by the factor of the common caste affiliation of both the patron and his client on their patron-client relationship. Here the relationship is established on the basis of the politico-economic factor; and the superior party plays the role of a patron to the inferior one. Although this factor plays the major role, the very fact that the patrons and their clients come from the same caste group is likely to make the tie stronger. Here the patrons are more friendly and easy to their clients because they can have free mixing and exchange of goods and services. The factor of jati bhai (caste brother) is often activated by both the patrons and their clients to maximize the degree of co-operation in their exchange relationship. For example, Reboti Mohan Ghose is a wholesale cloth merchant of Rajshahi town. He has clients from various caste groups as well as from the Muslim community. Many of these clients purchase cloth from him at wholesale rates and often on credit. But some of his clients, such as Kanu Ghose,
Bakul Ray, Ramani Sarkar, Ranjan Kumar Guha etc., who are all retail cloth sellers with small shops in Rajshahi town get their supply of cloth from their jati bhai patron always on credit and often at a bit lower rate than other clients, mainly because all these Kayastha clients belong to their patron's caste group and render him personal services on various social occasions such as weddings, sradha (giving a feast in honour of the dead person), annaprashan (first giving of rice to a child) etc.

Secondly, if the patrons are in higher positions in the caste hierarchy and hence purer than their clients, their higher ritual purity and superior politico-economic power give them the opportunity to extend their unquestioned supremacy over the clients who show allegiance to them because of their combined ritual and secular power in the community. However, this pattern of patron-clientage becomes more prominent when a patron comes from one of the higher castes and his clients belong to one of the lower or lowest caste groups because of greater differential in ritual purity between the patron and his clients, as well as greater hierarchical distance between the patron's caste and that of his clients. But in this situation too the politico-economic factor plays the dominant role and the factor of caste hierarchy and the degree of ritual purity can play their roles only as long as the former remains active and operative.

Thus it can be seen that when the basic essence of the patron-client relationship i.e., the exchange relationship ceases to function, the factor of caste superiority-inferiority neither gives rise to a patron-client tie nor maintains it.
For example, the patron-client tie between Shunil Chandra Das, a Kayastha by caste and a rich mango trader of the town and his client, Bhawani Charan Mondal, a Namasudra by caste and a mango broker by profession, has recently broken down because the former did not fulfil the demand of the latter for a higher commission for his job of brokerage. This example shows that the factor of caste superiority-inferiority did not play any significant role to maintain the patron-client relationship when conflict arises between the patron and his client on the economic aspect of the relationship.

But one important aspect of this type of patron-client tie is that the coherence between the ritual superiority and the politico-economic superiority of a patron largely eliminates the possibility of psychological tensions for the clients.

Thirdly, there are cases where the patrons are politico-economically superior to their clients but inferior to the latter in ritual purity and caste hierarchy. The emergence of a patron-client tie between a socio-economically handicapped member of a higher caste, especially the Brahman caste and a politico-economically powerful but ritually inferior member of another higher, medium or lower caste can find its perfect expression in the system of jajmani, if the term jajman is interpreted in its original meaning which refers to master of the house who employs a Brahman to perform sacrifices.
and religious services for fees. But although the system of jajmani still, to some extent, exists in rural areas of Rajshahi district, possibly because of the lack of full functioning of the monetary economy and the prevalence of some elements of closed, natural or primitive economy, the system does not play any significant role in the interactive process of the Hindus of Rajshahi town where the functioning of the monetary economy and the subsequent growth of exchange relationship have made the use of the term 'jajman' and the practice of the system of 'jajmani' more or less outdated even though the services of the Brahmans in weddings and religious functions and ceremonies are regularly secured by some Hindu elite and non-elite members in exchange for money and some other kinds of material goods. This network of relationship is generally treated as a kind of patron-client tie within the framework of the general type of exchange relationship. And it is not necessarily true that a particular patron will hire a particular Brahman every time. He may secure the services of any Brahman according to his convenience. This largely precludes the possibility of a long-enduring attachment of a particular Brahman and his family to a patron.

35. For a detailed discussion on the system of jajmani, see Dumont, L., Homo Hierarchicus, London, 1970, pp.138-50. But the jajmani system has been interpreted in different ways by different scholars who have differences of opinions about the meaning, interpretation and the functions of the system. See Beidelman, T.O., A Comparative Analysis of the Jajmani System, New York, 1959, p.16; and Pocock, D.F. 'Notes on Jajmani Relationship', Contributions to Indian Sociology, No.VI, Dec.1962, p.89.
36. Dumont, Ibid., p.139.
But the type of jajmani relationship, which is completely different from its original meaning, that can be seen to some extent to develop between a lower caste specialist such as a napit (barber) or a dhopa (washerman) and a higher caste landholder in rural areas of the district can hardly be found in Rajshahi town, mainly because these services can be easily secured from people who are running hair-cutting saloons and laundries. It is not even necessary for the townspeople to have the services of the same saloon and the same laundry because there are many of them; and the people can take the services of any one according to their convenience.

In the rural areas, however, where these lower caste specialists are the only available people to do the job for the higher caste Hindus, the former are often seen to become more or less permanently attached to some higher caste Hindu families in exchange for fees, both in kind and cash as well as other favours. Although this type of exchange relationship has nothing to do with the original concept of jajmani, the lower caste specialists are seen to refer to their employers as jajmans, meaning the patrons. This is what people in the community usually mean by jajmani, even if it is not the original meaning.

However, returning to our discussion on the third point, some poor Brahmans are often seen in a position of clients to powerful and influential persons of other caste groups. In this situation too, the patron-client tie is established on economic and political considerations but the affiliation of the patrons to comparatively lower caste groups than those of their clients gives rise to a situation when the patrons
are usually seen to show respect to their ritually superior clients who, in turn, give much importance to the material benefits and favours which they get from their patrons. Consequently, the Brahman clients of a non-Brahman patron are generally treated with respect and honour. A non-Brahman patron as far as possible does not like to offend his Brahman clients and tries to help them in various ways by distributing patronage among them in the form of monetary help, material goods, help in getting new jobs, promotions, licences, permits etc., as long as the latter show their allegiance to him and render him secular as well as religious services which are often necessary for the patron in accruing more privileges and power. In fact, the continuity of the patron-client relationship between them depends upon the material considerations, though the factor of ritual superiority-inferiority, to some extent, influences the behaviour of the patron to his Brahman clients. For example, J. Lahiri, a Brahman by caste, is a teacher in a local primary school. But he did not give up his priestly functions. He is more or less regularly engaged by Hemendra Guha, a Kayastha by caste and a rich contractor, to perform religious rites on various occasions in his house. Although Hemendra Guha gives him fees in cash or kind for his services, he shows respect to J. Lahiri because of the latter's higher ritual status. However, Hemendra Guha has a close linkage with some Hindu and Muslim ruling party leaders of the town, such as K. Zaman, Alauddin, Umesh Ghose etc., who help him in getting contracts for government work, in exchange for his financial contributions to the ruling party fund, as well as his and his clients' political support to the latter. Thus J. Lahiri always
approaches his patron Hemendra Guha to secure benefits in the form of material goods or recommendations for himself as well as for some of his kinsmen from those political leaders, not only on the grounds that he performs religious services for his patron but also on the strength of his secular services, such as helping his patron in the mobilization of some political supporters for his (Hemendra Guha's) political patrons of the ruling party.

The above example, however, should not be treated as a typical representation of the growth of a patron-client relationship between a Brahman client and a non-Brahman patron, because the tie may develop between the two partners purely on secular grounds. Thus in some cases when a Brahman elite member becomes a client of a Kayastha elite member, the question of the rendering of religious services to the patron may not arise at all, but the patron's behaviour to his Brahman client may be, to some extent, influenced by the fact that the latter belongs to the caste hierarchy with the highest ritual purity. But if a Kayastha patron is a very powerful and influential elite member and his Brahman elite client belongs to the lower elite category, the latter may be treated by the former at par with his other clients coming from the higher, medium and lower castes but belonging to the same lower elite category. The functioning of both the processes discussed above can be seen from the following example: Bimal Chandra Sarkar is one of the most distinguished physicians of Rajshahi town and a big landholder, possessing 92 bighas of land. He is also the owner of a transport company. His income is about Tk.3,500 per month. Although he does not hold any formal position in the party hierarchy,
he is widely known as an informal leader of the local Awami League. His linkage with the local political leaders of the ruling party is quite extensive. He has many clients and friends in the town. But we shall not try to discuss his networks of patron-clientage and horizontal ties here, because the purpose of this example is to see how at one level the concept of ritual purity does not influence the behaviour of a non-Brahman patron toward his Brahman client and how at another level it does indeed influence it. Anil Bhaduri and Kamal Ray are two managers of his (Bimal Chandra Sarkar's) transport company. Anil Bhaduri is in charge of the management section, while Kamal Ray has been given the responsibility of looking after the financial and accounting side of the company. Anil Bhaduri is a Brahman and Kamal Ray is a Kayastha by caste. Both of them are treated as lower elite members by their employer patron, Bimal Chandra Sarkar. Although Anil Bhaduri's ritual purity is much higher than his patron and his colleague, he does not get any special treatment from his patron who behaves with these two managers in the same way. But Kamal Ray shows respect to his Brahman client, Pijush Kumar Mukherjee who works in his section as the chief accountant because he also belongs to the lower elite category and because he is a Brahman with higher ritual purity.

From the above example, it can be assumed that when the power differential and structural distance between the two elite members in a patron-client tie are great, the question of ritual purity does not influence the behaviour of the ritually inferior patron to his ritually superior client. But when such a power differential and structural distance between the two partners is less, the question of ritual
superiority of the clients does affect the behaviour of the ritually inferior patron to his client with higher ritual superiority.

So far we have discussed in what way the caste factor enters into the network of patron-clientage of the Hindu elite members. Here it would be necessary to examine whether the caste factor has any role to play in the emergence of a horizontal type of alliance between the Hindu elite members of comparable politico-economic standing, from the same or different caste groups. In the first place, when a horizontal alliance is established between two or more elite members belonging to the same caste, the parties involved in the alliance show a high degree of co-operation to each other because first, it helps them to maintain their privileged position with each other's help and support, and secondly, the concept of jati bhai gives more solidarity to the alliance. But the problem is that the concept of jati bhai in the absence of the more important factor of exchange relationship in socio-economic and political arenas cannot give rise to any such alliance, because there are cases where two or more elite members of comparable politico-economic standing belonging to the same caste become involved in conflict with each other when one partner wants to make material gains at the cost of the other or when one forms an alliance with the other's rivals, even when these rivals belong to other caste groups or the Muslim community. The following example shows the working of the process: Shudhamaya Sarkar, an elite contractor of the town, has formed a horizontal type of alliance with R.K. Mitra, an executive engineer of the regional branch of the Department of Water and Power Development Authority, as
well as with Shukumar Pall, an elite contractor, so that they can have each other's services and support in accruing material benefits. These three elite members belong to the Kayastha caste and hence are connected to each other through the bond of jati bhai which has given some amount of solidarity to their alliance because, being members of the same caste, they feel more at home with each other in their interaction. But the problem has developed when Shudhamaya Sarkar has tried to make a deal with R.K. Mitra without giving any consideration to the interest of Shukumar Pall, who has immediately come in conflict with both of his former jati bhai allies and has formed an alliance with an influential Muslim contractor - Jaber Ali and a rich Kayastha contractor, Hamendra Guha, who have professional jealousies with Shudhamaya Sarkar. This shows that when the allied elite members of the same caste develop conflict amongst themselves, the consideration of their affiliation to a common caste cannot hold them together and maintain the alliance. The conflicting parties can be commonly seen to go for an alliance with other elite members whose co-operation is considered important for the maintenance of their interests, no matter whether these new partners belong to their own caste or religious community or not. Thus it is not uncommon to find a horizontal type of alliance between the elite members belonging to higher, medium and lower castes and the consideration of the hierarchical and ritual superiority of one or the other partner cannot make the relationship a vertical tie of patron-clientage because the politico-economic considerations push aside the factor of ritual superiority-inferiority of the allied members.
However, when the Hindu elite members of the higher castes establish patron-client relationships as well as horizontal alliances with their Muslim counterparts, most of whom are descendants of lower caste converts, the factor of caste hierarchy does not feature prominently, though the Hindu higher caste elite members generally treat them as inferior people without giving any open expression of their feelings because of the changed socio-economic and political condition of the community in which the Muslims have occupied most of the elitist positions and in fact have effective control over the power structure and decision-making process in the community. The Hindu elite members can hope to maintain their privileged positions only by forming an alliance with the dominant Muslim elite members. The Hindus have a very low percentage (only 10%) of the total elitist positions in the community, though they constitute 20% of the total population of the town.37

This situation may be partially explained by large-scale migration of Hindu elite members to India, especially West Bengal in the wake of partition of Bengal in 1947. This large-scale migration became possible because most of the Hindu elite members had some of their kinsmen living and serving in West Bengal and many of them had economic interests and investments in Calcutta which was an important centre of activities of the Bengali Hindu elite members. The migrating elite members, therefore, had always had

linkages with the Calcutta elites, some of whom were in fact their relations. However, one of the important causes of their migration was the fear of persecution, and actual persecution at the hands of the Muslims, who were alleged to be deprived of all sorts of opportunities by the higher and medium caste Hindus in general and the Hindu elite members in particular. There is no denying the fact that many Hindus, especially the Hindu elite members and their family members, were persecuted and forcefully evicted by some rough elements among the Muslims. But a section of the liberal Muslims gave protection to some Hindu elite members who did not wish to migrate to India, leaving their property and ancestral home. But this liberal section of the Muslims did not do this without their own interest. They became protectors in exchange for some share in the property, business etc. of the established Hindu elite members. A few of the Hindu elite members, especially in the fields of medicine, law and education, were given protection by the Muslim community as a whole, in view of the fact that their services were vitally necessary for the welfare of the community and that there were only a few qualified Muslims in these arenas. Thus, some prominent lawyers, doctors, and teachers did not leave the town. They are still there.

Large-scale migration of the Hindu elite members does not fully explain their lower proportion in the elitist positions. The process of discrimination has been brought to such a point that it is not easy for a qualified Hindu to have access to various elite positions. The reason is that most of the recruitment to elitist positions is controlled
and made by the Muslim elite members who tend to show favour to their kinsmen, friends and people from their own community. Since the independence of Bangladesh, there has been a slight improvement in the prospects of the Hindus to be recruited to various elite positions. But it is not yet time to make any categorical statement about the policy of the present government on this matter. The present trend of the process of recruitment of Hindus to elite positions indicates that the caste factor as such will not play any significant role in such recruitment because the decision-makers would give more emphasis to the factors and channels of mobility to elitist positions discussed earlier, than to the caste factor for they are more concerned with the maintenance of their privileged positions and control over the power structure than with the question of ritual superiority-inferiority in the caste hierarchy.

Caste-like Groups Among the Muslims:

Historically, the Muslim people of the district of Rajshahi, as in other parts of Bangladesh, were mostly converted from the lower caste Hindus, except for some Muslims who came to Rajshahi from the northern part of India or from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and Turkey, who mostly accompanied the Muslim rulers who came to rule Rajshahi at the beginning of the 13th century.

38. For a detailed discussion on this point, see Chapter 2, pp.109-130.
Writing in the Bengal Census Report, H. Beverly states that the large preponderance of Musalmans in Rajshahi as in other neighbourhood districts

"is to be attributed to the conversion of Islam of the numerous low castes which occupied it... The exclusive caste system of Hinduism, again naturally encouraged the conversion of the lower orders from a religion under which they were no better than despised outcastes, to one which recognized all men equal".40

The 1961 Rajshahi District Census Report states

"Rajshahi claims to have a distinct racial stock the 'Shershabads' who are of Pathan ancestry as the followers of Sher Shah who became the emperor of Delhi defeating Humayun".41

Thus, because of large-scale conversion to Islam from Hindu lower caste groups, a very small-scale conversion from higher caste Hindus42 and the existence of a group of people, claiming foreign ancestry, the Muslim population of Rajshahi district, as elsewhere in Bengal, developed a caste-like hierarchy among themselves; and the arrangement of this hierarchy has been made according to the degree of nobility of birth and association with feudal families in and outside Bengal.

Although theoretically Islam was opposed to the caste system, it was not successful in giving the new converts a social system free from a caste-like hierarchy, because in practice popular Islam contained some caste elements; and the Hindu caste system itself exerted strong influence on the emergence of a caste-like hierarchy among the people of

40. See Bengal Census Report, 1872, p.132; see also Hunter, W.W. A Statistical Account of Bengal - District of Rajshahi and Bogra, vol.VIII, 1876, p.50; and O'Malley, ibid., pp.30-31.
42. O'Malley, op.cit., p.31.
Rajshahi as in other parts of Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. 43

Thus J. Talke says,

"Socially, the community has had the misfortune to inherit the traits of their Hindu and Moslem forbears. Caste prejudices have left their mark upon many. There are about 35 (thirty-five) separate Moslem castes in Bengal. We use the term advisedly, for in some cases, the division is a clear differentiation of race and in others it means a kind of trade guild with strong Hindu caste significance. In fact, in many instances, the functional groups have become so distinct that they will never intermarry, nor even interdine together. Foreign descent still forms the highest claim to social distinction ... although now, since many descendants of converts by education and position have sprung to the fore, they too are receiving more honour than formerly, and are even sought after for marriage with daughters of foreign extractions". 44

Thus, the Muslim population of Rajshahi as elsewhere in Bengal became divided into Ashraf or Sharif (upper caste-like group), Atraf (lower caste-like group) and Arzal or Azlaf (lowest caste-like group) following the hierarchical ordering of the Hindu upper, medium and lower castes. 45


45. According to R. Levy, amongst the Bengal Muhammadans the Ashraf or upper class includes all undoubted descendants of foreign Moslems (Arabs, Persians, Afghans, etc.) and converts from higher castes from Hindus. Like higher caste Hindus they consider it degrading to accept menial service or to handle plough and look with contempt upon all other ranks of Bengal Moslems whom they call 'Atraf' 'coarse rabble'. These include 'functional groups' such as weavers, cotton-carders, oil-pressers, barbers, tailors etc., as well as converts of original humble castes. In some cases, a third class called 'Arzal' or 'lowest of all' is added. It consists of very lowest castes such as Helalkhor (sweepers, latrine and garbage cleaners), Lalbegi, Abdal, and Bediya, with whom no other Muhammadan would associate. See Levy, R., An Introduction to the Sociology of Islam, London, 1933, p.104.
Each of these three caste-like groups was subdivided into numerous sub-caste-like groups. For example, among the Ashrafs or Sharif, one could see the Syed, Mir, Chowdhury, Khandkar, Khan etc. However, the sharif Muslims were always associated with land control and feudal status or linkage with feudal families. This placed them at the top of both the economic and social hierarchies and gave them higher access to economic resources, social prestige and political power; and thereby enhanced their life chances over the Atraf and Arzal Muslims. They often claimed nobility of birth by tracing their origins to noble families outside Bengal. Thus Karim says,

"... foreign ancestry coming from the West, (the West is nearer to Arabia and therefore nearer to the Prophet and his religion) that is, ancestry tracing its real or fictitious origins from Arabia, Persia, Afghanistan, Central India, sometimes even from Northern India, was reckoned as sharif ancestry in Bengal, provided such ancestry was associated with feudalism and land control".46

According to information supplied by two of our informants, A. Mirza and A.S. Khan - both of them belong to an old feudal family and are very advanced in age - in the 19th and early part of the 20th centuries the sharif Muslims in Rajshahi district tried their utmost to maintain their higher caste-like group status by practising endogamous marital relations amongst themselves. They discouraged, in some cases by imposing strict social sanctions and ostracism, any matrimonial alliance with the members of the lower caste-like groups, who they saw to be mostly converts from lower and lowest caste Hindus. They even abstained

from interdining or mixing on equal terms with these people. But in some cases, when they had to take food in the same baithak (community building) in some large-scale community feast, they were given the front seats on farash (white cotton sheets) placed on shatrunchi (a kind of thick cotton carpet). For the non-sharif people coming from the lower-caste like groups, choats (thick jute sheets) were placed behind the farash but always keeping a reasonable distance between the farash and the first row of choats. The type of food was not the same. The sharifs were served with superior quality food to that supplied to the non-sharifs. This shows how the sharifs were segregated from the rest of the community and the non-sharifs were discriminated against and given lower and often degrading social status. These sharifs side by side with many higher caste Hindu landholders became the patrons of their non-sharif clients who got lands from them on lease and provided support to their patrons as well as allowing themselves to be economically exploited and socially dominated by them because they were economically handicapped and politically powerless. Lands were given to these clients because the sharif Muslims felt the necessity of keeping themselves away from manual labour which must be avoided to maintain their higher social status. But the levelling effect of the British rule became more powerful than their caste-like pride and urge of segregation from the Atraf and Arzal or Ajlaf caste-like groups which in the past used to practise endogamy. 47

The introduction of modern education and modern administrative machinery in the latter part of the British rule and the governmental policy of recruitment of personnel in administrative and other types of newly created jobs, largely on the basis of qualification and merit, especially proficiency in and knowledge of the English language, created a situation in which it was no longer possible to maintain their former upper caste-like status, pride, power and prestige.\(^48\) In fact, British rule helped in the breakdown of the caste-like status hierarchy between the sharifs and the non-sharifs (e.g. the Atrafs and Arzals). The sharifs began to lose economic as well as political power, and hence lost control over the power structure and decision-making process in the community. Due to British patronage, a Muslim maddhabitta category (middle income category) consisting of largely Atraf and Arzal people emerged. This category subsequently became and still is the strong base for the recruitment of Muslim elites.\(^49\) These newly recruited elite members came to give leadership to the Muslim community and formed a new upper caste-like group, i.e., the new-sharif.\(^50\)

\(^48\) According to Broomfield, to set foot on that road (British government created opportunities), however, the young Bengali had first to learn the tongue of the new rulers and, if he wished to go far he had to have an advanced English-language education. See Broomfield, J.H. op.cit., p.7; see also McCully, B.T., English Education and the Origins of Indian Nationalism, New York, 1940, p.44.

\(^49\) See Chapter 2, pp.103-4.

\(^50\) See Chapter 2, pp.100-101.
One important feature of this group was and is its flexibility in accommodating new entrants to elite positions, regardless of their social origin. Moreover, it was not, and is not, an endogamous group. The above statement shows that the Muslims can move to a higher caste-like group and even can form a new one fairly easily when they have politico-economic power. However, the main reason for the shift of power and control from the sharifs to the new-sharifs was that a large section of the sharifs was antagonistic to English education which was treated as an essential requirement for movement to elitist positions created by the British rulers. According to Karim,

"... certain section of the upper class Muslim were definitely opposed to the introduction of English as the official language as that would affect their immediate interests. A few of the upper class Muslims were holding responsible posts as judges of the moffusil courts. Some Muslims were also holding the petty posts of clerks etc. and this was because of their knowledge and proficiency in Persian which was the official language. These petty job holders were also naturally opposed to the introduction of English as the official language".

Hence they failed to take the opportunities to maintain their privileged positions. When they realized their mistakes, it was too late because by that time most of the elitist positions available to the Muslims were occupied by the new-sharifs. However, a few sharif Muslims were successful in

51. This idea of relatively easy social mobility associated with Muslim social stratification is distinct from the rigidity correlated with the Hindu system. See Mines, op.cit., p.334.
retaining their elitist positions or capturing new ones by learning English and collaborating with the British rulers. Thus the initial resistance of the sharifs to English education and the British-introduced modern administrative mechanisms undoubtedly put most of the feudal sharifs, whose size of landholding became smaller day by day due to the operation of the Muslim law of inheritance, in a disadvantageous position, and they began to decline because they could not avail themselves of the new opportunities. Therefore, the only way left to them to avoid their total decline was to form matrimonial alliances with the elite members coming from Atraf and Arzal or Ajlaf parentage. They had little difficulty in effecting such matrimonial alliance because the new-sharifs with a poor family background were and are themselves eager for such an alliance, with the hope of enhancing their social status, often adopting the family titles of their fathers-in-law for their children. For example, M. Rahman, an elite physician of the town is the son of Haran Ali, a member of the Atraf caste-like group. Because of his elitist position, M. Rahman could marry Rahela Chowdhury, the daughter of a declining sharif. This gave him not only higher social prestige in the community, but also enabled him to use his father-in-law's title of 'Chowdhury' for his two sons.

This process of matrimonial alliance between wealth and power and social status as found in Rajshahi could, except

for some local variations, be found in different parts of Bengal.\(^5^5\)

The above discussion shows that the factor of Muslim caste-like hierarchy enters into the interactive process of the Muslim elite members in the formation of their matrimonial alliance, as well as in their endeavour to enhance their social prestige in the community. But because the Muslim elite members, irrespective of their social origin, belong to the same caste-like group, i.e. the new-sharif, the question of caste-like superiority-inferiority does not arise in their interactive process and exchange relationships amongst themselves. Moreover, in politico-economic arenas, their interactions and exchange relations with the non-elite members from various caste-like groups are hardly influenced by the factor of caste-like hierarchy because the process is largely based on the factor of transaction of one sort or another.

\(^5^5\) Wali says, "In some parts of Nadia, Jessore, Bakerganj, Dacca and Faridpur districts of Bengal low classes sometimes would marry to better class families on account of the prosperity of one and the poverty of the other. When these unequal or ghair kuff marriage takes place lower classes would assume such titles as Munshi, Mulla, Biswas, Jawardar and sometimes called Atraf Bhalomanus or an Atraf made a gentleman". See Wali, M.A. 'Ethnographical Notes on the Muhammadan Castes of Bengal', Journal of Anthropological Society of Bombay, vol.VII, p.106. (Quoted by Karim) See Karim, A.K.N. 'The Modern Muslim Political Elite in Bengal' - Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1964, p.203.
Before we take up a systematic discussion of the problems of land tenure and land reform it is necessary to discuss, in short, how these topics are important for the study of elites in Rajshahi town. The elite members are closely linked with the agrarian structure and its change or reform in four important ways: (1) Firstly, all the elite members\(^1\) and most of their kinsmen\(^2\) are landowners and possess a substantial amount of land in rural areas, partly cultivated or managed by hired agricultural labourers and partly leased out orally to share-cropping bargadars. Generally the produce is equally divided between the bargadars (share-croppers) and their elite maliks or munibs (owners or masters) who have mastery not only over the land but also over the men who work on it; and they expect to be shown respect or deference by their clients in agricultural networks. Thus the relations of tenants, bargadars and agricultural labourers to their maliks are largely governed by the marks of deference. For agricultural labourers, bargadars and even petty cultivators a landholding elite malik is a patron par excellence because it is he through whom they try to get things done and it is he to whom they show allegiance and support. One aspect of this deference combined with the distribution of patronage is the huge support the landholding political elites are often able to muster in local and national elections. This type of patron-client tie minimizes

1. See Chapter 2, Table 6, p.80.
2. According to the elite members most of their kinsmen have at least some land.
the possibility of the emergence of class interests and movements among the exploited groups. Some occasional outbursts by some of the members of these exploited groups do occur to gain more patronage from the maliks but they are able to control the situation by making a few adjustments in their strategy of distribution of patronage.

Moreover, the elite members have developed vested interests in land which provides a secure source of the flow of a part of their income. This additional income earned by simple investment in land without contributing anything to the direct process of production largely strengthens their already higher economic power. This higher economic power is very much connected with the enhancement of their socio-political power because higher access to economic resources enables them, at least partly, to distribute patronage to their clients and potential clients. However, these landholding elite members, though interested in securing income from their lands, are highly motivated to control the people engaged in the cultivation of their lands because control over these people is important for maintaining or gaining political power. But to ensure the flow of their income from land and to exercise control over the people engaged in the cultivation of land they usually have to maintain close connection with rural areas where most of them own a house.

(2) Secondly, given the fact that land is a marketable commodity and there is regular sale and purchase of this commodity, the elite members have got an opportunity to acquire more lands as their higher income gives them higher purchasing capacity and enables them to amass surplus money to invest in land which is considered to be both a safe and lucrative investment when compared with investment in commercial and industrial sectors. However, this should not be taken as the absence of investment of elite members' surplus incomes in commerce, industries and other economic sectors. But the fact remains that a part of their income is always invested in land which gives them income, status, prestige and political power.

On the other hand, the small landholders to meet their domestic demands and for their survival, especially in a crisis situation like famine, cyclone, flood, drought etc. are frequently compelled to sell their land at a cheaper rate than its normal market value. Thus the interplay of the process of sale and purchase of lands initiates the process of concentration of lands in the hands of the elite members, their allies and rich kinsmen and the swelling of the number of landless agricultural labourers, near-landless peasants and bargadars. Many peasants after selling their land find no alternative but to become landless agricultural labourers only to work in the land of the landowning elites and non-elites or to migrate to an urban area to add to the number of the urban proletariat. Similarly, when a small peasant sells a portion of his land he becomes near-landless and dependent upon the elite members and their allies and
rich kinsmen for getting land on barga. This situation aggravates the worst type of prevailing social and economic inequality between the landholding elite members and their clients in an agrarian structure. This situation is largely responsible for the increase in the degree of dependency of the underprivileged, and thereby gives rise to a condition in which the growth of patron-client relationships becomes almost inevitable and the personal ties of dominance and dependence govern the process of social interaction, accommodating varying degrees of cooperation, conflict and exploitation. But by and large with the provision of shifting allegiance of the clients, the network of relationship has to continue to give functional reality to the social system.

(3) Thirdly, like most of the underdeveloped countries in South Asia measures for land reform are always sponsored by the elites, especially the ruling elites, and the promise of land reform is a common slogan of the political elites during their election campaign to secure the political support of the economically handicapped peasants who often dream of the break down of the concentration of land in a few hands and its equitable distribution among themselves. They

4. According to Beteille, in addition to inequalities of wealth and status, the rural social system is also characterized by inequalities in power and authority. It is true that ... in India, new democratic institutions have been created within the village itself. But this does not mean that all sections of society now have equal access to power. By and large the sharecroppers and agricultural labourers continue to be at the bottom of the power hierarchy, not least because of their lack of organization and the relative absence of political skills among them. See Beteille, A. Studies in Agrarian Social Structure, Oxford University Press, 1974, p.69.

generally think that the land reform will make them owners of a few bighas of land, and this will to some extent improve their economic conditions and enable them, at least partially, to get rid of the domination and exploitation of the landholders, especially the landholding elite members. These would-be beneficiaries of the promised land reform are so eager to gain the immediate benefit of the land reform that they are seen, at least to some extent, to rely on this simple and generally exaggerated promise of the ruling elites. Here the question may arise, what is meant by land reform? In short, we may say that the concept of land reform has two different aspects: (a) land tenure reform, and (b) land operation reform or land use reform. Land tenure reform refers to a change in the pattern of land ownership. Land operation reform means changes in the pattern of cultivation or the terms of holding and scale of operation; and reform in this area may be independent of or only indirectly related to land tenure reform.

The objectives of land reform may be social, economic and political or a combination of them. Economic objectives deal with production and allocation; social objectives include the distribution of income, wealth and status of the peasants and the landholding elites; and political ones include promotion of political stability, legitimacy of the political system and its power structure and national security. The formulation of these objectives and programmes and their implementation are the business of the elite members and nothing about land reform can be done without their consent and beyond their knowledge; and no amount of public demand can have any effective impact on their land policy if it goes
against their own interest. Thus however noble may be the objectives of land reform professed and outlined by the ruling elites, the question of their own interest and the interest of their kinsmen and allies are always there in their minds; and any decision on the problem of land reform is largely influenced by this fact. Because of the changing socio-economic and political atmosphere in the country these elite members are to some extent willing to make some sort of concession to the poor peasants but not at the cost of their own privileges and interests as well as those of their recruiting base i.e., the maddhabitta category and the jotedar group which consist of their kinsmen and allies. Thus a clear inconsistency between the promises and actions of the ruling elites regarding land reform can be observed. Even the objectives formulated by themselves are hardly ever implemented; they remain in huge files only as a paper document. Although the ruling elites outwardly show their great concern for the depressed, suppressed and exploited peasants and agricultural labourers and proclaim the policy of "land to the tillers" they very tactfully dilute this policy into a land reform programme suited to their own interests as well as that of their kinsmen and allies. It would be wrong to say that the poor peasants do not get any benefit out of the land reform programme. But the fact remains that the amount of benefit derived by these people is very insignificant; and the basic aim of the reduction of inequalities by the introduction of land reform programme remains more or less unachieved, and the differential access to landownership is hardly removed or reduced except
for the abolition of the intermediary rent-receiving interests. 6

(4) Fourthly, as the political leadership of the peasantry is still very much in the hands of the elite members and their agents, the latter would try to use the former group to its own definite advantage. And while trying to take that advantage it becomes necessary for the elite members and their agents to increase their power by striking an alliance with the vested interest in rural areas i.e., the rural-based jotedars. In fact, some of the urban elites are themselves jotedars having control over vast amounts of land. In Rajshahi most of the elite peasant leaders can be seen to try to use the peasantry primarily for electoral purposes not exactly to promote the interest of the poor peasants but to secure their own interests as well as those of their rural allies. 7 They, of course, distribute patronage in one form or another to the peasants.

Land Tenure:

For an understanding of the present state of the problem of involvement of the elite members in the land tenure system it is necessary to explore some important past events that brought about certain changes in the agrarian system and hence in the nature of relationships between different groups of people involved in a network of relationships within it.


7. According to Umar, Bengal has seen quite a number of 'peasant' leaders, from Sir A. Rahim to A.K. Fazhul Haque, who tried to use the peasantry of Bengal primarily for electoral purposes. Under their leadership the Bengal peasantry was mobilized in the thirties and forties but that mobilization instead of promoting the interests of the peasants promoted the feudal-bourgeoisie elements of Muslim Bengal to power. See Umar, B. Politics and Society in East Pakistan and Bangladesh, Dacca, 1973, p.103.
The land tenure system introduced in the district of Rajshahi and elsewhere in Bengal by the British rulers was inherited after the creation of Pakistan in 1947. With the passing of the Permanent Settlement Act of 1793 the district of Rajshahi was a permanently settled area, which meant that most of the land was parcelled out in estates of various sizes and held by people called 'proprietors' (this included zamindars as well as independent taluqdars). But all the proprietors were not large landholders. They were primarily tax collectors for the government. All zamindars in the district now had hereditary status so long as they paid their land taxes. However, zamindars of Rajshahi district as elsewhere in Bengal were not really the equivalent of Western landowners. Dominant families in each pargona (region) remained as their 'tenants-in-chief' and continued to enjoy many of the old customary rights i.e., they could not be evicted, their rights were heritable and their rental payments could not be raised easily. Lower and medium caste families among the Hindus and non-sharif caste-like families among the Muslims were usually sub-tenants of the tenants-in-chief, rather than direct tenants of the zamindars. Often there were several layers of tenancy between the actual cultivators and the zamindars.

Around 1950 most of the land in Rajshahi as in other districts of Bangladesh was under the nominal control of the zamindars. It appears that even the rigours of rent-collecting

proved too much for them, so that they in their turn farmed out portions of their estates to independent and dependent taluqdars. Moreover, more frequently than not, the taluqdars created further subordinate tenures and so the chain went from patni taluqdars to dar-patni taluqdars etc., creating a long chain of intermediaries between the state and the raiyot or proja. Thus apart from the state, broadly four classes of people were connected with and had different kinds of rights in the land in a feudalistic type of production system. They were, a) the zamindars, b) the tenure-holders, c) the raiyots or projas and d) the under-raiyots. Outside this scheme of things and marginal both economically and politically, if not numerically, were the share-croppers and the landless agricultural labourers.

However, with the passing of the East Pakistan State Acquisition and Tenancy Act of 1950 which abolished the intermediate rent-receiving interests i.e., the zamindari system the agrarian system of production did not remain purely feudalistic in nature. It has become a semi-feudalistic one which is not truly based on the system of wage labour as can be found in a capitalistic enterprise in agriculture. Although some labourers are hired on wage-basis their wages are not governed by market forces which are indeed very weak in Bangladesh. Moreover, the relationship between the landholder and the hired labourers is not

10. The dependent taluqdars paid a fixed amount to the zamindars, pocketing the difference between the rent-collection and fixed due.
11. See Iyenger, S.S. Land Tenures in the Madras Presidency, 1921, pp.94-95, 112.
purely contractual in nature; it generally assumes a multiplex character in which the question of domination of the landholder and the dependency of the labourers becomes prominent. And different groups of people involved in a network of relationship in the agrarian structure are not highly motivated to enhance their income by adopting more efficient methods of cultivation and management as can be seen in the management of agricultural sector in a capitalistic country. However, Bettelheim's use of the term 'semi-feudal' for the Indian agrarian structure is applicable to the present agrarian structure of Bangladesh. This author has rightly defended the use of the term on the grounds of:

"(1) absence of labour market in a large part of the rural sector; (2) the personal subservience of the immediate producer to the landowner; (3) the excessive importance of land rent; (4) the underdeveloped marketing system resulting in little social division of labour, a low rate of accumulation and the use of the produce mainly to satisfy immediate needs".

Peasantry and Agricultural Labourers:

Any study of the peasantry and agricultural labour force in the district would show that a vast majority of people, especially in rural areas of the district are directly or indirectly engaged in the management and cultivation of lands and in other agricultural activities in view of the

fact that the economy of the district, as in other districts of Bangladesh, is predominately agrarian with more than 55% GDP (Gross Domestic product) coming from agriculture.

A question may arise how the elite members enter into the discussion of the problem of the peasantry and agricultural labourers who have their permanent residence in the village and live a type of life which has very little resemblance to that of the elite members especially the urban elites? The answer to this question may be that the elite members of Rajshahi town and other urban areas of the district as well as the rural elites recruited mainly from among the former landholding gentry and the rural maddhabitta category are intimately connected with cultivators, especially the bargadars and landless and near-landless agricultural labourers who are the actual tillers of their lands and who are to a greater or lesser extent involved in a sort of patron-clientage with their elite maliks. Although the urban elites mostly live in the town they maintain close connections with their village homes which they visit at least twice or thrice a year if not more. But those elite members who have their village homes near the town (i.e., within a five- or six-mile limit) visit them quite frequently. Our data show that out of the 330 elite members 290 have their village homes; and all the elite members have a good amount of land in the village, the size of landholding varying from group to group or individual to individual, depending upon the level of its or his income and its or his attitude towards the possession of
agricultural land. Out of these 330 elite members with ownership of land in rural areas 204 have managed to lease out all their lands to the bargadars, 61 manage all their agricultural lands by engaging agricultural labourers and work-sarkars (agricultural work manager or supervisor) and the rest (65) have their lands managed partly through the bargadars and partly with the help of agricultural labourers and work-sarkars some of whom are recruited from among the economically handicapped relations of the elites; there may be more than one work-sarkar engaged by a particular elite member, having a large-sized holding. They supervise work both at home and in the field and keep their master up-to-date with information about his land and produce. There is no fixed mode of payment to this group of people. They are paid either in cash or in kind or in both.

The peasants in Bangladesh constitute more than 70% of the total self-employed population of the country, and are the largest detachment of labourers. A large portion of them are the poor peasants with an allotment of up to 2.5 acres (i.e., 51% of all the property owners) as a rule engaged in subsistence or semi-subsistence farming, and often not having draught animals. Almost half of the poor peasants (over 1.5 million families) have parcels of less than one acre, and are actually agricultural workers with an allotment. By Bangladesh standards, peasants with a plot of land ranging from 2.5 to 12 acres (46% of the property owners) usually

15. For some idea of the size of landholdings of the elite members of Rajshahi town, see Table 6, Chapter 2, p. 80; See also Table 7, Chapter 2, p.80 to have some idea about the relationship between the size of landholdings and the level of income of the elite members of the community.
belong to the category of peasants of average means. The majority of them (26% of all the peasant landowners), however, have allotment of less than 5 acres; this means that few of the peasants can engage in profitable farming and become, or have the possibility of becoming farmers of the capitalistic type. The overwhelming part of the rural workers in Bangladesh are thus landless farm labourers or owners of small or extremely small pieces of property for whom various forms of sharecropping continue to this day to be the basic form of land tenure. It is also characteristic of the Bangladesh village to have masses of 'superfluous people' who cannot find under the present system of agrarian relations, any opportunity for productive use of their energies and capacities. The number of these jobless 'superfluous people' has been estimated to be 6.7 to 7 million, and they constitute around 30% of the entire able-bodied rural population. These people have to remain in the village because there is very little employment opportunity for them in towns and cities of Bangladesh.

It is necessary to point out here that the leasing out of land to the bargadars is a widespread phenomenon in Bangladesh. According to A.R. Khan,

"A good many of the larger owners rent out their land to be operated by small owners, and to a very small extent by landless farmers".

The 1960 Agricultural Census of East Pakistan (Bangladesh) also gives testimony to the above fact and shows the vastness of its extensity when it reports that about 88% of the tenant-operated farms are based on share-cropping.\textsuperscript{19}

The situation discussed above is more or less applicable with the exception of little local variations to the situation prevailing in the district of Rajshahi. An individual's landholding exceeding 74 bighas is generally considered large, anything below 10 bighas small. An agricultural farm comprising 35 to 49 bighas would be considered a fair-sized comfortable holding for the maliks and his family. Those persons who have 50-100 bighas of land generally constitute the rural gentry, admitting the hierarchical gradation among themselves based on differential possession of land and wealth. They are the people who hold a significant portion of land in the district and live comfortably by cultivating a portion of their land through hired agricultural labourers and by leasing out another portion to the bargadars. Some of these people are engaged in certain elitist and non-elitist jobs in urban areas. But they always maintain close connections with the people in charge of actual cultivation and supervision of their lands.

The second group of persons who possess 35-49 bighas of agricultural land are not economically depressed. The produce they get from their lands is by all means adequate

\textsuperscript{19.} Agricultural Census of East Pakistan, 1960; see also Khan, M.S. The Role of Agriculture in Economic Development: A Case Study of Pakistan, Center for International Affairs, Harvard, 1966, p.130; and Spate, O.H.K. and Learmonth, A.T.A. Indian and Pakistan, Methuen Co.Ltd., 1967, p.279.
to maintain themselves and their family well and comfortably. This type of landholder can be divided into: (a) those who are cultivating or managing their land themselves or by engaging hired agricultural labourers, being more or less directly associated with the process of cultivation even if they themselves may not do any type of manual labour but the supervision of cultivation; (b) those who have leased out their total amount of land to the sharecroppers, relegating the total responsibility to the latter. Some of these landholders live in their villages, but many of them live in various towns and cities of Bangladesh. These people are engaged in various elitist and non-elitist jobs in urban areas; (c) those landholders who cultivate or manage a portion of their land themselves or through hired agricultural labourers and lease out a small portion to the *bargadars* in view of the fact that their traditional in-puts to the cultivation of land i.e., draught animals, plough, labour, cow-dung manure and other agricultural implements are not adequate to cultivate all the land they possess.

The third group of cultivators consists of the subsistence farmers whose average size of holding is 10 bighas or less. The produce they get from the land can hardly support them and their family. This type of subsistence farmers may be classified as: (a) those farmers who own a few bighas and secure land on a *barga* basis from

20. The size of agricultural holding used for the classification of landholders into various categories is somewhat arbitrary, but based on the general consensus of the landholders of Rajshahi district. For want of any recorded statistical materials we have relied on the general consensus of landholders of the district.
the rural gentry, economically solvent village-based landholders and absentee landholders who constitute a good number of people in elitist and non-elitist white-collar jobs in various cities and towns in Bangladesh; (b) those farmers who cultivate their own land, the produce of which cannot support them and their usually large dependent family which contains four or five children and a few old adults (because of a high fertility rate and the prevalence of the joint family system) who can contribute very little to the process of production and mainly become the consumers of bread earned by one or two able-bodied workers of the family. When their economic condition becomes worse, especially in a crisis situation they are seen to become agricultural labourers or to take loans from the rural gentry or money-lenders to support their family which due to extreme poverty and subsequent malnutrition becomes a breeding ground of all types of diseases. This situation keeps them in perpetual debt to their creditors. Gradually a situation may arise when they find no alternative but to eat up their agricultural capitals by selling their land and even draught animals and implements often to their creditors. These subsistence farmers are likely to become landless agricultural labourers in rural areas; and (c) those farmers whose subsistence is fully dependent upon the bargadari system. They do not have any land of their own and depend fully on barga land which they secure from the elite and non-elite landholders.

However, it may be assumed from our field study that the percentage of bargadar-cultivated and labour-cultivated land in the district has further gone up; and consequently the number of bargadars and landless and near-landless agricultural
labourers has increased to a considerable extent. There are various reasons for our assumption. First, there is continuous fragmentation of holding, especially among the Muslim population which constitutes 82% of the total population of the district. The Muslim law of inheritance which breaks up a holding on the death of the owner into a series of small fractions among the determined heirs plays an important part in such fragmentation. Fragmentation of holding is also present among the Hindus, but it is somewhat restricted by the fact that only the sons are the heirs of their father's property. This process of fragmentation has led to an increase in the number of landless labourers and sharecroppers in view of the fact that there is a gradual decrease in the size of landholdings many of which become too small to support the family of the owners who either take lands on barga or are compelled to sell their small holding only to become landless labourers.

Secondly, there is the heavy rural indebtedness and a continuous process of transfer of lands of the poor peasants to the rural gentry and urban absentee landowner elites who give much importance to the acquisition of more and more lands in rural areas because possession of land as has already been mentioned, gives them power, income and prestige. For example, our data show that out of 330 elite members 292

21. Rehman Sobhan argues, "The class of landless or near-landless villagers is growing larger. They can hire land on barga, or they can hire themselves out as labour; but they usually face the annual prospect of six months of unemployment, when they are constantly in the shadow of starvation". See Sobhan, R. 'Social Forces in the Basic Democracies', South Asian Review, vol.1, No.2, Jan.1968, p.158.
have a strong desire to purchase more lands, and for that they are even willing to curtail their family budget to some extent. Thus it may be argued that the poor peasants' compulsion to sell their lands and the rural gentry's and urban elites' desire for purchase of lands are simultaneously working on the one hand for the increase in the number of *bargadars* and landless and near-landless labourers and on the other for the increasing concentration of lands in the hands of the urban-dwelling elites and the rural gentry, creating more and more inequalities in the distribution of economic resources, political power, social prestige and privileges.

Thirdly, the increase in the number of absentee landholders who generally lease out their lands and sometimes get a portion of the land cultivated with the help of hired labourers, undoubtedly contribute to the increase in the number of *bargadars* and landless and near-landless agricultural labourers.

Fourthly, most of the subsistence farmers' agricultural holdings are too small to meet the requirements of their bare subsistence. 22

Outside the general framework of tenancy the landless agricultural labourers form an important group which is directly associated with cultivation without any right to the land and any security of employment. They remain outside the

22. According to Bertocci, "Most of the agricultural labour force consists of cultivators who own, or commonly rent or sharecrop part of their farms. Nearly 20 per cent of those employed in agriculture in 1960 were landless labourers and it is likely that their number has increased since the last agricultural census". See Bertocci, P.J. 'East Pakistan: The Harvest of Strife', *South Asian Review*, vol.5, No.1, Oct.1971, p.12.
orbit of all programmes of institutional reform and agricultural development programmes. They are generally hired by the rural gentry, solvent peasants and the work-sarkars of the absentee landholder elites on a daily-wage basis to work in their fields during the time of ploughing, sowing, weeding, reaping and processing of crops. During these seasons there is a higher demand for their labour and the daily wage goes up to Tk.5 (about 20 pence); but during the off-seasons, especially the rainy season and the period between weeding and reaping there is not much demand for their labour in the field. Some of them are occasionally employed for domestic work of various kinds, but this type of employment opportunity can absorb only a fraction of them; and as a result a large number remain unemployed only to starve or to increase the number of thefts which they are compelled to commit in the absence of any type of social security, and any organized association for the ventilation of their grievances. This state of unemployment compels them to take loans from the economically solvent and politically powerful groups in the community. This gives these groups of people immense opportunity to keep the landless labourers in debt and often in servitude binding them in a network of patron-clientage. It is important to note here that the relationships between the employer peasants or landowners and the agricultural labourers of the landless and near-landless category are diverse, ranging from patron-client situations of the jajmani type (social division of labour based on caste or caste-like group distinctions) to a weak market structure for labour on a wage basis. Previously
a labourer would live on the land of his munib, rarely working for anyone else, receiving payment in kind. Thus labourers were tied to proprietors in a feudal type of structure. Although there are certain changes in this type of relationship many elements of the traditional relationship are still there. In most of the cases it has assumed a new character in combining the patron-client elements with some aspects of contractual relationships in a semi-feudalistic type of agrarian structure.

For example, in Rajshahi district and elsewhere in Bangladesh the labourers are generally paid partly in cash and partly in kind. The labourers engaged on a daily wage basis are to be supplied with cooked or uncooked food two or three times a day. Some of them prefer to take food grain instead of money. In a case of appointment of a chakar (agricultural-cum-domestic servant) the elements of patron-client relationship between a chakar and his munib become quite prominent because a chakar stays in his munib's house showing full allegiance and deference to the latter and his family members. He thinks of his munib as a protector par excellence to himself as well as to his family because his subsistence and survival are to a large extent in the hands of his munib. Thus even if he is rebuked and punished for his slight fault he hardly ever protests because it is highly disgraceful on the part of a chakar to argue with his munib and his family members. However, a munib may replace his old chakar by a new one; and a chakar may find a new master. But this sort of change does not significantly alter the pattern of relationship between them. According to our
informants this ideal type of traditional relationship cannot always be found in its pure form; and in fact, because of his growing awareness of his degrading social status and public image and the exploitation and social domination of the munib, a chakar often, though mildly, tries to ventilate his grievances. This is one of the reasons that a munib is found to change his chakars who in turn tries to find a new munib. But the number of such incidents is very low because the number of chakars far exceeds the number of munibs; and moreover, it is not easy for a chakar to get a new master in such an adverse situation. In addition to this, the growth of mutual attachment between a munib and his chakar keeps the incidence low.

From the above discussion it may be argued that an extreme type of socio-economic hierarchy emerges between munibs and landless agricultural labourers. And the munibs taking advantage of the desperate economic condition of these labourers can keep them under control and exploit them under the coverage of patron-clientage, and if need be, use their services and support to maintain or acquire political power.

In addition to the pattern of relations between the agricultural labourers and their munibs, a new type of indirect relationship through a system of krishan-dalali (agricultural labour brokerage) has recently developed between the munibs and the agricultural labourers. In this system a munib distributes agricultural work on a chukti (contract) basis to a krishan-dalal who in turn hires the number of labourers as would be required to finish the work within a specific period of time. He makes payment of the agreed amount usually in two instalments - one at the beginning of the work and the
other at the end of the work to a **krishan-dalal** who then pays wages and gives food to the hired labourers and gets the work done by them. He generally assumes the role of a supervisor and sees that all his labourers do the work properly. In this system a **munib** instead of having direct contact with the labourers deals with a few **krishan-dalals** who are usually seen to be very loyal to him because it is due to the patronage of the **munib** that they can pocket the difference between the amount realized from the **munib** and the amount paid to the labourers in cash and kind. However, the system is largely limited to an agricultural operation which involves a sizeable number of labourers. It is a recent phenomenon and is not yet very popular. But its sociological importance may be seen in the gradual emergence of a group of middlemen between the agricultural labourers and the **munibs** and thereby becoming an important party in the process of exploitation of the **munibs** over the agricultural labourers. It also enables the **munibs** to secure a group of subordinate allies whose interests are tied to the maintenance of the privileged positions of the former. These **dalals** will extend their support to the **munibs** if the latter's privileged position is ever threatened by the exploited groups. Moreover, the **munib** can avoid a direct confrontation with the labourers and thus, keeps himself both structurally and socially away from the labourers but binding them through a third party i.e., the **krishan-dalal**.

The ruling elites often claim that they have already done something to help the landless labourers and peasants in rural areas by activating the system of a rural works programme and that more benefit will be distributed to them
in future by the effective implementation of the distribution of reclaimed lands among these groups of people. Thus on September 10, 1972 the then Minister for Land Reform and Land Administration declared that the land policy of the ruling government was to distribute 1.5 acres of land to each landless labourer. There is nothing wrong with the preoccupation with landless labourers, but the sitting tenants and bargadars who might as well be landless or near-landless (i.e., those cultivators who have less than one acre of land have been included in near-landless category) should have a better claim because many of them already have some agricultural in-puts (i.e., draught animals, agricultural implements, provision of indigenous manures etc.) to apply for the cultivation of lands. It is often alleged (by the opposition political leaders) that it is a deliberate policy of the ruling political elites to bring the reclaimed (reclaimed from those who have more than 100 bighas of land) lands under their as well as their rural allies' control through the landless agricultural labourers who are too poor to procure in-puts for cultivation of such lands and would have no alternative but to sell them, there being no restrictions on transfer, sale and purchase, to the urban absentee landholder elites and their influential kinsmen and allies in rural areas. But only a few landless labourers actually got such lands, and those who got them were recommended by the influential rural elites affiliated to the ruling Awami League.

Malik or Munib and Bargadar Network:

The bargadars cultivate their munibs' lands on oral yearly lease without any occupancy rights and have no legal protection against eviction by the munibs. With the concentration of lands in the hands of the jotedars (large landowners) goes another remarkable feature of the village economy, namely, the combination of grain-dealing and money-lending with landholding which gives the jotedars enormous economic and political power within the village. These jotedars, generally with the connivance of the ruling elites have succeeded in keeping under their control more land than they are legally entitled to hold. It has been reported that some of the jotedars in different districts in Bangladesh, in spite of the government regulation of the maximum ceiling of 100 bighas of land, have still in their possession sometimes more than 1000 bighas as benami (not recorded against anybody's name) or in fictitious names.

24. See 1931 Census of Bengal; Memorandum on the Permanent Settlement, p.40, and Memorandum of the Bengal Krishak Shava, p.42-43; see also Umar, B. Chirasthaie Bandobasthe Bangladesher Krishak, Dacca, 1379 (Bengali era) pp.28-29.

Before the partition of Bengal in 1947 a draft of "The Bengal Bargadar Regulation Bill", proposing some sort of occupancy right to the bargadars was circulated by the then Muslim League Ministry under British rule. But no serious attempt was made to implement it. After the partition the bill was shelved. See The Weekly Millat, January 31, 1947.

25. The term 'jotedar' is used to mean ordinary landholder and sometimes sharecroppers in some parts of West Bengal and Hyderabad in India. See Beteille, A. Studies in Agrarian Social Structure, Oxford University Press, 1974, p.129.

According to Moni Singh, President of the Communist Party of Bangladesh, there are roughly 30 thousand *jotedars* in the country. He terms the *jotedars* as oppressors, and touches on the linkage between the ruling elites and the *jotedars* who provide strong political support to the ruling party in exchange for patronage.

However, in Rajshahi district the *jotedars* have developed a pattern of behaviour which is generally viewed as exploitative, oppressive and at the same time paternalistic in nature. Avoidance of manual work is highly valued and no one belonging to the *jotedar* category would go for any type of manual labour. Being highly influential and powerful in rural areas they have developed close linkages with the urban elites, especially the political and bureaucratic elite members who patronize them in all possible ways to remain entrenched in the power structures of the rural areas as the dominant group so that they can extend political support to them when such a need arises. They are seen to play an active role in establishing connections between the rural voters and urban elites, simultaneously playing the role of a patron to their dependents in agriculture and other rural clients and of a *dalal* (broker) of the ruling elites. However, the *jotedars* form a particular type of group which is quite distinct from other groups of landowners. In fact, the *jotedars* are *maliks* or *munibs* par excellence or

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27. There is no statistical record about the number of *jotedars*. Moni Singh's figure is based on his personal guess. This estimate seems to be very conservative and has got very little statistical validity.

high ranking munibs; whereas the resident or absentee landowners are always treated as ordinary maliks or munibs. Interestingly enough the subsistence farmers are never called munibs because they do not have any control over the life and subsistence of any other group, even though they own a few bighas of land. They are generally termed Krishaks (cultivators) some of whom, at the same time, may be bargadars. But the bargadar category may include both the subsistence farmers and landless peasants. In an oral tenancy arrangement the bargadars are more or less defenceless against munibs because in the socio-economic context of Bangladesh the latter wield disproportionate politico-economic power and still command the customary respect characteristic of feudalism in the present semi-feudalistic agrarian structure.

There is the problem of eviction of the bargadars from the malik’s lands. The question of eviction arises when the bargadars fail to abide by the conditions as set by the maliks as well as when their allegiance and support to the latter become doubtful. If a bargadar is unwilling to surrender the land to the maliks, especially jotedar maliks after he gets an order to do so, they have no difficulty in evicting him by force with the help of their clients and hired men or by giving the land on barga to a stronger party who can easily evict him. For example, A. Salam, an influential local political leader of the ruling party is a rich jotedar malik and owns 203 bighas of land though official records show only 100 bighas recorded against his name. He has leased out 170 bighas to 56 bargadars and manages 33 bighas with the help of a hired work-sarkar, two chakars and some agricultural
labourers. Two of his bargadars did not abide by the conditions set by him. He has asked both of them to surrender the land. One bargadar has acted according to the order of the malik, but got back the land on condition that he will not violate the conditions in future. But the other one is not willing to surrender the land because he thinks that he has not actually violated the conditions of the barga except that he did not turn up in time to meet his munib when the latter ordered him to do so. A. Salam is dissatisfied with this particular bargadar not only because he has violated his orders but also because it has been reported to him by his other bargadars that he supports an opposition political party i.e., the Jatiyo Samajtantrik Dal. Thus in order to evict him by force A. Salam has asked one of his bargadar clients to hire a group of people to evict this disobedient bargadar from his land and to take possession of the same on a barga.

The above example suggests some important points. First, a bargadar may be given a chance for rectification before he is finally evicted from a malik's land. Secondly, the eviction of a bargadar by a malik may take place on political grounds. Thirdly, application of force may be necessary to evict a bargadar; and another bargadar or a potential bargadar may be used by a malik for that purpose by distributing certain patronage to the former. This shows that the existence of patronage system creates a block on the way of emergence of some sort of common interest among the bargadars along a class line though they form a potential class in the agrarian structure.
However, when the *maliks* are not members of the *jotedar* group eviction generally takes place through mutual discussion and the application of force plays minor role. But the number of *bargadars* violating the orders of their *maliks* is quite small and the number of cases of eviction is not many. For example, our data show that out of 236 elite members (who have leased out their lands to the *bargadars*) 21 have evicted some of their *bargadars* on charges of disobedience and anti-*munib* activities, but 6 of them have reinstated some of their *bargadars* on condition that they will not go against the will and interests of their elite *maliks*. In fact, in many cases the *bargadars* are dependent on the *maliks*, especially *jotedar-maliks* for operating capital such as draught animals and loans for purchases of agricultural implements or for living expenses of their families between sowing and harvesting. Thus the *malik-bargadar* relationships are not fully impersonal and contractual in nature and may have existed for generations among the *malik* and *bargadar* families. It may be considered not morally justifiable to break such a tie for the purpose of obtaining some temporary economic benefits. For the *maliks* control over the *bargadars* is often more important than the accruing of high rate of economic benefits. However, once a *bargadar* breaks up the long-standing relationship it will be difficult for him to get someone to recommend for his son's employment, his loan from the Agricultural Co-operative Bank and for getting relief materials. But in the context of very high population pressure on land and few alternative avenues of employment, finding a new *bargadar* is no problem to a *malik*. The *maliks*,
however, generally do not like to evict their bargadars as long as they remain loyal and do not grossly violate the terms and conditions of barga (lease).

The threat of eviction or eviction itself, unjustified though it might be, puts power in the hands of the maliks to secure such conditions that enable them to indulge in their process of exploitation without much trouble. There is no legal provision which would act as deterrent against improper eviction.

In the past in Rajshahi district as in some other districts in North Bengal there were two systems of payment of rent to the malik by the bargadars who were identified according to the mode of payment of rent. In the first system the bargadars paid half the produce of the land to the maliks and the system was known as adhi-barga (share-cropping on 50-50 basis) and the bargadars were known as adhiyars. In the second system the bargadars had to pay a fixed amount of produce to the malik, no matter whether there was any produce in the land or not; and the bargadars were termed as gula-bargadars. But today only the adhi-bargadari system is being practised. However, even today if the bargadars cultivate the lands continuously for a long period they are never granted the right by the maliks to cultivate their lands for more than one year at a time; and every year the oral agreement is renewed for the current period. This device is used to have more effective control over the bargadars. However, by paying Tk. 2 or 3 per bigha rent the  

29. Umar, B. Chirasthaie Bandobasthe Bangadesher Krishak, Dacca, 1379 (Bengali era) p.69.
maliks enjoy half the produce when all other costs of cultivation are borne by the bargadars. But in some parts of the district the maliks are required to supply seeds or the value of the same. But the main burden of cultivation always lies with the bargadars. Although the maliks always remain the main beneficiaries of the bargadari system of cultivation the bargadars also derive some economic benefits which are not often sufficient to meet their minimum demands of life. The lack of alternative employment opportunities compels them to remain tied to the lands.

It is important to note here that the operations of the rural credit mechanism through which the jotedar-maliks exercise control over the labour power and political affairs in rural areas, are largely facilitated by the structure of the market for agricultural produce. The poor bargadars and subsistence farmers have no holding power because they have to buy other necessities of life such as cloth, salt, oil etc. by selling a part of the crops. As a result, they sell a part of their produce almost immediately after the harvest when the market price of the produce generally remains low to the local aratdars (grain-hoarders) or bepari (grain-dealers) who often belong to the jotedar-malik group. These jotedar-maliks hardly go to the market to purchase the grain. They have a number of hired employees and a host of farias (agents) to look after this purchase and its storing. Generally, they have varying number of golas (big store rooms) where they can keep their own produce as well as their purchases to wait until the prices go up in the middle of the cultivation season, when they sell a portion of the stored
grain in the market at a much higher price and give another portion as loans to their poor sharecroppers and subsistence farmers at the high rate which prevails for 4 to 5 months before the harvest; and they are compelled to pay it back at the low rate after the harvest when the market is full of grain brought by the needy cultivators. Thus the turn of the agricultural cycle ends in losses to the bargadars, subsistence farmers and landless labourers of the village and corresponding profits for the jotedar-maliks when they are involved in grain-dealing.

Although not all the jotedar-maliks are involved in grain-dealing most of them have to supply food grains as loans to their dependent clients and poor peasants. According to Umar, in North Bengal (which includes Rajshahi district) a jotedar owns thousands of bighas of lands and about 60 to 70 per cent of peasants are either landless agricultural labourers or sharecroppers. These landless and near-landless peasants are in all respects dependent upon the jotedars for their subsistence. They get lands from jotedars for cultivation, and in their times of need the jotedars give them loans at a higher rate of interest. Our data largely confirms Umar's statement when we find that after meeting the expenses of cultivation and paying half of the produce to the maliks it is difficult for the bargadars to meet the minimum demands of life because, as has already been mentioned, the produce they get is not generally adequate to meet the minimum food requirements of their families. Consequently, during the whole cultivating season they are

30. Ibid., pp.76-77.
compelled to take loans from the *jotedar-maliks* as well as some other solvent and well-to-do *maliks*. But the cunning *maliks* give them loans in such a way that the borrower peasants can just survive; and the recording of inflated amounts of loans against the names of such illiterate and poverty-stricken peasants and *bargadars* is not uncommon. Thus at the year ending the *bargadars* can hardly keep any surplus amount of produce in their hands after the repayment of the loans to their creditor-*maliks*. They again go for loans, and in this process they are trapped in a perpetual indebtedness to their *jotedar* creditors.

It is often alleged by the *maliks* that the *bargadars* misappropriate a certain amount of crops by falsifying the actual amount of produce. But this can never happen when the *bargadars* cultivate the lands of a *jotedar-malik* because the latter would send his agents to the fields at the time of the reaping of the crops to bring one half of the unprocessed crops to his home. The *jotedar*-creditors usually do not disoblige their debtors because their political power and exploitation are largely dependent upon the sharecropping peasants and agricultural labourers who work for them and give them political support, but have no power and organization to protest against the action of their patrons.\(^{31}\)

It is often argued that the burden of debt leads them to such a condition that often they become unable to maintain their families; and as a result, they are compelled to leave the village in search of a job elsewhere. But the scarcity

\(^{31}\) In 1946 there was an attempt to organize the *bargadars* in the *Tebhaga* movement which demanded two-thirds of the produce from the *maliks*. But this movement ultimately failed. See Ray, K. *Chashir-Lorai*, Calcutta, 1946, pp.23-24.
of job opportunity in various regions of Bangladesh becomes a hindrance to their employment; and consequently they are left with no alternative but to become beggars.\textsuperscript{32} The above argument is no doubt applicable to extreme cases. But in general the situation is not that bad and acute. It is true that the politico-economic power along with their social dominance gives the jotedar-maliks a double advantage in exploiting the poor peasants and bargadars and binding them in a network of patron-client relationship. In this type of relationship coercive elements surely play some part, but the mutual need for each other's services, the unequal exchange and the paternalistic attitude of the patrons and deference and loyalty of the clients strengthen this patron-client tie between the jotedar-maliks and bargadars and poor peasants. The patrons' actions are not actually directed to driving their bargadars to a position of destitution and forcing them to leave the village. On the contrary, they want their bargadars and other clients to stay in the village and often around them so that they can use them when necessary; and their services may be requisitioned when the jotedars themselves are involved in competition and conflict with each other over important political positions in the village such as chairmanship, vice-chairmanship and membership in the union parishad. Some of these jotedar-maliks are aspirants to political positions at thana, subdivision and district levels, and hence have to depend on their clients' political support and co-operation, especially at the time of election. The

bargadars and other agricultural labourers who work in their lands are expected to support them in time of their need; but for the full confirmation of their clients' support they are often seen to distribute some extra-patronage in cash or kind among their clients. But the process of exploitation and social dominance of the jotadars remains. From our field data it becomes apparent that the bargadars are always in a disadvantageous position and are more or less forced to allow themselves to be exploited and socially dominated by their patron jotedar-maliks. But in their time of need they invariably approach their patrons to get things done for them. Their demands are varied and diffuse in nature; and the patrons as far as possible and practicable try to meet those demands. For example, Hirendra Bhaduri is a big jotedar and an elite rice trader of Rajshahi town. He is also the chairman of the Meherchandi Union parishad. He comes from Meherchandi village, adjacent to the town. He owns 190 bighas of land though only 100 bighas are recorded against his name; the remaining 90 bighas have been recorded against the names of his two sons. He is an important Awami League worker and is involved in an exchange relationship with the Awami League leaders such as K. Zaman, the Industries Minister, Mesbahuddin, General Secretary of the District Awami League etc. who give him political protection in his hoarding and smuggling activities in exchange for political support and some financial contribution to the ruling party fund. However, he has leased out most of his lands to 46 bargadars who are seen to approach him for loans, relief materials etc. Some of them also request him to secure the help of K. Zaman and other ruling party leaders to manipulate some permits of corrugated iron sheets in their favour.
The jotedar-maliks are, of course, quite conscious of the danger of future concerted movements of the bargadars and agricultural labourers against jotedsars' exploitation and social dominance. They apprehend that some political leaders of the leftist parties (i.e., the Communist Party of Bangladesh, the NAP (B) etc.) may try to incite their bargadars and agricultural labourers to rise against them by giving these exploited groups hopes for higher material gains in the form of ownership of the lands they cultivate. This induces them to try to keep the bargadars quiet by satisfying their minimum demands which hardly affect their privileged positions. Moreover, because of long and continuous face-to-face contact, association and informal relationship between the jotedar-maliks and bargadars they develop some sort of attachment to each other; and as far as possible both the parties do not like to break the relationship if they do not find any other means to profit themselves.

The jealousy, conflict and competition among the jotedar-maliks for capturing important political positions have to some extent enhanced the importance of the bargadar-clients who are constantly drawn by opposing parties to their camps often by promising to give more and better quality lands on barga and to give loans without many rigid conditions and also to help their sons in getting education and employment. This has created a situation in which some of the bargadars have been seen to change or shift their allegiance from one patron to other, but most of the bargadars remain attached to their own patrons because they are not sure whether promised favours would ever be given to them if they change their
allegiance to a new patron. This shows that the changing political situation and the introduction of the elective principle in the recruitment to important political positions have caused certain changes in socio-economic relationship between the jotedar-maliks and their bargadars and agricultural labourers. Today the necessity of a patron-client relationship has become more and more important, and the nature of this type of old relationship has undergone certain changes. For instance, the magnitude and intensity of coercive measures against the bargadars and agricultural labourers have been minimized and the rate of exploitation of the jotedar-maliks over their clients has been to some extent reduced; and some sort of scope has been created for the clients to find shelter and protection in case they decide to sever connections with their former patrons. The jotedars are not the only maliks whose lands are cultivated by the bargadars. There are thousands of urban elites and their kindred in urban and rural areas who lease out their lands to the bargadars on more flexible terms and conditions. Because the elite-maliks are mostly absentee city- or town-dwellers and are only occasional visitors to their rural homes, and most of them prefer to have the share of the processed crops they have to rely more and more on the co-operation of the bargadars. In this situation the process of exploitation works in both ways, that is, the maliks by supplying lands and often seeds get more than half of the produce, while the bargadars by taking advantage of the

absence of the *maliks* or their agents during the time of processing of crops often falsify the actual amount of produce and give the *malika* slightly more than one-third of the actual produce although the lands are leased out to them on condition of equal sharing of the actual produce between the two parties. This, of course, does not mean the termination of the process of exploitation and social dominance of the *maliks* over the *bargadars*; it does, however, reduce the rate of exploitation.

Hence in Rajshahi district some social and economic legacies of the old zamindary system continue in the form of the persistence of the landowner-tenant nexus, the ambivalence of the large and medium sized landowners toward an active role in land management and the apathy and resourcelessness of the exploited *bargadars* and poor and small peasants. This situation is perpetuated by the pressures of population on land which is unrelieved by economic opportunities outside agriculture. In this situation tenancy and small units of cultivation have become chronic features of the agrarian structure of the district. These features are further re-enforced by the low technological level of monsoon-based agriculture which makes it profitable for the *maliks* to continue leasing out their lands to land-hungry tenants rather than engage in self-cultivation or more active involvement in land management. So Qadir says,

"Renting the land out on cash or share-cropping is a sure and profitable means of income". 34

34. Qadir, S.A. *Village Life in Dhaneswar*, Pakistan Academy for Rural Development, Comilla, East Pakistan, 1960, p.120.
Although unfortunately we have no data on the actual money or income made by the maliks and the bargadars in the bargadari system of cultivation we have observed that in this district the landowner-tenant (including the bargadars and agricultural labourers) system forms a part of a wider social system which assigns the landowners, especially the large and medium-sized landowners a paternalistic and protective role in relation to the bargadars and landless and near-landless agricultural labourers. A rich malik is idealized as a patron of the bargadars, landless agricultural labourers and poor peasants who are in turn viewed as clients. This conception of the superior malik as a protector not only, to some extent, sets limits to his acquisitiveness but also may induce him to fulfil certain positive obligations toward the weaker section of the community. Moreover, the force of paternalism often not only kept economic exploitation within its limits in normal times but also, to some extent, prevented the fact of exploitation being fully perceived as exploitation. Today although the paternalistic elements in this patron-client tie have been largely reduced the tie remains but in somewhat different form. The survival and existence of this sort of tie are mainly due to the prevalence of semi-feudalistic agrarian system in which the involved parties need each other's service. Moreover, this type of patron-client tie has been reinforced by the fact that many elite maliks, especially political elite-maliks living in various cities and towns generally feel the necessity of maintaining this type of patron-client network because they will be able to manipulate it quite usefully to maintain their positions in the power structures of the community. Keeping this in view the
elite-maliks in addition to renting out their lands on barga distribute or promise to distribute patronage in various ways to satisfy the minimum demands of their clients and also to recruit more and more potential clients so that they can secure the support and services of their clients in time of their need. For example, the political elite-maliks in Rajshahi town are maintaining direct or indirect patron-client ties with their peasant clients in rural areas of the district for their own necessity because their continuance in important political positions is, to a considerable extent, dependent upon the amount of political support, especially at times of elections, they can secure from their clients and allies many of whom will act as their agents. But the process of economic exploitation and socio-political domination of the maliks does not disappear because the clients lacking any effective organizational set-up to represent their interests usually do not strongly protest at this process as long as it does not become a threat to their minimum subsistence requirements and survival. However, the urban-based elite-maliks have been largely successful in recruiting many rural-based jotedar-maliks and ordinary malik as their clients and allies. They distribute favours to them and help them in retaining their privileged positions in the agrarian social system and relations. And in return they get the political support of the latter which enables them to maintain and often enhance their privileged positions in power relations and decision-making process in the community, and thereby facilitates their process of politico-economic domination over the general mass of population. Generally these urban elite-maliks, especially the political leaders have their
power base in rural areas within the framework of their kinship networks because many of their kindred still live in rural areas and form a group of mia-shahebs or babus (gentlemen) who are in many cases matrimonially connected with the old declining zamindars and taluqdars and jotedar-maliks. These people are actually bound up with the urban elite-maliks in a network of patron-clientage and help their patrons in extending such a network of relationships directly or indirectly to the general mass of the rural population. This type of patron-client tie between the urban elite-maliks and the jotedar-maliks and mia-shaheb- or babu-maliks is largely governed by their mutual interests and is reinforced by kinship ties; and the process of economic exploitation and social domination hardly becomes prominent. But this patron-client tie helps both the parties to exploit the rural proletariats and would-be proletariats. The following example may be cited in support of the above statement:

A.R. Chowdhury, an elite lawyer, is an influential member of the executive committee of the local Awami Jubo League (i.e. Awami League’s Youth Front). He is also a rich landholder possessing 98 bighas of lands in his village and neighbouring villages. He has leased out his lands to a group of 48 bargadars. His father-in-law, Z. Chowdhury is a jotedar-malik in the village and owns 200 bighas of lands of which 100 bighas have been recorded against his son, Kamal Chowdhury’s name. His wife (i.e. A.R. Chowdhury’s mother-in-law) is the daughter of Nilu Mia, a declining taluqdar from the neighbouring village. A.R. Chowdhury’s brother, Makhan Chowdhury is also a rich landholder and owns 84 bighas of lands. He is the chairman of the local union parishad. A.R. Chowdhury has
some other landholding relatives in the village. These people, in fact, dominate the local politics and are generally known to the villagers as mia-shaheb. They have largely leased out their lands to the bargadars and are managing a small portion of their lands with the help of hired agricultural labourers. They not only get produce of their lands but also use them as resources to obtain control over a good number of people who provide them with political support and many other types of services. These kindred are in alliance with A.R. Chowdhury who help them in securing certain government-controlled resources such as agricultural loans which they rarely use for the purpose of increasing the productivity of their lands. This type of alliance has enabled A.R. Chowdhury and his allies to keep up their process of exploitation over the poor villagers within the framework of patron-clientage with the latter.

Land Reform:

A careful study of any agrarian change in Bangladesh would reveal that the land reform is sponsored by the elites, especially the ruling elites. It is important to note that commitment to land reform was and is very common amongst the ruling elites of Bangladesh. After the liberation of Bangladesh it was assumed by many that the new government based on the so-called ideals of nationalism, socialism, democracy and secularism, would undertake steps to rationalize the unfavourable tenurial system prevailing in the country and to alleviate the sufferings of the small cultivators.

According to the declaration of the late President of Bangladesh, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the land ceiling per family would be reduced to 100 bighas\footnote{36} and small cultivators will be made more productive. In his speech the late President talked about increasing the productivity of the small peasants, about introducing co-operative farming, about improved methods of agriculture etc. But very significantly he did not say anything about sharecropping, possibly the worst remnant of feudalism.\footnote{37} He was silent on the issue of the bargadari system of cultivation because he himself and most of the elites in Bangladesh had and have a vested interest in the continuity of the system. However, his statement amply demonstrates the stated concern of the ruling elites for land reform whatever might be the nature of such a reform. The main reasons for their preoccupation with the question of land reform possibly are: (a) to minimize the growing tensions among the suffering and exploited peasants who are, it is alleged, incited and backed by the progressive and revolutionary political elements; (b) the danger of radical redistribution of lands among the landless and near-landless peasants and the abolition of the bargadari system; (c) the danger of redefinition of 'cultivator' excluding the non-cultivating interests which are up to now included in the category of 'cultivator'; and (d) acquiring a resource base which enables the elites, especially the ruling elites to distribute patronage among their clients and potential clients, and the creation of some

\footnote{36. See The Holiday, April 9, 1972.}
\footnote{37. During the Ayub regime the 100-bigha ceiling of 1950 Act was raised to 375 bighas. See the East Pakistan Ordinance No.XV of 1961.}
groups of vested interest in rural sector which would support them to maintain their power and uphold the semi-feudalistic arrangement of the land tenure system.

The actual expression of the concern of the ruling elites and their associates can be seen in the post-liberation land reform in Bangladesh when its main provisions, under Presidential Orders 96 and 98 state that: (i) families holding 25 bighas (about 8.28 acres) or less are exempted from payment of land revenue and (ii) the maximum amount of land retainable by a family has been refixed at the original ceiling of 100 bighas (about 33 acres). A little thought about the main provisions of the Presidential Orders would reveal that the ruling elites have not given much attention to the question of breaking the concentration of lands in the hands of the big rural landowners and the absentee elite-maliks. There is nothing in the way of abolishing the bargadari system or giving the bargadars any occupancy right over the lands they cultivate for their maliks. There is no move to change the old definition of 'cultivator' which includes both cultivating and non-cultivating interests. It seems to me that the retention of non-cultivating landowners under the category of 'cultivator', which logically should include only the cultivating peasants, is one of the devices of the ruling elites, who themselves are non-cultivating landowners, to frustrate any radical move in the direction of land reform policy, because any change in the definition of 'cultivator' to mean the actual tillers would go against their own interest as well as the interest of their recruitment base and their allies in rural and urban areas. Thus the very definition of the term 'cultivator' as is used in Bangladesh is a great
hindrance in the way of any real land reform which might change the mode of production and production relations and hence the pattern of social stratification and social relations which are, at least partly, dependent upon the mode of production and production relations. So Thorner says,

"If you do not totally reject the principle of non-working landlords you cannot prevent the village oligarchs from acting as landlords. As soon as you leave the door barely open for property income to non-working proprietors - which you do when you permit landownership to exist unassociated with labour in the fields - you allow all the evils of concentration of power at the village level to come trotting back...."

However, the Presidential Orders mention the redistribution of released lands (lands taken away from the owners who possess more than 100 bighas) and the Khash lands (lands under the direct control of the state) among the landless, near-landless and poor peasants with less than 1.5 acres of lands.

The provision of exemption of land revenue up to 25 bighas has no doubt given some relief to the subsistence cultivators but the extent of benefits derived by some elite members and their kindred is much larger. It may be considered to be a device by which the ruling elites want to gain the popularity and support of the general mass of the population for their general policies and programmes. It may be thought of as a large-scale distribution of patronage among the people having 25 bighas

38. Thorner, D. The Agrarian Prospect in India, Delhi School of Economics, 1956, p.82.
or less of agricultural lands in exchange for their political support which will enable them to remain in power. The exemption of revenue up to 25 bighas has brought some benefits to certain groups of people, but so far as production and production relations are concerned this exemption means almost nothing because it has not at all affected the semi-feudalistic production relations in the agrarian structure of the community. From the land policy of the ruling elites it is quite evident that in the future plan of economic reconstruction the system of share-cropping and with it semi-feudalistic production relations will remain in force. This will impede any attempt for a land reform designed for the real benefit of the suffering peasants and agricultural labourers. Hence as long as the ruling elites have vested interests in the prevailing semi-feudalistic type of production relations in agriculture no land reform measures are likely to be adopted and implemented which try to replace the prevailing production relations by new ones that will remove the groups with vested interests and stop the process of economic exploitation and social domination of the privileged over the under-privileged mass of the population. The land reform policy of the present government clearly shows that the ruling elites are not actually interested in changing the prevailing production relations, especially the bargadari system. In fact, they have formed an alliance with those groups who are trying to protect their property interests in industry, trade and commerce.

The retention of 100 bighas as the maximum permitted size of landholding per family or 10 bighas per family member whichever is larger as introduced by the Act of 1950 are too
liberal in the context of the total available land in the
country and the average size of a farm holding of only
2.6 acres. It appears in fact that there were only 529
families having more than 375 bighas of lands.

According to The State Acquisition and Tenancy (Third
Amendment) Order, 1972 (P.0.98) all the heads of the
families, who either individually or with other members
of their families held or hold more than 25 bighas of
agricultural lands were directed to submit a statement
of their lands to the revenue officers. So far only 5,371
families have filed returns showing excess lands, and the
total area of excess land declared is 76,712 acres in
Bangladesh; in Rajshahi district 800 families have submitted
such reports showing excess lands of 5,892 acres.

Obviously the distributive impact of this measure is not
likely to be very significant for the landless and near-
landless peasantry; but the distribution of these excess
lands plus the Khask land is quite significant for the ruling
elites in their endeavour to use them as a resource base to
distribute patronage among their clients and potential
clients. From that standpoint it serves a good purpose for
the ruling elites to spread their network of patron-client
relationships in the district as elsewhere in Bangladesh.

39. For a detailed discussion, see Akef, Q.M.A. 'A Proto-Type
System for the Control of Land use and Settlement in the
Planned Development of Bangladesh' - Ph.D. thesis,
41. Report of the Land Revenue Administration Enquiry
Committee, East Pakistan, 1962-63, East Pakistan
42. Data were collected from the Ministry of Land
Administration and Land Reforms, Govt. of Bangladesh,
Dacca.
However, originally this legislation had sought to give retrospective effect to the day of liberation (December 16, 1971). The amendment made the date for the announcement of a ceiling on landholdings (Feb. 20, 1972) the starting point for the application of the provisions of land ceilings. Thus a large number of persons who had succeeded in transferring land in this interim period in anticipation of such a move by the government were able to by-pass the legislation. Another provision of the land ceiling legislation related to the announcement that the ceiling could be progressively reduced in order to ensure intensive cultivation on the land, and the distribution of surplus land among the landless peasants depending on the 'objective' condition obtaining in Bangladesh. Such a proviso can but only create greater uncertainty among the farmers who may be induced to transfer their land even though the area owned by them was less when they are promptly enacted with an element of surprise and speedily executed. If expectations are raised earlier, the reforms, when sought to be enacted, tend to be self-defeating.

Since the present land legislation allows the tenure holders to cultivate their lands with the help of the bargadars or labourers, and they are defined as cultivators in the Act of 1950, P.0.96 and P.0.98, the old interests remain entrenched in a new guise. Many of the old large holdings have been divided through manipulation, into parcels of 100 bighas or less and distributed under the names of sons, daughters, other relations or even fictitious persons. Some large landholders have been successful in
keeping their excess lands as *benami* with the help of the elite revenue officials and the influential political leaders of the community. According to our informants, some elite members possessing more than 100 bighas of land had or have adopted the policy of transferring the excess lands to the names of their sons, daughters etc. There are many examples of such incidents; but owing to limitation of space we shall cite only three examples below:

**Example 1:** Abul Bashar Chowdhury, an elite trader and a jotedar possessed 275 bighas of land; but just before the passing and implementation of the 1950 Act he transferred 100 bighas of his lands to the name of his son, Abul Kalam Chowdhury and arranged his son's accommodation in a separate house in the town in order to show the land reclaiming authority that his son had a separate family living in a separate residence. He also managed to transfer another 75 bighas to the name of a fictitious person with the help of some elite officers of the land record and land registration departments who did the job in return for illegal gratification from the former. Moreover, they (these officers) were asked by their friend Azharuddin, a former MP of the then ruling Muslim League, who is a maternal uncle of Abul Bashar Chowdhury to help his nephew in his effort to maintain his possession over all his lands.

**Example 2:** Miraj Ahmed, one of the vice-presidents of the local branch of the ruling Awami League, is a jotedar and owns 97 bighas of land. But recently owing to his father's sudden death he has inherited his father's 98 bighas of lands and other properties. This has brought his total amount of
land to 195 bighas of which, according to the land legislation, 95 bighas must be surrendered to the government authority. But to avoid the surrendering of his excess land to the state he has recently, though illegally, transferred 96 bighas of lands to the names of his two sons by manipulating the case with the high ranking officials of the land record and land registration departments. In doing so he was helped by his political patron K. Zaman, the Industries Minister because he not only provides political support to his patron but also plays an important role in mobilizing political support for the latter.

Example 3: K. Zaman, the Industries Minister is a jotedar having 210 bighas of lands in his possession. His father and brothers are also jotedars. Before 1950 his father was a big jotedar owning 1,200 bighas of lands. But at the time of the passing of the 1950 Act he transferred a major portion of his lands to the names of his sons and was successful in keeping a portion of the same as benami through manipulation. So K. Zaman got 100 bighas of land from his father. But he purchased another 110 bighas of land after 1961 when the permitted land ceiling was raised. However, just before the announcement of the land legislation of the ruling government in which he took an active part he transferred his excess lands to the names of his wife and sons and daughters. His important political position was enough to do so quite easily because the elite officers who handled the matter were, in fact, eager to please him so that they

43. See footnote 37, p.309.
are able to secure his help in their promotion, transfer etc. However, he has leased out all his lands to a group of 67 bargadars. This example shows that even a Minister has avoided the surrendering of his excess lands through manipulation and that he has vested interest in the bargadari system of cultivation.

Thus it is relevant to say that the ceiling of 100 bighas has become almost meaningless because of the involvement of the elites in the manipulation of things in favour of some rural gentry and urban elites who own more than 100 bighas of lands even though land records show only 100 bighas against their respective names. Some of these people are relatives, or clients of some of the influential and powerful ruling elites who themselves own more than 100 bighas of lands though in record none of them possesses more than the permitted ceiling of 100 bighas. Thus there is no change in the mode of operation of most of the previous owners, and in terms of transfer the regulation did not help the landless or near-landless peasants - if at all, it helped the occupier-holder, the one who cultivates with the help of labourers, share-croppers or renters. Most of the urban and rural elites fall into the category of occupier-holder. Our data show that all the elite members of Rajshahi town are occupier-holders. So one may think that the land reform measures have been very carefully devised by the ruling elites to safeguard their own interests as well as the interests of their allies in rural and urban areas.
In Bangladesh as in some other south Asian countries the general commitment to land reform finds concrete expression in the programme for: (a) the abolition of intermediary tenures; (b) tenancy reforms; (c) fixing of ceilings on agricultural holdings; and (d) reorganization of agriculture, including consolidation of holdings, prevention of fragmentation, development of service co-operatives and limited promotion of co-operative farms.

As regards Bangladesh many of these commitments remain as paper work, never to be implemented. But the main problem of land reform in Bangladesh as in some south Asian countries is the high degree of land concentration in the hands of a minority of landholders who neither fully manage nor cultivate their lands and the extensive dissociation from landownership of a large number of peasants who actually manage and cultivate the lands of the maliks over which they have generally no proprietary rights. Thus the ruling elites in Bangladesh are of the view that tenancy is not in conformity either with agricultural efficiency or with social justice; and therefore, it should be replaced by owner-cultivation. But at the same time they include the landholders who get their lands cultivated with

44. For a detailed discussion, see P.0.96 & 98, Govt. of People's Republic of Bangladesh, Dacca; First Five-year Plan, Govt. of Pakistan, p.312; and First Five-year Plan, Govt. of India, pp.184-207.

the help of the bargadars and agricultural labourers in the category of owner-cultivator. They are neither willing to transfer the lands to the actual tillers by large-scale redistribution of lands among the small peasants, bargadars and agricultural labourers nor to induce the maliks themselves to undertake self-cultivation through hired labour instead of leasing out their lands to the bargadars. This shows that the ruling elites are in favour of a policy of curtailing but not eliminating landlordism and of upgrading the upper layer of tenants and of giving some relief to other tenants by way of exempting land revenue up to 25 bighas of lands. Here we can find the significance of the statement made by a perceptive scholar on land reform in Asia, Hung-Chae Tai when he has suggested that the character of the land reform programme in the developing countries is determined by the character of the power-élites more specifically by "the relation between the elites and the landed class".46

In Rajshahi district and elsewhere in Bangladesh between the large landholders on the one hand and the poor tenants, bargadars and labourers on the other, there exists an intermediate stratum (i.e., the maddhabitta category) of resident and absentee landholders who are intimately bound up in a network of kinship and patron-client ties with the urban-based elite members. These elites of various categories controlling the power structures of the community in various capacities, are mostly recruited from this urban and rural maddhabitta.

category which is largely dependent upon the bargadari system and the agricultural labourers for the cultivation of their lands without contributing much to the actual process of production. These maddhabitta people generally avoid any type of manual work in their lands because of their fear of losing prestige in the community as manual labour in the land would brand them as chasha (cultivator). This will mean the loss of their social status, prestige and privileges and a deviation from social values of the maddhabitta category. However, the bargadari system and the hiring of labourers enable them to have control over a group of people whose political support is valuable to themselves as well as to their elite kinsmen and allies in urban areas. Thus if the bargadari system is abolished and lands are distributed to the actual tillers of lands the maddhabitta category will have to undergo the maximum suffering in view of the fact that either they must go to the fields for cultivation of their lands or lose their lands, in which many elite members have interests as heirs, to the bargadars and poor peasants who have so far acted as their dependent clients. Similarly, many elite members will lose their lands to the actual tillers. The elites cannot think of such a situation as will force their kinsmen and allies in the maddhabitta category to cultivate their own lands themselves or reduce them to poverty by taking away their lands to be distributed to the landless and poor tillers and bargadars. But more importantly the redistribution of lands to the tillers will mean the end of their direct and indirect control over a large group of people whose support is necessary for the ruling elites to achieve their political goals.
One important issue about the land reform policy of the ruling elites is that the political programme of these people is always given top priority and any type of land reform, adopted by them should be in harmony with that programme. In Bangladesh and hence in Rajshahi district the ruling elites have adopted only those land reform measures which are compatible to their programme of perpetuation of private property with some limitation and the maintenance of hierarchical arrangements of social groups, differing in social status, wealth and power. And when the ruling party's policy is to secure political support by the distribution of patronage the ruling elites are not likely to adopt any land reform policy which will be a bar to the distribution of patronage and the growth of the patron-client network of relationship. According to our informants, the local Awami League party hierarchy in collaboration with the bureaucrats in charge of distribution of excess and Khash lands has managed to distribute these lands mostly amongst their supporters and would-be supporters whose political support, especially during the time of election, is very valuable for the ruling party to remain in power in the future. They have also pointed out that some of the ruling party elites have acquired a significant amount of land by recording it in some fictitious names through manipulation. The following example will help to understand the process: Alauddin, the President of the District Awami

League is very friendly with the Deputy Commissioner of Rajshahi and some other higher bureaucrats of the Regional Revenue Department. He helped his clients, Mazu Shek, Abed Ali, Haradhan Sarkar etc. and potential clients, Fazal, Zahur, Bedu Shek, Rohini Das etc. to get a few bighas of lands allotted against their names by the dealing bureaucrats. He also managed to take possession of 31 bighas of Khash lands recorded against the names of some fictitious persons with the help of the same bureaucrats. These bureaucrats did the job because they were after the favours (promotion, transfer, permanency etc.) from the Awami League leaders.

The above discussion shows that the land reform measures of the ruling elites instead of affecting them adversely have benefited them in various ways. Thus the problem of land tenure system in Rajshahi as well as other districts in Bangladesh cannot really be solved by mere adoption of this or that specific land reform measure. The obstacles to any enduring solution are found to be deep-rooted in the social organization and the socio-economic and political relations between various groups of people in a semi-feudalistic agrarian structure. Purely economic factors and considerations and social justice hardly play any dominant role in the land reform policy of the ruling elites.
CHAPTER 6
Dalali (Brokerage) System

This chapter deals with the problem of how dalali enters into the interactive process and network of exchange relationships of the elite members of the community.

Before taking up the discussion of the problem it is necessary to distinguish between a dalal (broker) and a patron in order to obtain a clear picture of the functioning of the system. Defining brokerage as a business in which a broker's capital consists of his personal relations with people and his credit of what others think this capital to be, and referring to the brokers as the professional manipulators of people and information to bring about communication J. Boissevain has made a distinction between a broker and a patron when he says,

"A broker differs from a patron in that the former has control over second order resources (i.e. contacts and connections) and the latter over first order resources". 1

A.C. Mayer has also made a distinction between a patron and a broker. According to him the patron recruits followers by his power to dispense favours. The broker, on the other hand, is a middleman attracting followers who believe him to be able to influence the persons who control the favours. A further difference between a patron and a broker is that whereas the client of the former is only interested in his relation with the patron and does not care about the sources

of patron's power, the client of the latter has a relation with person with whom the broker is in contact and indeed has called in the broker to influence the relationship to his advantage. The implication is that there is more contact with the outside in the brokerage system. However, Mayer has made it clear that the same person can play the role of a patron and a broker when he argues,

"The leader in a local government system, on the other hand is constantly aware of his electorate for his position depends entirely on its support. As a patron his favours are invariably limited and he may not be able to spread them over the minimum 51% of the electorate which he needs to support him. As a broker, on the other hand, he can make promises to influence outsiders on a widely varying number of matters and can blame these outsiders if the favours do not materialize; hence at least in theory he can recruit a larger clientele than he can as patron".

In Scott's view,

"The diffuse claims of the patron-client tie actually make it normal for a patron to act as a broker for his clients when they must deal with third parties".

In our study the question of role performance has been found to be the important factor in making a distinction between an elite member's role as a patron and that as a broker. Here the act of a broker refers to the function of an intermediary who arranges an exchange relationship between the two parties who are not in direct contact,

3. Ibid., p.169.
of course, paying full attention to his own interest. This involves a three-party exchange in which a dalal does not himself control the resources transferred from one party to the other. On the contrary, the act of a patron refers to the distribution of resources which he himself controls to his clients and potential clients.

A question may arise here why should the elite members who have varying degrees of control over patronage resources play the role of a dalal? To answer this question we can say that in the first place, the diverse nature of demands of the clients and potential clients for patronage puts an obvious limitation on the resources directly controlled by the patrons to meet these demands because of the prevailing division of labour and the distribution of power among the elite members. This situation creates difficulties even for a super-elite member of a particular occupational group. For example, a higher bureaucrat will have direct control over the patronage resources in his own department, but he will not have any direct control over the patronage resources, say, in the University of Rajshahi. Thus if a client of the Deputy Commissioner (D.C.) requests help in getting a job in the university he can assist his client only by playing the role of a dalal to manipulate the case in favour of his client by exploiting his direct or indirect linkage with the appointing authority. If the D.C. is to take the help of someone directly linked up with him as well as with the appointing authority he also puts another man in the role of a dalal. This man may be his patron or client or friend.
This example extends support to Mayer's argument that in a brokerage system in the network of relationship between a dalal and his clients a third party i.e., the dispenser of favours is involved; and this situation creates a condition where the network of relationship has a wider spread.\(^5\)

But to add to Mayer's argument the example also shows that a dalal may put another person in the role of a dalal. Similarly this person may take the help of another person to get things done. This shows that the use of indirect linkages leads to the multiplicity of the parties in a dalali network in which the involved parties are not necessarily bound up in a patron-client tie. Some of these parties may be involved in a horizontal alliance. Secondly, for the political elite members the playing of the role of a dalal has become an essential part of their activities because they are required to secure patronage resources such as licences, permits, jobs etc. controlled by the governmental bureaucratic machinery and various other semi-autonomous and autonomous organizations for at least some of their clients and potential clients. Moreover, a political leader, say, an MP is expected to be there in the parliament to divert the benefits in the direction of his constituents, to help individuals to get what they want out of the Administration, and to give them a hand when they get into trouble with the officials.\(^6\)

Thirdly, an elite member can often move to a higher position by becoming a dalal of the dispenser of favours or of a powerful and influential elite member who is able

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to help him on this matter.

However, it is also necessary to make a distinction between a client and a dalal. Here also the distinction is based on the factor of role performance. The role of a client refers to the showing of allegiance, the rendering of services and support etc. to a patron in exchange for patronage in one form or another. The meaning of the role of a broker has been mentioned earlier. So it is possible for a person to play the role of a client as well as a broker simultaneously. It may be noted here that a person may play the role of a patron, dalal and client simultaneously.

Now we may proceed to discuss the functioning of the dalali in the interactive process and the network of exchange relationships of the elite members of the community. We shall concentrate on the following arenas: (i) economic sphere; (ii) matrimonial alliance; (iii) politico-administrative arena; and (iv) academic sphere.

(i) Although the concept of dalali refers to the mediating, linking and manipulative functions of an individual acting as a middleman or agent between two or more parties interested in certain transactions, the implication of dalali as a business mechanism in economic sphere is somewhat different from that in other spheres. In economic matters the exchange relationship between a dalal and the parties for which he acts as a middleman is largely contractual in nature because generally a dalal in the economic field is engaged by the industrial and commercial or trading elite members on the basis of a commission. He may even be a regular employee.

7. See pp. 324-25.
in his employer's establishments. The economic dalala are mostly professionals and are required to function under certain formal conditions. As long as this exchange relationship remains purely contractual in nature the employer does not feel the need to play the role of a dalal himself to manipulate things in favour of his own dalal because an economic dalal in a purely contractual relationship is not expected at least theoretically, to make any demand on his employer for other kinds of favour except his commission or salary.

But in a community where the nature of relationships is largely multiplex in which the exchange relationship in a particular sphere whether contractual or not gives rise to exchange relationship in other spheres of life it is hard to find any significant number of cases where the relationship between an economic dalal and his employer remains strictly contractual in nature. In most of the cases the relationship generally transcends the boundary of a contractual tie and extends to other socio-political spheres where the relationship may be informal and personal in nature. When this happens the relationship assumes the form of a patron-client tie in which an economic dalal finds himself in the role of a client and a dalal simultaneously to his employer-patron; and both the parties can have informal type of exchange relations. Thus an economic dalal may be asked by his patron to render him services in addition to his normal contractual function of economic brokerage. Similarly, a dalal-client acquires the privileges of making such demands on his patron which may not have any connection whatsoever with his contractual
function. For example, he may be asked by his patron to act as a marriage broker to find out a suitable spouse for his son or daughter; and if the patron is a politically ambitious man he would ask his dalal-client to give him political support as well as to mobilize the same for him. In return for these services a dalal-client may ask his employer-patron to secure the admission of his son in a school or college or to help him in securing a job for his son; he may even ask for his patron's help in securing a permit for some bags of cement or bundles of corrugated iron sheets from a higher bureaucrat.

The following example may be cited to show the process: Mirzan Hossain is an elite rice trader and owns a big rice-trading firm in the town. He supplies rice to some wholesale rice traders of Dacca. Every year he sends his dalals - Kanu Basak and Shahed Ali - to Dacca to finalize the price of rice with the Dacca-based rice traders. He has also four dalals such as Fazal, Kasem, Jafar and Haider who are engaged in purchasing rice from the farmers in rural areas immediately after the cropping season when the price of rice goes down because of an adequate supply of rice in the market. All these four dalals are seasonally engaged for a period of three months on the basis of a commission. But Mirzan Hossain is also involved in illegal rice-trading with some elite rice traders of Maldah and Murshidabad towns of West Bengal (India). He maintains a group of six dalals such as Badal, Majnu, Ahmed, Belayet, Kamal Ray and Hannan who work as his regular agents in his smuggling of rice to his friends across the border. These dalals get a certain commission for their work.
The above discussion shows that all the dalals have a contractual relationship with their employer, Mirzan Hossain. But in my informal discussions with Mirzan Hossain and his dalals it has been possible to ascertain that most of these dalals have developed a multiplex type of relationship with Mirzan Hossain, who has assumed the role of an employer-patron to the former. They not only receive a commission or salary but also approach him for loans and the supply of rice on credit. They also seek his protection in case of need and often request him to manipulate things in their favour. Thus Kanu Basak could secure a clerical job for his son, Manabendra Basak in the Rajshahi Municipality with the help of his employer-patron who could manipulate the case with the help of his friend Alauddin, the President of the District Awami League who is a friend of Nazmul Huda, the Vice-chairman of the Municipality. Similarly, Hannan got a loan of Tk.250 from his employer-patron on the occasion of his daughter's marriage. Moreover, Badal, Majnu, Ahmed and Kamal Ray were arrested by the border security force on February 12, 1975 while trying to pass 300 mounds of rice to Mirzan Hossain's Indian partners' agents. Belayet and Hannan who could manage to flee away immediately rushed to Rajshahi town to communicate the news of the arrest of their colleagues to their employer-patron who took up the matter with the Deputy Commissioner of Rajshahi (the D.C.) with whom he is very friendly to get his dalal-clients released from the custody of the border security force. He asked the D.C. whether he should take the help of his political patron and
relation K. Zaman, the Industries Minister, in this matter. The D.C. told him that it would not be necessary because he (the D.C.) had the power to release these prisoners on bail. The D.C. showed this favour to Mirzan Hossain because the latter is a distant relation of his patron, K. Zaman. Moreover, Mirzan Hossain occasionally entertains the D.C. and his family members to dinner.

However, Mirzan Hossain has secured and is securing the services of these dalal-clients for various purposes which have nothing to do with the contractual part of the relationship. For example, he asked his dalal-clients to extend their political support to his patron, K. Zaman in the election of 1973 because he gets political protection and many other favours from K. Zaman.

The above example shows that Mirzan Hossain's network of dalali cross-cuts both the community and national boundaries and gets some political leaders and higher bureaucrats involved in the process.

(ii) Dalali plays an important role in the matrimonial alliances among the elite members as well as the non-elite population of the community because marriage is largely a family affair and a matter of negotiation between the wife-giving and wife-receiving family. Moreover, the close adult relations (i.e. grandfather, father, elder brother, maternal and paternal uncle etc.) do not generally like to initiate the matter personally mainly to avoid the risk of being refused by the other party. The refusal from the

8. For a detailed discussion, see Chapter 3, pp.186-187.
other party is always thought to be humiliating for the proposing relatives. Thus the services of a ghatak (marriage broker) become necessary for the establishment of matrimonial alliances. The ghataks perform the role of middlemen in the negotiation of a marriage. They collect information about the prospective bride and bridegroom and their families and facilitate the communication between the interested families. They also make the proposal for the marriage. They are generally classified into two categories: (a) professional ghataks who accept the position of a marriage broker as a part of their occupation and make a good living out of it. They are paid fees in cash or kind for their services. But these fees are neither formally agreed upon between a ghatak and his employer nor fixed in any way. This suggests the informal character of the transaction. A professional ghatak not only receives the fees but also tries to secure patronage from the heads of the involved families who, in turn, can also ask him to render many other types of services such as purchasing some vegetables from the market, accompanying them to their rural homes etc. They may also ask him to give political support to them (if they are politically ambitious or are already occupying political position) or to their political allies.

The following example may be cited to show the process: Jonab Ali is a professional ghatak and has a reputation as a good match-maker. Recently he acted as a broker to arrange a marriage between Kamaluddin, son of Kalam Bepari, a rich mango trader, and Hamida Begum, daughter of Alauddin, President of the District Awami League. Jonab Ali was engaged by Kalam Bepari to do the job. When the marriage was arranged Jonab Ali received Tk.100 and an umbrella from Kalam Bepari. But in the process of negotiation of the marriage Jonab Ali has developed a close linkage with Alauddin who helped him to secure some relief materials such as wheat, corrugated iron sheets, blankets etc. Alauddin as a patron of Jonab Ali can now ask the latter to give him political support when necessary.

(b) Non-professional ghataks who may come from various categories of people may or may not have former kinship ties with the families for which they act as marriage-brokers. Thus a friend, a patron or a client of the head of the wife-giving and wife-receiving family plays such a role, but he never accepts anything in the form of fees for his services. On the contrary, the offering of any such fee would be treated as very offensive, and both the non-professional ghatak and the involved parties are very much aware of the fact. But there are other ways to reciprocate his services. For example, if a ghatak is a friend he would expect their co-operation, support and services when he requires them (i.e. in the arrangement of marriage of his sons and daughters if he has any, in securing certain benefits from some elite members with whom his friends have contacts and connections,
in the formation of political alliance and the mobilization of political support etc.), if he is a patron or a client the patron-client relationships are further strengthened. But sometimes it so happens that a person from outside the friendship circle and patron-client network may appear as a ghatak and develop an exchange relationship with both the parties interested in a matrimonial alliance. But the incidence of this type of case is very rare because some sort of previous linkage with the party or parties is desirable to play such a role. Thus in general the non-professional ghataks can be seen to have such a linkage. However, if he is previously linked up with one party he can develop exchange relationship with the other party.

Our data show that out of 330 elite members 210 have played the role of a non-professional ghatak. But it is significant to note that out of 21 political leaders 19 have played such a role. They have done this because it helps them to recruit more supporters into their network.

(iii) In the political, administrative and academic spheres dalali plays an important role in the network of relationships of the elite members. It facilitates the establishment of new exchange relationships and thereby broadens the horizon of the network. It also helps the elite members to achieve their goals. For instance, the political leaders themselves not only play the role of dalal but also recruit a group of dalals for the mobilization of political support for them. The functioning of the system in the above stated arenas can be seen through the following examples:

Footnotes 10 and 11, see overleaf.
Footnotes:


Example from political arena:

Badiuzzaman, the President of the Rajshahi Chamber of Commerce wants to secure an import licence for his brother-in-law, Anisur Rahman. It becomes necessary for him to manipulate the case with the help of the bureaucratic elite members in the Ministry of Trade and Commerce at the national level. But Badiuzzaman does not have any linkage with the secretary of the Ministry and any other higher bureaucrats of the same. So he has to find someone who has linkage with the secretary or other higher bureaucrats and is in a position to manipulate the case in favour of his brother-in-law. K. Zaman, the Minister of Industries is available for that purpose because Bodiuzzaman is a close client relation and a dalal of K. Zaman. He rendered K. Zaman valuable services in mobilizing political support in the last 1973 election. The distribution of patronage such as cash, cloth, blankets, rice etc. to the voters in exchange for their votes to K. Zaman was partly carried out by Badiuzzaman who was supplied with these resources by K. Zaman. Because these resources were not adequate to meet the diverse demands of the supporters and potential supporters Badiuzzaman was empowered by his patron, K. Zaman to distribute patronage in the form of promises, taking the responsibility to materialize them through his patron. Thus when some potential supporters and clients asked him to show favours by securing jobs for them the latter could promise that this would be done with the help of his patron provided that they would extend their political support to his patron. These job-seekers could rely on Badiuzzaman's assurance because they knew that K. Zaman would have power to show them favours.
K. Zaman sent Badiuzzaman to Kazla and Shyampur villages to mobilize political support as well as to recruit some influential rural people as dalals to do the job. In these villages, Badiuzzaman could recruit Mohan Das, Habibur Rahman, Henju Mia, Majushek, Syed Hossain and Kentu Ghose as dalals of K. Zaman giving them cash ranging from Tk.500-600. They were asked to distribute at least half the amount to the general voters and were assured of future patronage. Badiuzzaman did all this for K. Zaman because the latter helped him in securing a licence for importing coconut oil from Ceylon. K. Zaman also helped him to retain his present position by asking his influential clients in the business circle to extend their support to Badiuzzaman in the 1972 election of the Chamber of Commerce. K. Zaman did this because he wanted his devoted dalal-client and relation Badiuzzaman to have control over such an important organization so that he (K. Zaman) will have influence over the decision-making process in it.

Badiuzzaman is still in the role of a dalal to his patron, K. Zaman.

K. Zaman has also some other non-elite dalal-clients directly connected with him. These dalals receive patronage from him in exchange for political support. But they are also supplied with resources such as cash, rice, wheat etc. (these resources are secured by K. Zaman from various indigenous and foreign sources) to distribute among the voters for the mobilization of political support for him. It was difficult to ascertain how much of these resources
actually reached the general voters. According to some of our informants a part of these resources was distributed among some voters, and the remaining part was misappropriated by the dalals who secured the votes of many for their patron, K. Zaman, giving assurances of future distribution of patronage. But after the election was over they did not come forward to fulfil their promises.

However, returning to the discussion of the issuance of a licence in favour of Badiuzzaman's brother-in-law, K. Zaman is already involved in an exchange relationship with the afore-mentioned secretary because the secretary, A. Rahim, is a cousin of K. Zaman's wife. In fact, A. Rahim was helped by K. Zaman in getting the promotion to his present elitist position for when A. Rahim was a Joint Secretary in the same ministry he helped K. Zaman in manipulating certain cases of issuance of licences and permits in favour of his clients and relations. For instance, A. Rahim helped K. Zaman to manipulate a licence for importing cloth from India in favour of his nephew, Azizul Haque. K. Zaman was able to secure the promotion for A. Rahim with the help of some other ministers in the cabinet who co-operated with him in influencing the decision of the promotion-giving authority i.e., the President of Bangladesh. He got the co-operation of these ministers because he is involved in a horizontal network of exchange relationships with them.
Example from Administrative Arena:

R. Karim is the Deputy Commissioner (D.C.) of Rajshahi district and is undoubtedly a powerful man in the bureaucratic structure. He is the administrative head of the district. It is well known that the D.C. himself has an elaborate network of patron-clientage as well as horizontal alliances with some elite members in and outside the administrative structure of the district. He controls vast official resources for the distribution of patronage. Thus one may think that he has no need to play the role of a dalal-client to a political leader having a higher degree of influence and power both at local and national levels; even though as a patron to his clients and kinsmen and for the sake of his friends he is required to play the role of a dalal in order to secure favours from other sources. But our data show that his role as a dalal-client is a fact and can be easily ascertained from his behaviour pattern, activities, decision-making and actions. His role-performance as a dalal-client has become necessary mainly for two reasons. First, he wants to secure somebody's help to fulfil his desire for quick upward occupational mobility. It has been ascertained from him as well as his patron K. Zaman mainly through informal discussions with them that he is after an important post of a Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Industries. He has realized that his case of promotion can be manipulated by K. Zaman who being a minister has close and direct linkages with the influential ministers, the President of Bangladesh and top bureaucrats at national level.
Secondly, however great may be his formal power he is required to work with the local people, especially the local permanent elite members of the community. Because the D.C. is a transitory elite member he feels the need for securing the support and co-operation of a person who has immense political power both at national and local levels and has a permanent local base in his existing patron-client network. Moreover, the D.C. is also very much aware of the fact that he is a member of the ruling elite and his power and position can be further enhanced if he can maintain a close relation with this politically very powerful leader. The D.C. thinks that by accepting clientelism to K. Zaman he would be able to secure more co-operation of his patron's clients, especially the local political leaders of the ruling party, in the administration of the district. Although K. Zaman has a great say in the decision-making process in the community, the formal control at the district level is in the hands of the D.C. It is he who distributes official resources to the people of the district either directly or indirectly through some of his subordinate officials who act as dalal-clients of the D.C. to link him up with the potential clients. But he is also required to play the role of a dalal when he is to secure some favours as demanded by his clients from other sources.

So undoubtedly the clientelism of the D.C. means a lot to K. Zaman because this facilitates the role of K. Zaman as a dalal in manipulating things in favour of his local clients and kinsmen on whose political support his continuance in his important political positions is largely dependent. However, when the D.C. is in the role of a dalal of K. Zaman,
the former does things by and large according to the latter's direction and keeps the flow of patronage more or less steady to K. Zaman's clients and dalal-clients and also makes an endeavour to recruit more potential clients for him. Moreover, as a dalal-client it has become the duty of the D.C. to ask his own clients and dalal-clients to extend political support to K. Zaman. This relationship reflects the dominance of the political leadership over the bureaucracy. Thus distribution of patronage either legally or illegally from public resources, under the supervision and often active participation of the D.C. and some of his subordinate dalal officials is going on more or less satisfactorily. So K. Zaman is frequently seen to recommend his clients and dalal-clients, especially the local trading, industrial, commercial and political elite members to the D.C. for licences, permits, dealerships etc. These licence, permit and dealership seekers are often seen to become involved in an exchange relationship with the D.C. and some of his subordinate colleagues. They, especially the rich commercial and industrial elite members, often provide the D.C. and some of his subordinate officials with material incentives mostly in kind and always in the guise of gifts to them as well as to their family members. For example, these wealthy people generally present them with costly suits and ties; costly sarees and gold ornaments are presented to their wives and daughters and valuable wrist watches, fountain pens, transistors etc. are offered to their sons. In a few cases illegal gratifications are also offered in cash. This helps them to acquire more and more
favours from the higher bureaucrats. The D.C. is also able to secure certain favours such as promotion, transfer and some material benefits for his clients, friends and kinsmen through his patron, K. Zaman.

(iv) In the University of Rajshahi all the elite teachers except a few who are opposed to the Vice-Chancellor (V.C.) and the university administration, are bound up with the V.C. in a patron-client network, performing simultaneously the role of dalal-clients to the V.C. and dalal-patrons to their own dalal-clients and clients. Because the V.C. is the head of the University administration he has an opposition group headed by a few non-cooperative elite teachers who are frustrated in their upward occupational mobility. The V.C. has, therefore, to deal with both the co-operative and non-cooperative groups of elite teachers and their followers. Naturally to meet the challenge of the non-cooperative group he tries to build up his network of patron-clientage as solidly and as widely as possible. To do that the V.C. puts all his elite clients who are always after more and more favours, directly controlled by the V.C. and his nominees, in the form of promotion to higher position, provostship, membership in various decision-making committees (i.e., the Finance Committee, the Committee for Advanced Studies, the Tender Committee etc.), directorship in various research projects, recommendation or nomination for fellowships and scholarships abroad and substantial loans from their provident funds and other university sources, in the role of dalals to secure a large number of clients from the general teachers, employees and students of the university. Thus it can be
seen that the V.C. to achieve his goal often provides his elite dalal-clients with a resource-base and informally delegates to them some authority to negotiate with the clients and potential clients on his behalf. But these elite dalals of the V.C. have their own dalals recruited from some elite and non-elite teachers, employees and student leaders of the university who secure the support of the general teachers, employees and students for their patrons as well as for the V.C. However, the V.C. himself is often required to play the role of a dalal when some of his clients and dalal-clients make a demand for certain favours over which he has no direct control and must be manipulated at other levels.

Let us cite a specific example to show the functioning of the process discussed above. Mansur, an Associate Professor and the chairman of the department of Islamic History, is an aspirant to the post of professor which has been lying vacant for some time and is interested in becoming a provost of a university hall of residence. To achieve his goal he has thought it wise to bind himself in a patron-client tie with the V.C. because the latter has, to a large extent, the final say in this matter and can distribute these favours to him if he so desires even though according to the formal rules of the university one has to have favourable recommendations from foreign experts to become a professor. However, the advertisement of the post depends on the will of the V.C. The V.C. has taken advantage of this situation and given his client Mansur an understanding that to get those favours
he (Mansur) is to act as his dalal for recruiting clients and ensuring their support to him (the V.C.). Mansur being the chairman of the department possesses certain first order resources which he can distribute as patronage to his colleagues in the department and recruit them as his clients and friends. Moreover, he has close linkages with some other elite teachers of the university with whom he is involved in a horizontal type of alliance. This has enabled him to secure certain favours required by his clients and potential clients but controlled by his friends or allies in other departments. In addition to these, Mansur's close linkage with the V.C. has provided him with an opportunity to recruit more clients from the general teachers, employees and students of the university because Mansur is in a position to secure certain favours for his clients from the V.C. acting as a dalal on their behalf.

From my informal discussions with Mansur and all his colleagues in the department and some of his other clients it has been possible to ascertain that in addition to the already distributed patronage Mansur has already promised some of his colleagues and teachers from other departments more favours in the form of scholarships for higher studies abroad, securing of one or two more increments, associating them with research projects and getting money sanctioned and research proposals of some of his colleagues approved and promising to recommend some of them as house tutors if he is appointed as a provost of a hall of residence. Directly or indirectly Mansur has already communicated to his colleagues that all these favours can be obtained only if
they support the V.C. and become his clients as well as trying to secure more potential clients from among their teacher friends, employees and students of the university. Thus it can be seen from the above discussion that Mansur acting as a dalal taps various sources to recruit clients for the V.C. He also tries to recruit supporters for the V.C. by showing favours regarding the admission of some of the candidates of the teachers from other departments as students in his own department, generally making those admissions as special cases subject to the permission and approval of the V.C. Some vague criteria such as sportsmanship, artistic achievements, contribution to freedom movement of Bangladesh etc. are generally used to treat those cases as special cases for admission because otherwise they do not fulfill the minimum qualification requirements for admission in any department in the university. In such a situation Mansur carefully brings the V.C. in the picture, sometimes asking the favour-seeking teachers to get the prior permission of the V.C. for the consideration of those cases so that the favour-seeking teachers would require to go to the V.C. for his favour of approval. This is likely to put them under some sort of obligation to support the V.C. in his policies as well as in his fight against his opposition group, and thus would reciprocate the favours shown to them by the V.C. However, the V.C. directly or indirectly communicates to them about the possibility of getting more favours from him if they become his clients and extend their co-operation, support and services as well as show their allegiance to him.
But to prove his further effectiveness as a dalal-client, Mansur is required to do something more than what he has already done. I have seen him speaking in a general meeting of the teachers supporting the V.C.'s stand if such a meeting is held to discuss the justification of certain decisions, taken by the V.C. and some of his more powerful dalal-clients such as the deans, proctors, provosts etc. Mansur is very often seen to help other influential dalal-clients of the V.C. in organizing a general meeting of the teachers to counter any move by the opposition group against the activities of the V.C. He becomes very active in giving publicity to the meeting and in mobilizing a good number of supporters in the meeting. According to some of our informants this type of meeting is often organized under the direction of the V.C. to frighten the opposition group by showing his numerical strength.

There is always a contest between the opposition group and the V.C.'s group in the Rajshahi University Teachers' Association election. Each group tries hard to capture power because control over the Teachers' Association means a lot to both the groups. According to some of our informants as well as on the basis of my personal observation it can be said that the leaders of these groups are always interested in putting up such candidates as would be able to manipulate things in favour of their respective group members. From my informal discussions with Mansur and the V.C. it has been possible to gather the fact that in the recent election of the Rajshahi University Teachers' Association the V.C. induced his dalal-client, Mansur to contest for the key post of General Secretary of the Association. Because of the V.C.'s
support to Mansur his (V.C.'s) *dalal*-client, Munim Ahmed, an Associate Professor of Applied Chemistry became highly dissatisfied because he wanted to contest for the same post. The V.C. tried to keep him within his network by assuring him of future patronage. But his past frustration in receiving patronage from the V.C. in his endeavour to become the proctor of the Faculty of Science made him sceptical of the V.C.'s assurance. So he severed his tie of patron-clientage with the V.C. and joined the opposition group as a *dalal*-client of F.K. Chowdhury, the top leader of that group. However, Mansur with the approval of the V.C. has given publicity to the effect that he is the candidate of the V.C. and therefore, if he is elected to the post he would be able to meet many demands of the teachers through his patron, the V.C. who has already assured him of his help and co-operation. He is heard to say, "My victory is the V.C.'s victory; to vote for me is to vote for the V.C.". Because there was no protest from the V.C. against the association of his name in Mansur's election campaign there is good reason to assume that the V.C. was fully involved in Mansur's election campaign and highly interested in the victory of his *dalal*-client. Some of our informants from the university told us that they were asked by the V.C. to support Mansur's candidacy and vote for him. The opposition group put up a candidate against Mansur but could not do much because of Mansur's securing of certain favours for some of the teacher-voters as well as his extravagant promise of patronage which will come from the V.C. and flow down to the general teachers supporting him. So he came out as the successful candidate with a good margin of votes.
Now that Mansur is the General Secretary of the Teachers' Association he has got an opportunity to link up many teachers with himself as well as with the V.C. in a network of patron-client relationship. Moreover, the horizon of his horizontal alliance with some elite teachers of the University has further extended. Thus his position as the General Secretary has enabled him to acquire a significant power base by recruiting many of his clients from among the general teachers who are seen to cluster around him with the hope that he would be able to facilitate their upward occupational mobility by securing favours for them from the V.C. as well as help them in getting other favours as promised earlier.

While visiting Mansur's residence and office frequently I have seen him to be very busy with a large volume of extra-academic activities such as distribution of patronage, securing of favours for his clients, dalal-clients, friends and relations as well as planning and discussing the strategies with some of his friends and dalal-clients against the move of the leaders of the opposition group. According to Mansur's own version every day he has to receive in his office and residence a good number of his clients and dalal-clients who come to him to show their allegiance as well as to request him to do something for them so that they can gain some material benefits. The demands of these clients are so diverse and his direct control over resources so limited that in order to satisfy some of their demands he is required to act as a dalal securing resources and manipulating cases in favour of the former. From my informal discussions with Mansur I could ascertain the fact that he has developed a
liking for being surrounded by his clients, dalals, and friends. He wants to be so because he thinks it as one of the means to prove his power and popularity to the V.C. whom he visits quite frequently and repeatedly assures him of his, his clients' and friends' support. Moreover, as he is a dalal-client of the V.C. his own clients and dalal-clients are also connected with the V.C. in a patron-client network. This shows that he has done a lot for the expansion of the patron-client network of the V.C.

A question may arise here, in what way the expansion of the patron-client network through dalali differs from the normal process of its expansion? To answer this question it can be said that dalali is one of the mechanisms for the expansion of patron-client networks of clustering as well as of pyramidal types. However, the expansion of the pyramidal type of patron-client network which plays an important part in the political processes, especially in the mobilization of the general voters, is possible only through dalali because some clients must function as linkmen to connect the potential clients with a patron. But in a clustering arrangement of a patron-clientage the expansion may be effected by the direct distribution of patronage by a patron to his potential clients. But the fact remains that the clients and potential clients may make demands for such favours as are beyond the direct control of a patron and must be manipulated at other levels. In this situation a patron has to act as a dalal for further expansion of his patron-client network.

Coming back to Mansur's case it has been seen that in recognition of his valuable services the V.C. has already appointed him as a provost of a hall of residence and his
promotion to a professorship is being processed. Now that Mansur has moved upward along his occupational scale he has secured an additional number of dalals, but his position as a dalal-client of the V.C. remains undisturbed. But he has also put the V.C. in the role of a dalal when the V.C. on his request got Mansur's brother, Mahmud, a Lecturer in Bogra Government College, transferred to Rajshahi Government College by manipulating the case with the Director of Public Instructions (D.P.I.) with whom the V.C. has close connections not as a patron or a client but as a friend. The relationship between the V.C. and the D.P.I. is a horizontal one. This shows that in a dalali network the involved parties are not necessarily bound up in a patron-clientage network.

To sum up the above discussion dalali plays an important role in the interactive process of the elite members of the community. It widens the horizon of the network of exchange relationship. Dalals may come from both elite and non-elite members. The relationship between the parties involved in the dalali network is based on the factor of mutual calculation of benefits. People with varying positions and interests may be found all the way up and down the dalali network. Dalali is a role which can be combined with other roles. A dalal may shift his allegiance from one network to the other when he is frustrated in securing patronage in his previous network. The dalali network often cross-cuts the community boundary because: first, some of the resource-bases of patronage are
located outside the community, and secondly, in the electoral process the mobilization of voters, especially the rural voters is done through the dalals. Another important aspect of dalali is that the playing of the role of a dalal of a powerful patron helps the upward mobility of some elite and non-elite members of the community.
CHAPTER 7
Politics of Patronage

This chapter deals with the political process in the community which predominantly centres around the interactive process and the network of exchange relationships of the political leaders of the ruling Awami League (AL) amongst themselves as well as with other elite members of the community, with the national-level leaders of the AL and with the rural elites and the general masses of the district. The chapter should show that the politics of the community is largely modelled round the patron-client relationships in which patronage is exchanged for the political support. The pattern of factional recruitment is also based on the factor of transaction of patronage. Sometimes, reciprocal exchange of patronage becomes a basis for the formation of a political alliance between two or more political leaders. The interactive process and the formation of alliances between the political leaders and their supporters are largely guided by pragmatic considerations; and the political process is predominantly leadership-centred. This type of political process which is quite pervasive in the community has been termed the politics of patronage\(^1\) in which ascriptive ties such as kinship and caste, and political issues and ideology do not play any significant role.

However, there is some degree of political coercion or repression of the leaders of the ruling party over the leaders, workers and supporters of the opposition parties.

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Very often the AL leaders themselves become involved in factional conflicts. This process constitutes a minor but important dimension of the politics of the community which does not come within the orbit of the politics of patronage. This dimension of conflict is important because it has an impact on the interactive process of the political leaders of the community. To analyse the data on this aspect of the politics we have applied the network model which can explain both co-operative and conflicting types of relationships.

It may be necessary to note here that after the completion of my field work there was a military coup d'etat led by Major Dalim and backed by Kh. Mushtaq Ahmed, the Commerce Minister and the faction leader of the AL. Sk. Mujibur Rahman, the President of Bangladesh along with a few other AL leaders was killed. Kh. Mushtaq Ahmed was installed as the President of the country. K. Zaman, the Industries Minister and the principal actor of the politics of Rajshahi district was arrested and subsequently killed in the Dacca Central Jail. 2 Some district-level AL leaders such as Aladuddin, the President and Mesbahuddin, the General Secretary of the District AL were also arrested. One of K. Zaman's important clients i.e., the Vice-Chancellor of Rajshahi University was fired from his post.

Before we begin our discussion of the political process in the community it must be made clear that in our analysis the concept of patronage means the showing of favours by one party to the other as well as the mutual showing of favours in an exchange relationship either through socially approved and legitimate means or through socially disapproved and illegitimate means. If the second means is adopted to show favours the patronage becomes a kind of corruption, in the sense that the concept of corruption is generally understood in Bangladesh.

However, to obtain a clear picture of the political process in Rajshahi it is necessary to discuss, in short, the historical background of the politics of patronage in Bangladesh since the partition of Bengal in 1947 in view of the fact that the basic principles of the political process in the community were more or less the same as were prevailing in the then East Pakistan.

From the very inception of Pakistan the effective political power of the state was in the hands of the influential military officers and the bureaucrats under the facade of a parliamentary form of government up to 1958 when a coup d'etat under the leadership of General Ayub Khan was staged to take direct charge of the administration of the country. The bureaucratic-military oligarchy came to the forefront and removed the facade of parliamentary form of government. Thus up to 1957 the so-called ruling political leaders in East Bengal were functioning in a so-called parliamentary system of government and had access to economic resources though the bureaucratic-military oligarchy was
in effective control of political power in the province. Consequently, the existence and continuance of these political leaders in their privileged positions were highly dependent upon the favour of this oligarchy because it could easily replace an individual political leader or a group of political leaders by another one if it felt the necessity to do so. In fact, the positions of ministers, state-ministers and parliamentary secretaries with their attached privileges were distributed to those politicians who were willing to support and promote the cause of the ruling oligarchy. These political leaders were also provided with resources for distribution as patronage to their clients and supporters. A question might arise here why was it necessary for the bureaucratic-military oligarchy having effective political power under the facade of a parliamentary form of government and having patron-client ties with the political leaders and their followers, to take charge of ruling the country? There were two main reasons for this: First, when in 1958 the prospect of the impending general election appeared to pose a challenge to the supremacy of the bureaucratic-military oligarchy, those who already held the reins of power mainly from behind the actual scene appeared on the scene by assuming the formal responsibility of ruling the state and thereby abolished the institutions of parliamentary government through which the challenge was being mounted.

4. See Alavi, H.A., Ibid.
Secondly, the political leaders were involved in serious conflicts over the question of sharing of privileges and the distribution of patronage to their clients and supporters. They began to use their networks of patron-clientage to advance themselves and maximize their privileges at each other's cost. This happened because there had been a change in the social origins of the political leaders of Bangladesh. During the British days the native political leaders generally came from the landed aristocracy. Even after the partition of Bengal in 1947 the people remained satisfied under the political guardianship and patronage of the landed aristocracy and provided political support to their political patrons. But this situation could not be continued for an indefinite period of time. The economic situation of East Bengal was gradually undergoing changes in which the political leadership was slowly being transferred into the hands of the emerging political leaders recruited mainly from the maddhabitta category. For these political leaders of predominantly maddhabitta origin inherited status could not play any major role. They began to climb to elitist positions partly through achievements and partly through manipulation rather than rising to them by virtue of ascriptive status. They seemed to be impatient for upward mobility and for acquiring power, prestige, influence and wealth. This urge for upward mobility induced them to

indulge in a type of political process which might be termed as politics of patronage because patronage was distributed for mobilizing political support to come to politically important positions of power and prestige. Moreover, for maintaining their privileged positions they became involved in a network of patron-clientage with the leaders of the bureaucratic-military oligarchy. This does not, however, mean that patronage originated in Bangladesh at this time. It was there in the past; but it became more prominent and pervasive at this time.

Although the bureaucratic-military oligarchy seized power it nevertheless needed politicians who would fulfill a complementary role to provide and secure support for the bureaucratic-military rulers of the country. Thus by 1962 the politicians were put to work again in a parody of democratic politics under General Ayub Khan's system of 'Basic Democracy', and their manipulation was perfected to a fine art. This was done because Ayub and his close associates were eager to give legitimacy to their formal seizure of political power under the facade of a political government. They felt the necessity of creating supporting bases both in rural and urban areas in East Bengal. Keeping this in mind in the sixties Ayub introduced the system of basic democracies with the obvious intention of building up a system of vested interest in rural and semi-urbanized areas. This was clearly a device to activate the system of politics of patronage because 80,000 members elected as functionaries for the running of the local self-government

institutions at lower levels were made the electorate to elect the President of the country and members of the central and provincial assemblies with an intention that they could be easily managed through the distribution of patronage. For distribution of patronage the ruling elites introduced a system of works programme for rural reconstruction which was carried out by the basic democrats. A huge amount of money was sanctioned for carrying out this programme; and the programme up to 1966-67, had spent 670.80 million rupees in East Pakistan and 301.32 million in West Pakistan. A significant portion of the money was misappropriated by basic democrats and supervising officers and the rest was spent on projects which benefited primarily the group from which the basic democrats came. The government indirectly supported this misappropriation by slackening the supervisory and audit checks. The bureaucratic elites were given the supervisory power in order to secure the political support of these basic democrats for the Ayub regime by distributing patronage in various forms. The works programme proved the ideal vehicle for the reinforcement of government control over the union councils. The government could legitimately claim that they were catering to a genuine economic need in the village; but they were also binding the basic democrats

8. The elected representatives of the local self-government institutions at lower levels such as union council and town committee.
to the regime with more than constitutional ties. By putting the execution of the programme in the hands of the basic democrats, and by giving them hard cash for direct disbursement, they gave them scope for power and wealth beyond their most extravagant expectations. The basic democrats were thus given a vested interest which proved deaf to all the exhortations to freedom and democracy from the combined opposition parties in the electoral campaign.

The timing of the programme, the particular choice of projects, the laxity in administration and the extravagant if unfounded claims of its achievements all pointed to an implicit political motivation to reinforce the working of the political process within the framework of patron-client networks in which distribution of patronage for political support featured most prominently. This piece of Realpolitika did not stimulate in the villages the mass popularity of the regime which had been widely claimed by it; for the works programme merely served to perpetuate the existing power structure in the villages. This new source of power made the surplus farmer into more than a mere money-lending or petty landlord. He could now decide who would work and who would sit idle in the winter months. For the landless and near-landless villagers, this meant all the difference between eating and starvation. It was this group of people which was already most dependent on the landholding rural elites, and whose bondage became almost feudal. At the same time, the basic democrats could now reward their political clients, friends and relations by letting them dip their hands into the till. They could also enhance their own fortune, and the laxity of supervision and
the encouragement of irregular and unfair practice by the
government machinery enabled them to appropriate the
maximum personal benefits out of the works programme.
In fact, the ruling elites introduced this rural reconstruc-
tion programme with a clear intention of using it as a
resource-base for the distribution of patronage to the basic
democrats who in return would give them political support in
times of election and defend their programmes and policies
and glorify their activities. Moreover, it was also thought
that the basic democrats by virtue of their access to the
works programme money and other resources would be able to
use them as patronage for recruitment of their own supporters
who would also support the policies of the ruling elites.
Thus, Rehman Sobhan says,

"Villagers who have been interviewed voice no
objection to the programme itself, and are quite
willing to recognize its potential. But this
potential does nothing to banish their bitterness,
frustration and distrust, for what they see is the
growing power of the surplus farmer who now parades
himself as the dispenser of patronage".11

Although Rehman Sobhan's finding is partially correct it
seems to me that he possibly did not give much attention to
ascertain the attitude of a large number of villagers,
especially the clients, friends and relations of the basic
democrats who enjoyed a varying proportion of benefits
distributed to them by their patrons. This group of
beneficiaries surely constituted a significant proportion
of the villagers who were seen to give strong political
support to their benefactors. However, that a significant

11. Sobhan, R. 'Social Forces in the Basic Democracies',
South Asian Review, April 1968, p.172.
proportion of villagers who were deprived of personal benefits out of the works programme resources was highly antagonistic to the basic democrats could not be denied. They were seen to provide political support to the leaders of the opposition groups with the hope that they would be able to receive patronage from the former if and when they would come to power.

Thus, Ayub's system of basic democracy, in practice, made a clearly identifiable group of people the arbiter of the country's politics. They were middle-aged, partly educated, half traditional and half westernized. They came from the rich landowners in rural areas. These 'transitionals' unsure of their values and caught in the whirlwind of modernization, proved more venal, competitive, and susceptible to patronage than the urban maddhabitta category which was deprived of political power. The 1962 Constitution of Pakistan promulgated by Ayub had certain definite political objectives in view and in that the ordinary maddhabitta people of the country did not feature at all. In the newly devised electoral system they were relegated to the position of political nonentities. But although the ordinary maddhabitta people were deprived of any effective participation in the election of the head of the state and the legislators their kinship ties and patron-client networks with a large number of Bengali

legislators remained because of the fact that in East Bengal most of the legislators had to be recruited from among the people of the rising maddhabitta category which was and is the main base for the recruitment of various categories of elites, especially the Muslim elites. Thus the flow of patronage from the legislators, ministers, state-ministers and parliamentary secretaries to their client relatives and clients in the maddhabitta category remained more or less steady.

However, the ruling elites thought that the new system of exchange relationships with the basic democrats based on distribution of patronage for political allegiance and support would be adequate for them to remain entrenched in the state power. But soon after the constitution became operative the ruling elites recognized that the government could not be run without some sort of political organization whatever might be its character. Thus, an amendment was introduced and adopted providing for political parties within the framework of the 1962 Constitution. The opposition political leaders began to take steps for resuming party activities and along with that Ayub regime decided to have a political party of its own. In spite of these developments President Ayub Khan remained firmly convinced about the political effectiveness of the basic democracies in keeping himself and his regime in power. The bureaucratic-military oligarchy began to use its newly established political party

i.e., the Convention Muslim League to overcome certain procedural difficulties which arose from time to time with the actual working of the constitution but never seriously tried to build up the organization with a view to mobilize public and popular support. Thus, according to Umar, whatever enthusiasm there was for the Convention Muslim League at the initial stage was lost soon afterwards when the temporary success of the basic democracies as a form of support for the regime became quite pronounced. It was realized that if the government did not put up any candidate for election at the primary level then the real character of the elected basic democrats would be that of an 'independent' candidate. These 'independent' candidates would lose no time in realizing that their newly acquired financial and political power could be protected only by the regime which had brought them into existence and thus the interests of both would coincide. In fact, out of this coincidence arose the co-operation between the great majority of basic democrats and their protector and patron, the established military regime. Owing to this relationship between the two even after the great election upsurge of 1964-65 finally the basic democrats went over to the side of the government and continued their support to the latter.¹⁴

Since at the primary level the candidates for positions in the basic democracy were not contesting the election on a party basis there was little scope for formal party activity, although it was informally known to the villagers which candidates were with the ruling oligarchy and which

were not. The election was fought mostly on a factional basis. But after the election the basic democrats by virtue of the organizational set-up of the entire administrative machinery came directly under the influence of the government officials and as such these officials proved to be more useful and effective in controlling the basic democrats than the leaders and organizations of the Convention Muslim League. Thus, it was the provincial governor, not the leaders of the government party who became the pivot and the central point around whom revolved the major political and administrative activities of the regime. The provincial governor, an elite client of President Ayub Khan began to distribute patronage to the basic democrats with the help of his officials with the purpose of securing the political support of these basic democrats for his patron who would require their support in the presidential election as well as in the election of members of both central and provincial legislatures. Although President Ayub distributed patronage to the Convention Muslim League leaders to ensure their allegiance to him and to his regime he seemed to rely more on the provincial governor because he had great faith in his governor's political effectiveness in establishing an exchange relationship between the ruling oligarchy and the basic democrats. It was well known that in the 1965 presidential election the governor of East Pakistan rendered valuable services to his patron Ayub Khan. The governor A. Monem Khan along with his officials devoted his time and energy to mobilizing the support of the basic democrats from East Pakistan. Many government officials if not all, gave him full co-operation in the hope that the governor would
help them in their upward mobility and enjoyment of privileges. Ayub Khan through his client governor also distributed hard cash to the candidates for membership in national and provincial assemblies in order to purchase votes of the basic democrats for him as well as for themselves. Money was also given to some influential dalals (brokers); and some businessmen, contractors and industrialists were informally directed, of course on the assurance of future patronage, to purchase votes for the Convention Muslim League presidential candidate i.e., Ayub Khan as well as for the candidates for membership in the national and provincial legislatures. Ayub Khan himself wrote that votes were purchased "specially in big cities and places where there are moneyed people".

Another important point of Ayub's politics of patronage was that the ruling oligarchy encouraged the patronage seekers to contest elections by amending in 1963 the Public Officers Disqualification Act to make people having financial interests in the government eligible to be assembly members; the original law had specifically debarred them. Thus the MNAs and MPAs, their clients, relations, friends were beneficiaries of various types of government contracts, export-import licences and different kinds of permits and dealerships, housing plots, bank loans, jobs and promotions.

16. These facts have been gathered through personal communications with some Bengali ex-MNAs and ex-MPAs of the Ayub regime.
17. During my field work in Rajshahi this information has been given to me by some elite members who were then involved in the process. See also Maniruzzaman, T. op.cit., p.226.
Like the basic democrats these people were able to enhance their socio-economic status. Moreover, to build up a supporting base in the urban areas of East Pakistan the Ayub regime devised a policy of fostering the growth of a group of rich Bengali businessmen, contractors and industrialists. To do so the Ayub regime opened the door of patronage to those enterprising Bengalis who were already involved in some sort of exchange relationship with the ruling elites and could see the perpetuation and the possibility of proliferation of their personal interests and privileges in the existence and continuity of the Ayub regime. These were the people who were the relations, friends and clients of the influential Bengali bureaucrats, the MNAs and MPAs. But Ayub was only partially successful in materializing his policy because of pressure from non-Bengali vested interests. However, a vested interest group emerged due to Ayub's policy as a junior partner of its non-Bengali and West Pakistani counterparts and provided strong political support to the government. Although many of them were frustrated in their attempt to enlarge their enterprises they remained loyal to the Ayub regime because their enjoyment of privileges was largely dependent upon the continuity of their patrons in the power structure of the state. So Alavi says,

"Two categories of people from East Pakistan were drawn into the process of 'capital formation' which was devised by the Ayub regime, to whom we may refer respectively as the 'contactors' and 'contractors'. The 'contactors' were educated Bengalis with influential bureaucratic contacts (especially those who were relatives of bureaucrats or influential politicians) who were granted all kinds of permits and licenses which had a ready cash value because they could be sold to non-Bengali and West Pakistani businessmen who needed them to be able to be engaged in profitable business transactions. This process transferred money into the pockets of a parasitic group of people at the expense of the ordinary consumer who ultimately paid for this corruption in the forms of inflated prices. The 'contactors' lived expensively, and few of them contributed to capital accumulation or built up industries. The 'contractors' were different. They were small businessmen who were awarded construction contracts etc., by the government at deliberately inflated rates. The excess profits made by them were ploughed back into their business. They were later encouraged by generous loans and official support to become industrialists".20

But for historical reasons mainly centring on the conflict between the Bengali and non-Bengali and West Pakistani elites over the question of the sharing of power, resources and privileges the Bengali elites especially political, bureaucratic and academic elites were successful in organizing a massive movement against the Ayub regime. This led Ayub to hand over power to Yahya Khan who reimposed Martial Law in 1969. As the President of the country he showed eagerness to instal a political leadership in office, of course, under the hegemony of the bureaucratic-military

oligarchy, and promised to hold the election as early as possible; and for the interim period he did not lose any time to instal a chosen group of civilians as ministers to help him in ruling the country. President Yahya Khan made arrangements for a national election on the basis of adult franchise in December, 1970. All the political parties became active to contest the election.

In East Pakistan the AL under the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman revived its famous six-point programme formulated in 1966 which implies a partially secessionist tendency with extreme autonomy for East Pakistan. But the AL had never the intention of complete secession of East Pakistan. The main reason for such tremendous popularity for the six-point programme of the AL was that the programme contained an assurance to the Bengalis of various walks of life of large-scale patronage from which many of them were deprived of because of West Pakistan's domination and control over East Pakistan. This programme had special appeal to the Bengali elites whose aspirations to further upward mobility were largely blocked by the favoured non-Bengalis and West Pakistani competitors as well as to the people of the maddhabitta category. Thus the people of the maddhabitta category along with their elite representatives took the initiative to secure political support for the AL because they could see the prospect of accruing material benefits in the event of the AL's coming into power. According to Maniruzzaman, the six-point programme was in essence the

21. For a detailed discussion on this point, see Alavi, H.A. Ibid., p.66.
programme of the petty bourgeoisie of East Bengal who found their road to advancement blocked by their counterparts in West Pakistan that were patronised by the military based dictatorship of Ayub Khan. By this time the impact of systematic exploitation of West Pakistan started biting deep in the mass and the AL began to gain phenomenal success in mobilizing the masses mainly on the plea that the success of the six-point programme would mean a large-scale patronage to the latter.

However, the attitude of the Ayub regime-created nucleus of rich Bengali businessmen, industrialists, traders and contractors towards the politics of the AL was one of the qualified support because of the AL's adoption of a programme of the so-called radical economic reform of socialistic nature. But soon it was made clear to them that the programme of economic reform was adopted for the sake of mobilization of mass support and to frustrate the design of some opposition parties which were likely to go for a radical economic reform once they were in power. This could convince some of these people who began to give both financial and political support to ensure the victory of the AL in the election so that their vested interests were protected and they would be able to enjoy more patronage in future; but some of them were not convinced because they thought that if the AL could capture power it would be under heavy pressure from the general masses to introduce radical economic reforms which would surely go against their interests.

So they preferred to remain with the rightist party such as the Muslim League which was in alliance with the bureaucratic-military oligarchy. But all the non-Bengali industrialists, big contractors and businessmen provided support to the right-wing Muslim League and were opposed to regional autonomy for East Bengal. They thought that it would not be possible for them to enjoy their privileges and patronage in an autonomous East Bengal where the central government would be ineffective in protecting their interests. According to B. Umar, the non-Bengalis had 70% industrial and business interests in Bangladesh and were in alliance and close relationship with the bureaucratic-military oligarchy and the then political leaders.

Thus by mainly putting forward its six-point programme, the AL secured a landslide victory in the election of 1970 in spite of the fact that it did not have any peasant organization. However, the massive electoral success of the AL was guaranteed by a third category of people who had jumped on the bandwagon of the AL. That was the rural elite in East Bengal, which was previously divided into many factions. The villages in East Bengal were and are dominated by rich farmers. Their wealth, status and power, much of which derived from possession of land and money-lending, enabled them to have connections with the ruling elites on

26. The list of the contributors to the Muslim League Party Fund shows that most of the non-Bengali industrialists and big contractors and businessmen made substantial contribution to the party fund. See The Record of the Contributors to the Muslim League Party Fund, 1967-68, The Muslim League Office, Dacca.
the strength of which they mediated on behalf of their factional supporters and thus further consolidated their local political power. They were, in fact, involved in a network of patron-clientage with the general mass of the rural population most of whom were dependent upon them for patronage in the form of lease of land and loan in time of their economic scarcity. These clients of the rural elites often could get things done in their favour with the help of their patrons.

The sweeping victory of the AL in the 1970 election posed a real threat to the control of the bureaucratic-military oligarchy over the state power; and the West Pakistani and non-Bengali elites were opposed to the transfer of state power to the AL leaders. The main reason for their opposition to the Awami League was that they thought that if power was transferred to the leaders of the AL it would be impossible for them to retain their privileged positions because the AL leaders were directly fighting for the enhancement of the position of the Bengali elites. So once they were in power they would clear the way for the upward mobility of the Bengali elites, if necessary at the cost of West Pakistani and non-Bengali elites. Thus, when the bureaucratic-military oligarchy got the support of this group of elites it became more or less determined not to hand over effective state power to the AL leaders. The bureaucratic-military oligarchy began to negotiate with the leaders of the AL so that it could

maintain its effective control over the state power under the facade of the AL cabinet in a parliamentary form of government. But the AL leaders could not accept the position because of their promise for the implementation of the six-point programme and because of their fear of a mass movement against them as the general mass became highly antagonistic to the rule of the bureaucratic-military oligarchy. Consequently, the AL leaders began to press for their demands and made it clear to the Bengalis that they would not deviate from their policy. For this reason the negotiation could not proceed very far. And the AL politicians under the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman resorted to a non-co-operation movement against the ruling oligarchy in East Bengal. Fazle Muqueem argues that

"President Yahya Khan brought the country to a point where only two courses were open to him - either strive for a Pakistan with strong centre and end up with no Pakistan; or have Pakistan at any cost by allowing regional autonomy based on six points demanded by the Awami League. As it turned out Yahya Khan chose an unachievable course and a policy of repression rather than one of generosity".

Accordingly on March 25, 1971 the ruling oligarchy unleashed a reign of terror and indulged in a large-scale massacre of the Bengalis. After a great initial loss the Bengalis began to mobilize to fight for the independence of Bangladesh under the leadership of the AL leaders and some Bengali

29. See The Holiday, April 28, 1974.
military officers who fled to India and formed a government in exile.  

Following the liberation the AL formed a single-party government ignoring the pleas of other political parties to form a national coalition. It is relevant to point out that the six-point programme on which the AL fought and won the election of 1970 does not at all constitute the founding charter of the new nation for those were issues listed essentially as a protest by a political unit against the insensitive central government and as a hope for the enjoyment of more privileges by the Bengalis, especially the Bengali elites.

Although the ruling AL has been able to build up a substantial number of followers in both urban and rural areas by distributing patronage, the party's mass concern is neither deep-rooted nor genuine. It is quite noticeable that the members of the party have a very shallow commitment to the national purpose. Most of the leaders of the AL are seen to be busy in acquiring more and more privileges and distributing patronage to their relations, friends and clients who provide them with political support. Thus R. Jahan reckons that since the AL as the party in power


has access to vast amounts of patronage and resources, "it can be expected not only to hold on its original bourgeoisie support base but also expand it further". 33

Even in the process of nationalization of industries, insurance companies and banks, the AL has got an opportunity to distribute patronage to its influential supporters because the positions of administrators, directors, supervisors etc. were distributed to the partymen without giving any consideration to their efficiency and capability to run these organizations. They grew richer overnight by smuggling machinery and raw materials to India. 34

Moreover, while the AL government has nationalized 85% of the industries and 90% of the foreign trade, the distribution of home produced and imported goods are being carried on by the 'dealers' who are issued permits and licences. Most of these licences and permits have been distributed as patronage to AL supporters and potential supporters in exchange for their political support to the party, its leaders and government. These 'dealers' have been able to acquire these benefits mainly through the manipulation of the ruling party leaders with whom they are bound up in a network of patron-client relationship and, in some cases, have kinship ties. They have become rich and found their ways to recruit their own clients who not only support their patrons, but also their patrons' patron,

the ruling AL and its government. This process of the AL's distribution of patronage coupled with the high rate of smuggling and hoarding of goods directly or indirectly encouraged by the AL and its government has resulted in a very high price of commodities creating a situation in which the elites associated with or affiliated to the AL and its government are acquiring handsome material benefits at the cost of the poor workers and peasants. It seems likely on the evidence of its recent behaviour that the AL and its government would not stop the above process of distribution of patronage and indulgence in hoarding because the party support has been built up and retained by the awarding of privileges and the condoning of dishonesties.

Although since the liberation of Bangladesh the AL as a party has, to some extent, lost its effectiveness as an organizational weapon for mobilizing the public support because of increasing factionalism within the party, the leaders of various factions have largely been able to retain their network of followers by distributing patronage because they have access to official resource-bases of patronage. A question may arise here why are we giving emphasis to the official resources of patronage? To answer this question we may say that the major part of the patronage resources are under the control of the government and the government-supported organizations.\textsuperscript{35} Even the private sector resources and their proliferation are largely dependent upon the

licensing system controlled by the government. However, each AL faction leader has been seen to strengthen his patron-client network in the process. Thus when the conflicting AL leaders have a more or less effective network of patron-clientage, the factionalism in the party and its government could not significantly decrease the strength of the party. Up to the general election of March 7, 1973 this factional conflict could not become open because of the mediating role of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the then Prime Minister of Bangladesh. In this general election in which 14 parties and 1075 candidates contested the election for 300 seats, 11 AL candidates were elected unopposed. Since the election results were a foregone conclusion the election campaign generated little public interest. But there was large-scale distribution and promise of distribution of patronage by the ruling party candidates. Though the AL had already prepared a strong base for political support mainly by the distribution of patronage its leaders were threatening the workers and supporters of the opposition parties, who being dissatisfied with the AL leaders over the question of distribution of patronage, were campaigning in favour of the opposition candidates. The opposition parties could not adopt the strategy of distribution of patronage in any significant scale because of their lack of access to official resource-bases of patronage. The opposition party candidates largely began to mobilize political support by giving assurance of future patronage

36. Alavi, op.cit., p.78.
37. See Bailey, F.G. op.cit., p.156.
and by projecting the AL candidates as dishonest and anti-peoples. They blamed the AL leaders for very high prices of the commodities and made them responsible for the suffering of the poor peasants and workers. However, in the face of large-scale distribution of patronage by the ruling party candidates the appeal of the opposition party candidates could not create much impact on the general voters who were mostly eager to realize some material benefits in exchange for their political support or vote to the candidates.\(^{38}\) They were not, except a few, interested in the question of party ideology. To the voters, especially uneducated poor voters who constitute more than 90% of the total electorate the question of ideology is more or less meaningless because their desperate economic condition has direct bearing on the mode of using their votes. If there is an opportunity to make some material gains in exchange for votes there would be few voters who would not do so. The ruling party candidates took full advantage of this situation and were conspicuous in the vote-market with various resources of patronage and often with bags full of unaccounted money mainly supplied by the government and some industrialists, contractors and businessmen. These vested interest groups could see the future protection of their interests in the continuance of the AL and its government in the power structure of the country. Thus in a house of 300, the AL won 292 seats in the 1973 election.

38. Ibid., p.138.
After the parliamentary election the AL regime also held the local bodies elections. But none of the political parties nominated official candidates in these elections possibly to avoid the party's involvement in factional conflicts at the lower-level. But after the election the ruling party claimed that most of the winning candidates belonged to it. Its claim was substantiated by the fact that most of the candidates were supplied with resources by the ruling party and its government a part of which could be used as patronage to the voters. A few candidates who won seats without the backing of any political party were subsequently brought within the orbit of the ruling party by offering them patronage.  

After the parliamentary election factional conflicts among influential leaders of the ruling party became acute. The controversies over the introduction of pure socialism or a mixed economy, the procuring of aid, grants etc. from foreign countries, plus the personal rivalry among the leaders created factionalism in the party. There were two important factional groups. One group led by Finance Minister Tajuddin Ahmed, was opposed to acceptance of any aid from the 'imperialist nations' and wanted to introduce a strictly socialist strategy of economic transformation. Another group led by Foreign Trade and Commerce Minister Kh. Mushtaque Ahmed was pro-West and wanted to introduce a mixed economy. In fact, this group was in favour of receiving aid from the Western countries such as America, England, France etc. so that they would be able to use these resources as patronage.

to the supporters and potential supporters of the ruling party. But the other group was in favour of securing those resources from the countries like Russia, India etc. At the beginning Sheikh Mujibur Rahman tried to maintain a balance between the two groups. But in the middle of 1974 when the economic situation reached crisis proportions and massive foreign aid was required to feed the people as well as to maintain the strategy of the politics of patronage Sheikh Mujib 'tilted the balance' in favour of the 'rightist faction' because he was convinced that massive foreign aid could be given only by America. Thus to curb the power of the other group he took the drastic step of sacking six ministers including Tajuddin Ahmed and three state-ministers of the rival group.\(^40\) Subsequently factional conflicts arose in the pro-Western group itself.\(^41\) There was hard competition between the leaders of two factional groups for acquiring more privileges and material benefits as well as to gain higher control over the government resources and resources secured from foreign countries in the form of aid, reliefs and grants to use them as patronage to their kinsmen, supporters and potential supporters. In this situation Sheikh Mujib could not take steps against one or the other faction; and as his mediation effort was not very successful he adopted the policy of bringing some sort of balance between the faction leaders by distributing political


patronage to them. This was why he had to expand his cabinet by selecting 14 state-ministers from these two factional groups giving seven posts to each group. Although each factional group shows concern for the welfare of the people the leaders of these factional groups, in fact, fight with each other for gaining more power and access to economic resources so that they can build up extensive networks of patron-clientage and ensure their political support in their endeavour to remain entrenched in power. Thus it may be argued that the factionalism in the AL is also highly conducive to the growth and perpetuation of politics of patronage in Bangladesh politics. The preceding discussion on politics of patronage shows that this type of politics is the extension and continuation of the past practice. Thus, if the AL is displaced from the power structure and another party comes to power the politics of patronage is not likely to disappear because in the first place, the predominantly traditional social structure, relations and values work as reinforcing factors to give rise to an exchange relationship and a network of patron-clientage which in turn give rise to a type of political process which can be largely put within the framework of politics of patronage. Secondly, the government control over the vast amount of patronage resources plus the resources secured from foreign countries in the form of aid, reliefs and grants enables the political leaders in power to maintain the strategy of politics of patronage by distributing those resources to their supporters and potential supporters. Thirdly, in a predominantly
traditional setting when some new opportunities are created by the introduction of some modern elements there is every likelihood that the rate of distribution of patronage in the political process would also increase simply because there would be many clients competing for a limited number of opportunities. Fourthly, in a country where subsistence is a great problem for a vast majority of people and extreme poverty very often compels them to search for some material benefits, the distribution of patronage in one form or the other becomes the order of the day.

However, the replacement of the political leaders by the military oligarchy at least initially enables a few actors to monopolize the power of distribution of patronage. They may deprive the supporters of the old regime of patronage, and bring their own supporters into the network. According to Maniruzzaman since the August 15 coup, smugglers in Bangladesh have lost the patronage of powerful circles in the former Mujib Government.42 But if one group of political leaders is replaced by another the same process remains except for a change of actors. Thus there is a good reason to believe that unless there is a radical transformation of the social system and social values as well as the privileges of the political leaders to use government controlled resources as patronage to their supporters there is little hope that the pervasiveness of the politics of patronage will be diminished. But the limitation of patronage resources and the maldistribution of the same always keep some people dissatisfied; and they provide support to opposition leaders

to displace the ruling leaders from the power structure.

Another significant aspect of the politics of patronage is that most of the elites coming from various occupational categories have been largely drawn into the orbit of the politics of patronage because of the fact that the political process in Bangladesh cannot function in isolation. Many of these elites are directly or indirectly connected with the political decision-making process. As there is competition among these elite members for upward mobility and their political connections help them to achieve their goals they remain in most cases eager to give their political support to the ruling party and its government in exchange for patronage. Some of these elites, especially the bureaucratic elites are directly involved in the political process of the country. This has become more or less inevitable because most crucial political decisions and legislative actions originate in the executive branch of the government and because a minister and a state-minister are highly dependent upon the expert knowledge of higher bureaucrats, especially the secretaries and the joint secretaries, the civil servants find for themselves an indispensable role to play in the development of public policy. Consequently both civil servants and political leaders find it important to have alliances with each other so that they can support each other in their enjoyment of power, prestige and privileges. These alliances help the political process of

the country to be firmly grounded on the principle of
distribution of patronage for mobilization of political
support because the political leaders can use the resources
controlled by the bureaucratic elites as patronage to their
supporters, and in the process the bureaucrats are also
able to secure certain patronage from the former.44

The politics of patronage as has been found in the
political process at national level, is largely true for
the study of district politics which refers to an on-going
process of actions that are related to capture, perpetuation
and enhancement of power which gives the individual actor
or a group of actors control over the decision-makings on
public affairs which are intimately connected with their
achievements of socio-economic and political goals. It is
the exchange relationship between the political leaders and
their supporters that becomes important and patron-client
relationship between them gives dynamism to the political
process in the community. The basic pattern of politics
is a cluster consisting of a powerful individual, a group
or a party who/which is in a position to distribute patronage
in the form of material benefits, manipulation, protection
etc. to his or its followers who in return for such benefits
contribute their loyalty, personal assistance and political
support to the patron's design. Such vertical patterns of
patron-client linkages represent an important structural-
functional principle of the politics of Rajshahi town and
district. In fact, the super-structure of politics of the

44. See Chapter 6, pp.339-42.
community is largely based on the distribution of patronage for the mobilization of political supporters whose support and services are needed by the political leaders for the acquisition, maintenance and proliferation of their politico-economic power. This type of politics also helps in the growth, maintenance and expansion of patron-client networks in the political field which frequently extends to other arenas cross-cutting the community boundary because in the first place, the political supporters of a political leader make varied kinds of demands many of which must be manipulated and secured from outside elites controlling those resources and formally responsible for the distribution of the same. Moreover, within the community he is required to manipulate things in favour of his clients from various categories of elites, especially the bureaucratic elites who are in formal control of resources which are required by his clients. In this situation a political leader is to play the role of a dalal (broker) between the favour-dispensing authority and his clients who may have very limited access to such favour-dispensing authority. Secondly, the community politics is not isolated from the national- and village-level politics. For example, the policy relating to the operation of the district branch of a political party is decided at the national level by influential political leaders of the party, of course, in consultation with influential political leaders of the district. These district leaders are, in fact, political clients of the national leaders and generally act according to directions of the latter from whom they expect and get patronage as well as resources for
distribution as patronage among their clients who provide political support and services to their political patrons in their endeavour either to maintain and enhance their already acquired important political positions in the power structure of the community or to capture political positions and powers that enable them to gain control over the decision-making process and access to economic resources in the community. Moreover, the national leaders are highly concerned with the problem of factionalism in the district-level politics.

The politics of the community is intimately connected with the village politics mainly in two ways: First, the district-level political leaders who are mostly affiliated to one or the other political party are in charge of recruitment of political supporters for a political party which has assumed the role of an institutional patron. This has become necessary because patron-client linkages with the villagers are important in the electoral process. Moreover, the district-level political leaders in order to fulfil their own political aspirations, especially when they become interested in contesting the election for memberships in the parliament in which the voters are predominantly rural people, feel the necessity of mobilizing their political support by effecting a network of patron-clientage.

Thus, when a politician tries to build up a network of political clientelism and reactivates his patron-client network in other areas of social life he must have direct or indirect access to resources for using them as patronage to his political supporters and clients who are largely
concerned with immediate as well as future material benefits of diverse nature. This brings about a straight-forward exchange relationship between a political patron and his clients leaving very little scope for a pure ideological issue to play any significant role. Even if an ideological issue is exploited by a political leader or a party it must contain a future hope for material benefits to the supporters. But its impact is always limited. It is important to note that in the political process of the community resources for political action mainly refers to material benefits, and favours and manipulations directly or indirectly connected with material benefits. This makes the political interaction between a political patron and his client a transactional one; and direct or indirect contact between political leader and his clients and potential clients some of whom are group leaders and brokers becomes essential to facilitate the process of exchange relationship in which patronage becomes the main trump for guiding the political clients and voters. The following example may help to understand the process discussed above: In the 1975 by-election for a membership in Rajshahi Zilla Parishad Kalinath, an opposition party (i.e. CPB (Marxist-Leninist group) candidate contested with Sadeque, a ruling party

candidate. In the election campaign both the candidates were seen to activate their already existing networks of patron-clientage with their bargadars, agricultural labourers, kinsmen and caste or caste-like group mates. They made appeals to their clients for political support and assured them of more patronage. But many voters of this predominantly rural constituency had no pre-existing patron-client relationships with the candidates. Hence both the candidates became active to establish exchange relationships with the former to secure their votes.

Both the candidates had combined their own limited patronage resources with those supplied by their respective party to distribute to their potential supporters mainly through their workers and agents who tried to secure the political support of these rural voters for the candidates in exchange for patronage without even raising the question of party ideology to the voters. They themselves were after patronage from their respective patron candidate in exchange for service; and the question of ideology was not important in their relationship with the latter. Even the candidates themselves in public speeches directly or indirectly assured the voters of more future patronage. Very often in the name of party ideology they projected their party programmes which contained assurance of future patronage to the voters. When I asked both the candidates about the reason for their giving very little emphasis to the party ideology for the mobilization of political support they told me that in the vote-market

46. I had the opportunity to attend two public meetings of each candidate.
an appeal for political support on pure ideological basis was ineffective. However, because Sadeque was a ruling party candidate with higher access to patronage resources which he could manage to distribute without any serious problem of maldistribution he could win the election.

On the other hand, Kalinath could secure the votes of those with whom he established an exchange relationship by distributing his limited patronage resources. He was also able to secure the votes of those who could not secure the desired patronage from the ruling party candidate as well as those who had personal enmity with Sadeque mainly by promising future patronage if he could win the election.

The above example reveals one important fact that the CPB (Marxist-Leninist) also indulges in the politics of patronage.

Before we carry on the discussion of the political process in the community further ahead it is necessary to point out here that although all political parties and their leaders and associates indulge in politics of patronage in varying degrees, our discussion as has already been mentioned centres around political actions and interactions of the ruling political elites of Rajshahi because they are the persons who are entrenched in the power structure of the community and have high direct or indirect access to various resource-bases of patronage as well as linkages with the power structure at national level. However, references and discussions about political actions and interactions of the opposition parties and their leaders will be made wherever necessary. We have observed that resource-bases of patronage for the ruling political elite of Rajshahi are located both
at national and local levels. At national level all the ministers and their divisions and departments have power to distribute patronage to the district-level political leaders of the AL who in addition to their own enjoyment of patronage, are required to secure and distribute patronage to their clients and potential clients in the district. Generally, the national-level ruling party leaders in collaboration with the ministers, state ministers, parliamentary secretaries, top bureaucrats, industrialists, big businessmen, contractors etc. manage to create a flow of patronage to district-level political elites and their associates and clients to ensure their political support to the policies and programmes of the ruling party and its government as well as in the electoral process.

Generally, the local-level political leaders are entrusted with the responsibility for the mobilization of political support for the ruling party so that in the event of any election the AL nominated candidates are in a comfortable position to win the election. Distribution of patronage becomes the most important factor for the mobilization of political supporters for the ruling party because it has been observed that very few district-level political leaders of the ruling AL as well as their supporters and workers have party loyalty, what F.G. Bailey calls a 'moral' commitment on the part of party leaders, workers and voters to a political party. But lack of 'moral' commitment does not, however, mean the lack of political support and showing of at least outward allegiance to the party. Thus when the supporting base of the party is created
on the strength of distribution and promise of distribution of patronage the 'moral' commitment to the party is given least importance. In fact, most party leaders are not fully committed to party ideology because as mentioned earlier the ideological appeal without distribution and promise of distribution of patronage cannot create any significant impact on party workers and voters who are highly motivated to acquire some material benefits in exchange for their support and services. Thus each party hierarchy tries with varying degree of success to develop a system through which patronage directly and indirectly flows down to the political supporters and workers in exchange for their direct and indirect upward flow of political support to the party hierarchy. Obviously the ruling party hierarchy can resort to this device most effectively because of their higher access to the resource-bases of patronage, especially the official resource-bases of patronage. So we can say that in a community participation in political activities by political leaders and their followers means gaining of some material benefits by the latter and capturing or perpetuation of power (which is ultimately related to gaining of material benefits) by the former and the ideology, whatever it may be, has very limited scope to play any significant role in the game of politics.

However, it would be wrong to say that all the party leaders, workers and supporters have no ideological commitment to their party. In fact, in each political party there are a few such ideologically committed leaders,
workers and supporters. Their number varies from party to party; but in all cases they are very few in number and are not able to play any significant role in the political process of the community. Thus in local-level politics it is almost impossible for the political leaders to mobilize political support purely on ideological grounds because it is the extensity and effectivity of patron-client network between the political leaders and their supporters which are important for the mobilization of political support for individual political leaders as well as for the parties to which they are affiliated. But the absence of commitment to the ruling AL is more evident among the political supporters than the political leaders of the party because the political leaders are often required to create a false show of their selfless dedication to the ideological objectives of the party which speak of welfare of the people.

The supporters who are after their own welfare by accruing some material benefits do not feel the necessity of showing much concern about the ideological objectives of the party. Moreover, habit, tradition and ideology, factors which are important in the West are relatively unimportant in any elections in Bangladesh. Thus there is good reason to argue that in both urban and in rural areas of the district there are very few people who support the AL because of habit, family tradition and the commitment to party ideology.

The supporters and workers of the ruling party are aware

of the fact that once the leaders are in power they care little for the ideological objectives of the party because they are largely guided by pragmatic considerations which help them to retain their political power and privileges by strengthening their patron-client network through distribution of patronage.

In Rajshahi as in other districts of Bangladesh the election for any political position is generally candidate-centred and the voters and workers are more interested in the degree of a candidate's access to resource-bases of patronage, his ability to distribute such patronage to his followers and potential followers and his power of manipulation of things in favour of his supporters. Because a candidate's power of distribution of patronage and manipulation is higher when he is affiliated to the ruling party, the voters and workers seem to be more inclined to accept clientelism of a ruling party candidate who is in a better position to distribute patronage to his clients and potential clients mainly by exploiting the official resource-bases of patronage controlled by the government of the AL. On the other hand, a candidate affiliated to an opposition party who largely lacks access to resource-bases of patronage, especially official resource-bases of patronage and power of manipulation, is obviously in disadvantageous position to build up an elaborate network of patron-clientage necessary to capture political power. But at the same time a candidate irrespective of his party affiliation cannot entirely depend on resources available from various government, autonomous and semi-autonomous agencies and organizations for distribution as patronage to his clients and potential clients.
Generally it becomes necessary for a candidate to invest some of his personal resources, especially money, when there may arise a need to purchase some votes. He is also required to exploit his kinship and caste ties for political support by distributing or promising to distribute patronage to his kindred and caste mates. And his patron-clientage in other spheres of life is also to be brought into action in strengthening his supporting base in the political field. A question may arise here how then can a ruling party candidate be defeated by an opposition party candidate? In answering this question, we can say our field data from Rajshahi show that the main reasons for this are: first, there is serious maldistribution of patronage due to the ruling party candidate's agents' misappropriation of the major part of the resources which are given to them to distribute among the voters for securing political support for the candidate. Consequently when patronage does not reach the voters they become frustrated and do not give any political support to the candidate. Although the candidate is generally aware of this problem it often becomes very difficult for him to keep track of everything going on in his election campaign, especially when he contests the election from a large constituency. The opposition party candidate and his agents can easily secure the support of these groups of frustrated voters by promising them future patronage. Secondly, when a ruling party candidate is already in a politically important position and is widely known to have misappropriated resources of patronage supplied by various national
organizations for distribution among the supporters and potential supporters of the ruling party and its government. His workers and clients become reluctant to mobilize political support for him when he seeks re-election. Sometimes the temptations for immediate material gains makes a ruling party candidate blind to his far-reaching future gain and he then fails to maintain and expand the patron-client network which is essential for him to remain in power. These dissatisfied clients generally have two alternatives open to them. First, they may switch over to another candidate of the ruling party provided that the ruling party in consultation with the district party hierarchy decides to replace the ill-reputed candidate by a new one who is capable of building up a network of political clientelism by distributing or promising to distribute patronage to his clients and potential clients some of whom work for him as his trusted dalals (brokers) and would be given special responsibility for distribution of patronage to the ordinary clients and potential clients. But if the ruling party does not replace the ill-reputed candidate and continues its support to him, the clients and voters being frustrated are likely to support the opposition party candidate generally on condition that he would distribute patronage to them when he wins the election.

A recent defeat of Hashem, a ruling party candidate in a by-election for membership in the parliament at the hands of an opposition party candidate can be cited as an example to show the process described above. Hashem is one of the members of the executive committee of the district branch of the AL. He is a powerful local political leader and has
direct linkages with the influential ruling party leaders at national level. Such linkages have largely increased his power of manipulation which he has effectively used to build up an elaborate network of patron-clientage. He is very much involved in the decision-making process in the community. Recently Rajshahi district has been hard hit by famine. A large quantity of relief materials mostly secured from some foreign countries were supplied by the government and the central ruling party hierarchy to the local AL hierarchy and the district administration for distribution among the famine-stricken people of the district. Each member of the executive committee of the district AL became highly interested in distributing these relief materials (i.e. wheat, rice, blankets, cloth etc.) to their clients and potential clients as well as in making some personal material gains out of them. At an informal meeting of the executive committee it was decided to put each executive committee member in charge of distribution of a specific quantity of relief materials to their supporters. Each member was instructed to distribute this patronage in the name of the ruling party so that it could serve the dual purpose of expanding and perpetuating his patron-client network as well as mobilization of political support for the ruling party. But most of these members have distributed a portion of relief materials as patronage to their clients and potential clients without much reference to the contribution of the AL. On the contrary, they have given all emphasis on their personal ability and power to bring such a large quantity of relief materials because in a patron-client
network a patron generally tries to take personal credit for the patronage he distributes to his clients so that the latter can feel the power of the former. To rationalize his action he advances arguments that it is not necessary to distribute patronage in the name of the AL since he himself is identified with the party, and when his clients give him political support they indirectly through him provide support to the party.

While all other members have informally decided to distribute roughly 50% of relief materials to their clients and to misappropriate the remaining 50%, Hashem could not check his temptation to misappropriate a major portion of relief materials by distributing only roughly 20% of the same to his clients. This has become a cause of widespread dissatisfaction among his clients. Hashem's dalal—clients who have been given special responsibility to distribute relief materials to his clients and potential clients failed to convince him to release some more materials for distribution because he had already sold roughly 80% of these materials in the blackmarket.

Although there is general allegation against the local political leaders of the ruling party of misappropriation of relief materials and indulgence in nepotism and favouritism in the distribution of the same, Hashem's case became the talk of the town because many of his dissatisfied clients began to spread the story of his gross misappropriation of relief materials. Some of these clients had already approached Alauddin, the President of the district AL to take up the matter with Hashem. But the president who has himself misappropriated some relief materials was not willing
to take the risk of coming into an open clash with Hashem who has some friends in the district party hierarchy as well as having direct linkage with some national political leaders of the ruling party such as Prime Minister Munsur Ali and Industries Minister K. Zaman. However, Alauddin held a private discussion with Hashem on this issue, and Hashem flatly denied the charges against him and blamed his dalal-clients for mismanagement in the distribution of relief materials. This enraged his dalal-clients who communicated the matter to K. Zaman and urged him to take up the matter with Hashem. But K. Zaman seems to be hesitant in taking any firm stand on this issue because Hashem is a brother of Kasem who is widely known to be one of the financiers of K. Zaman in his political campaign. He asked Hashem and these dalal-clients to settle the matter amicably and assured the latter of future patronage provided they do not pursue the matter any further and work for Hashem in the coming by-election for the parliament. The assurances of K. Zaman could satisfy only a few dalal-clients of Hashem, while most of his dalal-clients and many other clients remained dissatisfied. They became antagonistic to Hashem and began to work against him so that he was defeated in the by-election. They joined forces with Malek, a rival candidate of an opposition party (i.e. the JSD). Hashem, of course, was trying to maintain his network of patron-clientage by promising them adequate patronage in future. But his endeavour was not very successful because he had already clearly shown his greediness and susceptibility to temptation.
Thus although Hashem spent about Tk.20,000 (£1 = Tk.26) and was heavily backed by political leaders of the ruling party he could not win the election. While I was talking to Hashem about his defeat in the by-election he blamed some of his dalal-clients and newly recruited workers for his failure to win the election because, according to Hashem, these people were given money to purchase votes for him but instead of doing so they had largely misappropriated his money. He was thinking of taking retaliation against some of his dalal-clients and workers by implicating them in false criminal cases such as robbery, theft, murder etc. But he was dissuaded from taking such a measure by his brother, Kasem who, in fact, was responsible for recruitment of some of his new dalals and workers. However, from Hashem's recent defeat in the by-election, it should not be assumed that he has been displaced from the power structure. In fact, he is very much there in it because he is still an important member of the district party hierarchy and has connections with some powerful and influential political and bureaucratic elites both at national and local levels. His defeat, of course, temporarily blocked his mobility to the position of an MP.

We have already discussed how, in general, the political process in Rajshahi is connected with national politics and have made only casual references to the involvement of a particular national-cum-local political leader, i.e. K. Zaman in the political process of the community. An extended

48. Informal Interview with Hashem on December 19, 1974.
discussion of the involvement of K. Zaman in the community politics will enable us to understand how the community and district politics have been moulded by the networks of relationships that have developed between K. Zaman and various important political organizations and elite groups in Rajshahi.

Involvement of K. Zaman in the Rajshahi District Awami League:

As a student of law in Calcutta University K. Zaman was very active in the student politics. At that time he came in contact with Suhrawardy, a prominent Muslim Political leader of Bengal and became one of his devoted clients. He also came in close contact with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (then a prominent student worker of Suhrawardy's group in Calcutta). After obtaining a law degree he came to Rajshahi town and began his career as a lawyer. He became an important worker of the AL and subsequently was elected the President of the Rajshahi District AL and his political activities became more prominent. His direct linkage with the national- and provincial-level prominent AL leaders such as Suhrawardy, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Ataur Rahman Khan etc. gave him immense prestige in the community. These leaders relied much on him for mobilization of political support for the party in Rajshahi district. He became very active to popularize the AL in the district because he was an aspirant to a higher political position at national or provincial level.

At present K. Zaman does not hold any specific formal position in the district party hierarchy. He is an MP elected by both urban and rural voters because his electoral
constituency comprises both rural and urban areas. Being an MP he is one of the political representatives of the people of the district. Before his selection as the Industries Minister he was the President of the Bangladesh AL having direct linkages with influential ruling political and bureaucratic elite members of the country. His extensive tours in different parts of Bangladesh enabled him to develop direct or indirect linkages with the workers and supporters of the AL.

Though K. Zaman is no longer the President of the district AL he has now much greater influence and control over it and its political activities in the district because he is a powerful patron of local political leaders of the ruling party. His patron-client ties with these local political leaders have given him an opportunity to exercise great control over selection, election and formation of the party hierarchy in the district. He, in consultation with influential local political leaders of the AL, decides who should be nominated for various posts in the local party hierarchy because it has become more or less a convention of party politics in Bangladesh and possibly also in India and Pakistan that the political patron at national level should be approached by local political leaders for a decision on the selection or election of members of the party hierarchy at the district level. And through this district party hierarchy he exerts his control over the selection or election of candidates for the party hierarchies at lower levels, i.e. at subdivisional and thana (rural police station) levels. This shows that the district party hierarchy
acts as an intermediary between K. Zaman and lower level party hierarchies. From the above statement it should not be assumed that the existing members of the district party hierarchy do not play any effective role in the selection and election of new members of the executive committee of the party. In fact, they play an important role in this matter as K. Zaman gives due weight to the opinions of existing executive committee members who are his trusted clients for mobilization of political support for himself as well as for the ruling party and its government. So in most cases the decisions are treated as joint decisions of a patron and his influential clients; the fact remains that the patron K. Zaman has the final say in the matter; in case of difference of opinion his opinion prevails. Sometimes, K. Zaman has to play an important role in the party affairs at district and below district level, especially when conflict arises among the local-level leaders and the party organization is faced with a problem of factional division.49

However, K. Zaman has been able to build up a network of political clientelism mainly on the basis of a system of distribution of patronage and political protection to his clients. His political strategies have been proved to be quite effective to secure his own position as well as the position of the local ruling party hierarchy. He has very high direct and indirect access to the resource-bases of

49. For further information on K. Zaman's involvement in the problem of factionalism in the district party hierarchy, see pp.494-62.
patronage both at national and local levels. His direct contact and connections with other ministers, state ministers and parliamentary secretaries, high-ranking officials in various departments and big industrialists and businessmen of Dacca have placed him in a very favourable position to indulge in distribution of patronage to his relatives, friends, clients and potential clients in exchange for their political support to him and to the AL. He is, in fact, involved in a network of horizontal alliance with some national-level elite members on the basis of mutual exchange of patronage-resources. However, his activities are in conformity with the general practice of the AL which favours the policy of distribution of patronage in the form of licence, permit, dealership etc. to create a group of clients who are mostly middleman; and many of whom are not in actual trade and business. Their main business is to sell these licences and permits to a group of businessmen who were supporters of the previous regime and hence could not yet establish any effective linkage with favour-dispensing ruling elites. So they do not find any alternative but to depend on these middlemen's favour and support for the success of their business. These middlemen, being closely connected with the AL leaders, are not only interested in their immediate gain but also form a vested interest group which identifies its success with the success of the AL leaders. Thus at the time of sale of these licences and permits to the businessmen they never forget to mention K. Zaman's patronage in securing them with the purpose of securing their political support for K. Zaman and the local AL leaders. Their purpose is easily achieved because when
these businessmen make a huge profit under the protection of the AL-supported middlemen they are led to identify their success in making profit with the successful retention of power by the ruling party leaders. But the above discussion does not, however, mean that all the businessmen do not have direct linkage with the leaders of the ruling party. In fact, all AL-affiliated elite businessmen are directly connected with local AL leaders as well as K. Zaman. We shall discuss this issue later.

In general K. Zaman's relationship with his political workers in the community is quite informal in nature. It becomes more informal during election time when he is usually called and addressed by his political workers as "Hena Bhai", expressing very close, informal and personal ties with him. These workers, recruited from both rural and urban areas play the important role of dalals (brokers) in mobilizing political support for their patron, K. Zaman in exchange for patronage from the latter. These dalal-workers are assigned responsibilities for distribution of patronage among general clients and potential clients in the name of their patron and thereby ensure their political support to K. Zaman. They always try to project K. Zaman as a liberal dispenser of patronage to his clients and potential clients.

K. Zaman's position in the ruling party and its government has already been mentioned and his influence and control over the district level ruling party organizations have been briefly touched upon. For a better understanding

50. K. Zaman's nickname is 'Hena'; and 'Bhai' means brother.
of the political process in the community a detailed
discussion about K. Zaman's network of relationship with
the political elites of Rajshahi would be necessary.
K. Zaman himself is also a political and a professional
elite member of Rajshahi town but because of his full
involvement in politics he is more a member of the political
than the professional elite. He is also a national political
elite member. We have already said that he emerged from a
modest beginning as a lawyer in Rajshahi town to his present
high position of a cabinet minister. The community from
which he got his initial start demands some special treatment
from him on the plea that he belongs to Rajshahi town and
from the very beginning of his career he is intimately
connected with his political colleagues, clients and the
members of the local AL party hierarchy. He also has contact
with many more party workers who do not hold any office in
the party hierarchy but are quite well known as influential
party workers. At the town level K. Zaman's contact and
connections with his supporters are, to some extent, direct.
But, of course, he largely depends on the local party
hierarchy and his dalal-workers to secure further support
for himself as well as for the AL. His direct connection
with many of his supporters is, to a great extent, governed
by his patron-client network, friendship and kinship bond
with them.

The local AL leaders find themselves dependent on
K. Zaman for their political success which facilitates their
upward mobility and increases their direct and indirect
access to resource-bases of patronage and power of manipulation
which are necessary for mobilization of political support for
themselves, their patron K. Zaman and the AL. Moreover, the intimate linkage with a minister in a patron-client network is sure to give these elite clients higher prestige and power in the community. On the other hand, as K. Zaman has a strong hold over his client political elites of the community he definitely gains higher prestige at national level and earns a greater chance to maintain his political position because the local MPs and the local AL leaders give him political support to ensure the retention of his position of a cabinet minister with which their own interests are highly connected. As long as K. Zaman can maintain his political position at national level the flow of patronage to these local political elites remains steady.

Another point of interest is that K. Zaman plays an important part in the process of nomination of candidates from the district for membership in the parliament. This enables him to exert control over the upward mobility of the local political leaders of the ruling party. Moreover, during election time the local AL leaders get all sorts of material and political support from him. He is capable of managing it by adopting various means, such as by asking some rich businessmen, contractors and industrialists, who have enjoyed and are enjoying patronage from him, to give financial support to the local party hierarchy and sometimes to individual candidates or by procuring jeeps and cars from some invisible sources (i.e. mostly from industrialists in Dacca) for the use of the local party and often the individual candidates, especially during election time. He helps them to secure relief materials to be distributed to the AL supporters.

It is generally believed by the people of the community that
the local AL leaders get a supply of a certain amount of
money secured from foreign countries, especially the U.S.
through K. Zaman. Moreover, for the sake of maintaining
his supporting base at the district level he never hesitates
to give generally unwritten orders to the district-level
government officials to make government facilities available
to the local AL leaders. Thus it is not uncommon to see,
especially during the time of elections, the use of the
public cars, jeeps and trucks by the local AL leaders and
their workers. However, it is not that the local AL leaders
will not be able to use the government vehicles for their
purposes without the intervention of K. Zaman, but the point
is that the process becomes much easier.

It may be noted here that after the independence of
Bangladesh the AL formed the government and initiated a
policy of breaking the concentration of wealth in a few
hands which is said to have been encouraged during the Ayub
regime, and adopted a policy to increase substantially the
number of licence-holders by recruiting new members from
among the AL supporters and party workers on the recommendation
of local MPs. This policy gave K. Zaman an opportunity to
further strengthen his position in his home town and district.
He, along with other MPs started distributing this patronage
by recommending his clients, relations, friends, friends' relations etc. for licences and permits. Some of these
licence-holders became businessmen or industrialists or traders, but some others remained as middlemen to whom we
have referred earlier. 51 This accessibility to the resources

51. See pp. 402-3
of patronage has also given him a chance to increase the number of his political clients, workers and dalals. In doing so he is very careful to eliminate the workers of the opposition leaders. But the door of the local AL is not closed to those who want to join it by genuinely severing their connections with other political parties. They are welcome to enjoy this patronage, of course, not at the cost of the AL supporters, provided they show full allegiance to the local AL leaders as well as K. Zaman. Consequently, some workers of opposition and recently banned political parties have joined the AL in exchange for patronage and accepted K. Zaman as their patron.

Student Leaders' Involvement in the Political Process in the Community:

In the University of Rajshahi and in various colleges in the town there are students' organizations which are supposed to be elected every year for the purpose of looking after the welfare of student communities. But in reality, because of political leaders' use of students for their political purpose each students' organization has been clearly identified as the student front of each political party. Even the formation of a new political party invariably leads to the creation of its student front. This is one of the reasons why the students, especially student leaders, are directly involved in the political process of the community. Thus if we try to examine K. Zaman's network of relationships in political spheres we must look into the nature of his relationship with the student leaders of the local Students League (SL) which is the student front of the
ruling party. In the absence of a strong SL, K. Zaman and other local AL leaders become a bit weak because this student organization is an important base of their political power. Thus, the whole ruling party machinery and K. Zaman himself along with other local AL leaders devote much attention to the maintenance and perpetuation of the SL in the University of Rajshahi and different colleges in the town and the district. That this student organization and the Rajshahi University Central Students Union (RUCSU) are very important to the ruling party can be seen in the frequent interaction between the leaders of these student organizations and K. Zaman as well as the local AL leaders.

Now a question arises, why are the students so important in politics? An answer to this question can be found in the prevailing socio-economic condition in Rajshahi district as elsewhere in Bangladesh. The social and economic mobility brought about in the community by the introduction of some modern elements of Western societies has brought and still is bringing the maddhabitta category into existence and with the emergence of the maddhabitta category a new type of interest has arisen and is arising. These interests seek satisfaction; and consequently, a new type of consciousness tends to draw upon that entire group of people. The spread of education slowly draws people up to the maddhabitta category from the peasantry and other lower strata of the society and they become aware of certain rights and opportunities which they had never known before. This maddhabitta awareness of new opportunities and rights along
with the concern of the elites who have predominantly originated from this category as well as the prevalence of the system of distribution of patronage in exchange for political support and services largely determine the course of social and political processes in the community. Because the students want to take advantage of new opportunities and aspire to elitist positions and white collar jobs they become highly motivated to participate in the political process because politics is considered as one of the important factors for their upward mobility. The political elites who have control over the distribution of new opportunities as patronage take full advantage of students' aspirations to bring them into the network of patron-clientage and use them for achieving their political goal which also serves the interests of the students and the people of the maddhabitta category with whom the political leaders have established an exchange relationship in addition to their existing kinship ties with them (people of the maddhabitta category).

A question is raised here of whether there are students and student leaders opposed to the AL. As has already been mentioned there are, of course, student organizations attached to the opposition parties. These are the students who are highly dissatisfied with the AL leaders because of their frustration in securing patronage from the latter. They side with the opposition leaders because they think that they will be able to secure much higher patronage if the former can capture power. In fact, the opposition leaders give them an assurance of higher patronage. These student leaders and their supporters have good reasons to
rely on the assurance of their political patrons because in the past when an opposition party came to power they tried to fulfil their promises of patronage to its student supporters, especially the student leaders.

However, when the date of election of the student organizations is announced the whole energy of the SL and the local AL party hierarchy as well as K. Zaman is put together to win the election; and the whole district political machinery is moved accordingly. For winning the election all sorts of techniques are applied and measures adopted. Material supports in the form of cars, jeeps, trucks and money for this election campaign come from the local AL leaders and K. Zaman. The student leaders of the SL elected in various students unions, especially the RUCSU are heavily patronised by K. Zaman and the local AL leaders; and some influential student leaders are even consulted in making certain decisions on community affairs. These student leaders play an effective role in the mobilization of political support for K. Zaman and the local AL leaders. Moreover, their direct linkage with these political leaders and some high-ranking government officials enhances their politico-economic status and power of manipulation of things in favour of themselves as well as their supporters in the student community. Thus, when K. Zaman comes to visit Rajshahi these student leaders, local AL leaders, some influential dalal-workers and some higher bureaucrats are seen to be in the forefront to receive the honourable minister K. Zaman who embraces these student leaders. A few student leaders such as Showkat, the Vice-president of the RUCSU, and Quddus, the President of the Rajshahi District SL are
commonly seen to accompany the minister to his residence often travelling in his car. This is a device generally adopted by a political patron to keep his clients i.e., the student leaders in good humour. However, by virtue of their close association with K. Zaman they get an opportunity to enhance their socio-economic conditions as well as to help their friends, relations and clients to get jobs in various government departments. Sometimes, they procure licences and permits in the name of their relations and friends and make plenty of money out of it. In doing so they get the full co-operation of K. Zaman and the local AL leaders who recommended the cases of their client-student leaders to higher bureaucrats having formal power to distribute these resources.

Here a question arises how can these student leaders maintain their dominance and retain their influence over so many students? This process is interesting and takes different forms. One way to keep the students attached to the SL and hence to them is the distribution of favours amongst the students. As the student leaders' close linkage with K. Zaman and other local AL leaders enables them to have a high degree of indirect access to different sources of patronage, they do often distribute patronage to a group of students who are the quasi-leaders of the students. These quasi-leaders use or exploit their contact, friendship, kinship etc. to secure the support of many students for their patron student leaders, of course, giving them hope of some future patronage. Another most effective way is the assurance of securing the admission of the students in various academic departments by organizing some agitational
movements for the increase of seats in each department and
the relaxation of qualification requirements for the
admission test. Here many teaching departments are involved
in student politics. If a departmental head is a supporter
of a particular political party, say the AL, he is often
seen to show favours to some of the admission cases, pleaded
for by the student leaders. This has a very adverse effect
on the quality of students coming to the university and
colleges because sometimes students with poor background
are given admission at the cost of some good students.
True, there are protests from the teaching community, but
the student pressure, because of the backing of the political
leaders, is so high that it becomes often very difficult to
withstand it. Another way for the distribution of patronage
among the students is to secure residential accommodation
for the students in various residential halls of the University
of Rajshahi and different colleges in the district.

Interactive process between the leaders of the local branch
of the Jatiyo Sramik League (i.e. the labour front of the
AL) and K. Zaman:

In Bangladesh each major political party has its labour
front. The AL's labour front is known as the Jatiyo Sramik
League (JSL). It is a national organization having its
branches in different districts. The main purpose of this
organization is supposed to be the welfare of labourers,
working in different mills, factories and commercial
establishments. The leaders of this organization are
expected to function as spokesmen of the labourers in
matters of wages, working conditions, leave of absence,
overtime work etc. But in actual practice, it has been
turned into political organization of the AL to mobilize and use the labour force for strengthening its power and position. The selection and election of the candidates in the JSL is always controlled by the AL leaders. The Rajshahi branch of the JSL has been organized by Salam and Latif - two influential informal leaders of the local AL - in consultation with K. Zaman. The nomination of candidates for various posts in this organization is always given by K. Zaman and the local AL leaders. They nominate their own trusted people and are seen to take precautions so that people with doubtful allegiance to them might not occupy any position in the organization. Most of the leaders of this organization are not recruited from among the labourers. Top positions such as the posts of president, vice-president and general secretary are occupied by influential workers and leaders of the local AL, who are not labourers in the proper sense of the term. Thus one can see that the trade union leadership comes from outside the labourers; but the present trend is that there is strong demand from the labourers to have some influential trade union leaders recruited from among themselves because they think that such leaders may give more attention to their interests, i.e. higher wages and facilities. But the main obstacle to this is that the local AL party hierarchy has very rigid control over this organization through its political workers and dalals who are not actually labourers, but have close connections with some influential labourers who are regularly patronized generally through these workers
and *dalals* by the local AL leaders and K. Zaman, to enjoy some special privileges. Most of the office-bearers of the JSL are gentlemen largely coming from the urban *maddhabitta* category. So in a proper sense they cannot be termed as the true representative of the labour force; but they always pretend to uphold the interest of the labourers belonging to this organization. From their activities in it, it seems that they are mainly interested in political gain of the ruling party leaders and the government, not in the welfare of the general labourers.

However, K. Zaman has become involved in an exchange relationship with the JSL leaders and mainly through them with the general labourers even though he often meets these labourers in the mill or factory compounds. The JSL leaders speak on behalf of the labourers and place the latter's demands to K. Zaman who, in turn, tries to meet some of these demands in exchange for the labourers' political support to him and to the local AL leaders. Thus, K. Zaman distributes patronage to the JSL leaders and through them to the general labourers, especially the influential labourers i.e., the *sardars* in the mills and the work-supervisors in the factories who have considerable influence over the general labourers. The patronage takes the form of the flow of public money to the JSL office, licences and permits to the local leaders of the JSL and the *sardars* and work-supervisors, the distribution of relief materials among the labourers, recommendation for promotion of some labourers to higher grades, help to secure some jobs for the labourers' family members or relations, securing of some stipends for the labourers' sons and daughters,
distribution of corrugated iron sheets and house-building materials, helping some labourers to get loans from the co-operative bank in the town, etc. The JSL leaders along with the labourers rally behind K. Zaman and show their allegiance by attending his public meetings, often in a procession. When K. Zaman comes to Rajshahi town on a tour, generally he and the local AL leaders go to the mill areas where he is received by the local JSL leaders and the labourers. K. Zaman does not miss the opportunity to enquire about the financial conditions of some of the labourers and becomes outwardly very much moved by hearing the tale of their poverty and sufferings. Sometimes he pats the poor and naked children of the labourers and gives them some money for sweets. K. Zaman is very careful not to wear costly dress when he meets the labourers because that helps him to enhance his image of simple living in the eyes of the labourers.

The labourers supporting the ruling party are used for political purposes also in the sense that very often they are taken out of the mills and factories to participate in a procession, to attend a political meeting of the AL, to fight with the rival group, to demonstrate against a particular high official, to work for a political leader during his election time etc. K. Zaman and his local colleagues are involved in such an affair; but most of them act from behind the scene only to avoid public notice. They are always in close contact with the intermediaries i.e., the JSL leaders who lead such movements, and control the law administering authority and resist it from taking
any drastic action against the JSL labourers and their leaders even if they break the laws. Thus when fighting starts between two rival groups of labourers, belonging to different labour organizations, the police and magistrates are seen to take only very nominal measures to check it if the labourers of the JSL dominate the scene; but when other groups of labourers supporting the opposition parties are in a dominant position they, sometimes, take strong measures to control the situation. For example, on November 16, 1975, a general meeting of the labourers of the Rajshahi Jute Mill and the Rajshahi Sugar Mill was called by the Sramik Union (SU), the labour front of the NAP (B) to protest against the beating of SU leader, Motilalal Karmakar by some labourers belonging to the JSL. When the meeting was about to start a group of supporters of the JSL entered the meeting with lathis (bamboo poles) and began to beat the supporters of the SU. The police headed by Jalal, a deputy magistrate appeared on the scene only to observe the incident without any serious intervention because the JSL supporters were dominating in the fight. However, the presence of the police and the magistrate brought about a quick termination of the fighting. But the meeting could not be held because the participants and organizers of the meeting had to flee away. This happens because K. Zaman and the local AL leaders, especially Alauddin and Mesbahuddin, the president and general secretary of the District AL respectively, have control and influence over the law maintaining authority of the district and can manipulate things in their favour.
So far we have not said anything about factional conflict among the leaders of the JSL. In a simple way we can say that there are factional conflicts among these labour leaders mainly on the question of enjoyment of more privileges and sharing of power. Each faction leader in his bid to prove his strength tries to draw a higher number of labourers to his side. This often creates tension among the JSL affiliated labourers. But due to the intervention of K. Zaman and some influential local AL leaders factional conflicts in this organization remain more or less latent and the conflicting leaders are generally seen to abide by the decisions of their patrons from whom they receive the patronage and to whom they turn for political protection. However, back in 1972 when the JSL at the national level was divided into two factional groups one of which became the labour front of the Jatiyo Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) the Rajshahi District JSL remained more or less undisturbed because all the labour leaders of this organization except one, Majid, remained supporters of the ruling party. Majid withdrew his allegiance from the ruling party leaders and took charge of organizing the district branch of the labour front of the JSD. The main reason for his severing of connections with the local AL leaders was that he was frustrated in gaining any political position in the District AL party hierarchy, and moreover, his father Ghani became the Vice-president of the District JSD. Some other local leaders of the JSD joined Majid to organize it properly. The relationship between the local JSD leaders and the JSL (M) leaders is not very much different from the pattern of relationship found between the local leaders of the JSL and
those of the AL except that the JSD leaders, having limited access to official resource-bases of patronage, try to strengthen its labour front mostly by the promise of distribution of patronage when they would be able to come to power. The labourers are assured of material benefits through the introduction of socialism in which they will have higher income and standard of life. But the promise of future distribution of patronage and some sort of ideological appeal which contains the seeds of material benefits to the labourers have limited scope for recruitment of labourers as supporters of the JSD and its leaders. This is possibly one of the reasons why the JSL (M) is much weaker than the JSL.

Role of K. Zaman in Local Self-government Institutions:

K. Zaman is bound up with influential leaders of the local self-government organs (i.e. the Zilla Parishad, the Municipality and the Union Parishad or Town Committee) in Rajshahi town and district and through these elite members he can, to some extent, maintain connections with the general mass of the population. Most of the elite members of these organs are his clients who are highly interested in securing patronage for themselves as well as for their clients and kindred in exchange for their political service and support to their patron, K. Zaman who along with the influential local AL leaders exercises control over the selection, nomination and election of these local self-government leaders.
K. Zaman's Network of Relationships with some Professional Groups:

As has already been mentioned K. Zaman himself is a member of the legal profession, and before his assumption of office as a minister he was a practising lawyer in Rajshahi town. But now his political position has compelled him to spend most of his time in Dacca. Of course, his visits to his home town are quite frequent. Whenever he is in the town he shows his keen desire to meet his former colleagues in the legal profession as well as his friends and clients in other professional groups. Two processes motivate him to do so: one is K. Zaman's friendship and patron-client ties and community feeling, and the other is his political interest in securing the support and services of members of these professional groups for himself as well as for the local ruling party hierarchy by distributing and promising to distribute patronage to them. His clients and friend-clients in these professional groups can be seen to throng around him for some favours for themselves or for their sons and daughters and other relations. They feel that they have a claim on K. Zaman's favour on the grounds of their old friendship with him and their political support to him as well as to the AL. K. Zaman is highly interested in extending the horizon of his political supporting base to a group of people who are capable of exerting their influence on the local mass of the population in both rural and urban areas.
The lawyers have their clients all over the district and the latter are in close contact with the former for quite a long time as the final settlement of a case takes an unusually long time in any law court in Bangladesh. Some cases even take 5-6 years to settle and both the parties have to produce witnesses who are briefed by the lawyers. This legal procedure brings, in addition to clients, a group of witnesses in close contact with the lawyers. Although the relationship between the lawyers and the clients are contractual in nature, the clients are, in many cases, not in a position to pay full fees to the lawyers regularly. The lawyers have to show some favours to their clients, especially the poor clients, often by accepting reduced fees or delayed payment and thus bind them in some sort of patron-client relationship; and the clients feel obliged to their lawyers. So the lawyers are in a position to link K. Zaman with their clients and through the latter to other people who are friendly with and related to them.

The doctors are also well known for their contact with the general people in both urban and rural areas because the doctors treat the patients suffering from various diseases which are omnipresent in most of the families. Here again the doctor-patient relationship is expected to be governed by the principle of 'payment-for-service'. This principle works well with the economically solvent people; but in a community where most of the people are very poor and the wealth is concentrated in the hands of a small number of people this principle of 'payment-for-service' does not work very smoothly. What happens in the majority of cases
is that the doctors take reduced fees and thus do a great favour to a family with one or two patients. The whole family feels grateful to him. However, in Rajshahi town some elite members have their family physicians who not only treat patients in those families but also become very friendly with members of those families. Although there are two *hekims* (traditional Muslim physician) in the town their professional contact with the people is highly limited because in general people of the community prefer to have the treatment of the modern physicians. Thus the doctors' contact and linkages with many people in the community put them in favourable positions to play a significant role for mobilization of political support for K. Zaman as well as the local AL leaders in exchange for the latter's patronage.

The local journalists are divided into two factions. One faction is with K. Zaman and the local AL leaders. The members of this group always try to project the objectives of the AL but attack the objectives of the opposition parties by showing their danger for the future of the nation. They try to find faults with the leaders of the opposition parties. They are mostly AL workers, and some of them are also members of the SL and are still studying in the university. Some of them have kinship ties with political leaders of the ruling party. They have been employed by K. Zaman and other local AL leaders to give publicity to their real or imagined welfare activities for the people of the district so that their images are enhanced in the public eyes. In return for their services the political leaders, especially K. Zaman very often help them and some of their relations in their upward occupational mobility.
The other faction is attached to the opposition parties and project the objectives of these parties, pointing to their good effect on society, especially on the life of the poor people of the country. They try to project the leaders of their parties as the future saviours of the nation from the exploitation of the ruling elites and their associates and point to the malpractices of the AL leaders. In return for their valuable services to the opposition leaders they get some patronage from the latter and expect to get more patronage if the latter can capture power. However, compared to the other faction the number of members of this faction is quite small because most of the journalists are after some immediate gains which they cannot expect to get from the leaders of the opposition parties because of the latter's limitation of access to resource-bases of patronage, especially the official resource-bases of patronage. These journalists are with the opposition parties because they think that the AL leaders indulge in a high degree of nepotism and favouritism in the distribution of patronage and are responsible for the gery high rise of the prices of the commodities and the consequent sufferings of the general mass of the population.

**Involvement of Bureaucratic Elites in the Political Process of the Community:**

In Bangladesh the present bureaucratic elites are the legatees of the British rule in India. In many discussions of the history of the civil service in India and Pakistan it has been mentioned that the bureaucratic elite as a powerful group in an autocratic power structure was created
by the British Raj to govern the people of India. We shall not enter into the discussion of the structure and powers of bureaucratic elites because here our aim is to examine how the bureaucratic elites in Rajshahi town are entangled in a network of formal and informal relationships with K. Zaman and the local political leaders of the ruling party. However, it would be necessary to refer to the national bureaucracy of which the district bureaucracy is only a part. Even if it is generally upheld that the bureaucracy has lost its former power and control it sometimes becomes very difficult to understand its pattern from the study of local bureaucrats. But it is quite distinct that the bureaucratic elites are no longer in a position to act independently and to maintain their political neutrality which they are supposed to observe. As a result, most of the bureaucratic elites are directly or indirectly connected with party politics both at local and national levels. Thus the bureaucratic elites, especially the higher bureaucrats who are in key positions in the administration of the district, are under constant pressures from the leaders of the ruling party to act according to their (political leaders') wishes and directions. They are required to listen to the advice of the local leaders of the ruling party as well as K. Zaman in dealing with various problems and with the allocation or distribution of resources to the people of the community and the district. Consequently,

the bureaucrats are drawn into an exchange relationship with the political leaders of the ruling party. Because K. Zaman's words carry much weight both at national and local levels, the local bureaucrats seem to be very busy in pleasing him because he is in a position to help them to move to higher positions through promotion. They also feel that good relationships and a close association with K. Zaman would provide them with some sort of political protection in their practice of favouritism and nepotism. Thus in order to maintain harmonious and close relationships with K. Zaman and the local ruling party leaders, the bureaucratic elites have shown and are showing favours to the clients, potential clients, friends and relations of K. Zaman and other local AL leaders on the recommendation of these political leaders.

K. Zaman and the local AL leaders are well aware of the fact that the success of their policy of distribution of patronage to their supporters, friends and relations depends much on the co-operation of these bureaucratic elites. They also know that the police officers who are in charge of maintaining law and order in the town and district can help the local AL leaders by way of giving protection to their clients and workers as well as by suppressing movements generated by leaders of the opposition political parties. For this reason K. Zaman wants to keep the bureaucratic elites under his direct influence in his patron-client network by facilitating the prospects of their promotions and upward mobility. Sometimes it can be seen that a particular officer with less experience will supersede
a senior officer because of the former's close connections and patron-client relationships with K. Zaman and the latter's failure to extend whole-hearted co-operation to the local AL leaders, as well as to K. Zaman in their manipulation of things in favour of themselves as well as to their supporters, friends and kinsmen. Thus although most of the bureaucrats are in harmonious relationships with K. Zaman and the local AL leaders it is not unusual to see a few non-co-operative officers victimized in various ways. Their promotions are stopped; they are transferred to some bad stations or are put in positions without much power and prestige. Sometimes they are made officer-on-special-duty without assigning any specific and important function to perform. These victimized officers are often seen to seek help from the departmental secretaries for their protection. The secretaries who are at the top of the chain of bureaucracy generally come forward to help their colleague-clients with whom they identify their own interest as members of the same profession. They usually take up the matter with the ministers and try to bring about some sort of settlement. Most of the time they are successful because the ministers are very much dependent upon these secretaries for the efficient distribution of patronage to their clients as well as for the functioning of the ministry. However, the secretaries are also aware of the fact that their enjoyment of various types of privileges depends upon the good will of the ministers. Hence the mutual needs of the ministers and these higher bureaucrats bind them together in a network of exchange relationship. Since most of the secretaries are on good terms with the ministers the latter
become sympathetic to the cause of the former, but at the same time the ministers are very careful not to go against the local political leaders whose political support and clientelism are highly valued. So the usual procedure is reconciliation. But if that procedure fails and the pressure from the local ruling party leaders becomes very strong, the ministers in consultation with the secretary of the relevant department constitute an enquiry committee for the investigation of the case.

Although we have seen that most of the bureaucratic elite members of the community are involved in an exchange relationship with K. Zaman and the local AL leaders, this does not, however, mean that the bureaucratic elite members do everything for the AL people and nothing for the people who are not associated with the AL and its leaders. In fact, many of these bureaucratic elites are involved in transactions with people supporting other political parties in which they exchange their favours for illegal gratification. Moreover, the support of the bureaucrats to the leaders of the AL does not necessarily mean that they are formally affiliated to the AL because the bureaucrats, according to the civil service rule, cannot have formal membership of or political positions in a political party. Their political affiliation is hard to ascertain even though most of them provide informal and often secret support to the ruling party and go in for an exchange relationship with the leaders of that party. But once the bureaucratic elites are involved in an exchange relationship with the leaders of the ruling party they develop a vested interest in it and do not want to see their allies displaced.
from political power because of future uncertainties which might or might not be favourable to them. As long as the AL is in power the bureaucratic elites are generally identified as the supporters of the ruling party and its leaders.

From the above discussion it is quite evident that the bureaucratic elites of Rajshahi town are under the control of the AL leaders and intimately involved in the system of politics of patronage. Because the bureaucratic elites are in formal control of most of the official resource-bases of patronage it becomes difficult for them to avoid their involvement in the political process of the community. Moreover, their aspiration for upward mobility brings them in close contact with the political leaders of the ruling party.

Interaction between K. Zaman and Industrial and Trading Elites:

The industrial and trading elite members of the community have been found to be intimately connected with K. Zaman and the local AL leaders. In fact, they are involved in a network of exchange relationships with these political leaders from whom they receive patronage and political protection in exchange for political support and financial contributions. Money flows from them to K. Zaman, to the local leaders of the ruling party and to the influential leaders of the SL. This flow of money reaches its highest magnitude during the time of election. But in normal times they contribute quite substantially to the party funds. A question may arise here why are these elites so generous in giving so much money to the AL leaders and their political organizations? They do so because in the first place this
vested interest group finds some assurance of protection of their wealth and interests in the policies of the AL government because though the government has embarked upon a policy of nationalization of industries and some commercial concerns such as banks and insurance companies they have allowed the private industrial establishments and companies to develop, of course, with a maximum ceiling of capital investment of Tk.3,500,000 (£1 = Tk.26). In reality, the ceiling does not work as an effective bar to the concentration of wealth in the hands of a limited number of people. On the nationalization issue the opposition political parties have adopted in their party manifestos such policies that directly threaten the commercial, trading and industrial elites. This has prompted these wealthy people to support the AL and to bind themselves with the ruling political leaders in a network of exchange relationship. Secondly, they expect and get help from K. Zaman and his local colleagues in getting licences and permits and in those cases where the bureaucracy creates some difficulties in the renewal of their licences. Thirdly, they get the full co-operation of the ruling party leaders and some high government officials in evading income tax, in indulging in blackmarketing, smuggling and hoarding and in escaping legal actions against them. If any case of malpractice by these people is detected by the so-called anti-corruption department

no action can be taken against them because of the
intervention of K. Zaman and the local AL leaders. For
example, when the anti-corruption officials detected that
Kishor Lal, a Marwari wholesale trader and an informal
leader of the local AL had hoarded a huge quantity of
smuggled Indian cement and iron rods they could neither
arrest Kishor Lal nor seize these commodities because K.
Zaman and some influential local AL leaders such as Alauddin,
Jafar Ali Khan (MP), Mesbahuddin and Salam asked the district
anti-corruption officer, A. Matin not to take up the case. 54

Thus sometimes the law maintaining officers do not
interfere with illegal, unfair and often criminal activities
of some ruling party leaders and their supporters because
they know that no action can be taken against them. There
is no dearth of examples to substantiate the above statement.
However, we may cite the example of Kohinoor, a notorious
local informal AL leader, who is frequently seen to break
laws and to indulge in criminal activities. He is a ring-
leader of a group of smugglers and openly smuggles rice and
jute to India before the eyes of law-maintaining officials
who do not interfere in his smuggling affairs because he is
a trusted client of K. Zaman who often needs him to frighten
his political opponents and if need be, to break up public
meetings of the opposition leaders with the help of his
(Kohinoor's) goondas (rough elements). Kohinoor is, in fact,
a patron to these goondas for whom he secures patronage from

54. Informal interviews with A. Matin, Jafar Ali Khan and
Alauddin.
the AL government mainly through his patron, K. Zaman in exchange for the services of these goonda-clients.

A question may arise whether there are cases where the protection of K. Zaman breaks down. During the course of our field work we have not found a single case where K. Zaman’s protection to his clients failed to work. It is quite expected because K. Zaman’s hold over the bureaucrats of the community is very strong and his involvement in the decision-making process is indeed very great. But from the above example it should not be assumed that all the law-maintaining officers are honest and cannot do their duties out of fear of political leaders of the ruling party. What actually happens is that most of these officers are deeply interested in receiving patronage such as promotion, transfer, increments, house-building loans etc. from the AL government.

Elite contractors' ties with K. Zaman:

One particular contractor, J. Ali is a great financier of K. Zaman, and this contractor along with other clients and workers of K. Zaman plays an important role in organizing the election campaign of his patron, K. Zaman. He supplies money, motor vehicles and employs a large number of workers and employees of his firm for mobilization of political support for his patron. His house is temporarily turned into a meeting place of the AL workers who are entertained in occasional feasts. His two jeeps and three buses are sent to suburban areas to fetch the voters to the polling booth, and his people are seen to open an entertaining centre for the voters and offer them sarbat (water mixed with sugar
and lemon), *pan* (betel-leaf), *bidi* (indigenous cigarette) and cigarette. J. Ali is a close relation-client and *dalal* of K. Zaman who in return for his client's valuable services helps him in getting big contracts for construction works. For example, many big contracts for the construction of students' hall of residence, new faculty building, university mosque, extension works of old buildings, supply of electric goods, chairs, tables and benches have been given to J. Ali by the University of Rajshahi mainly on the recommendation of K. Zaman who has influence over the administrative staff of the university through his client Salam, a local AL leader and a member of the Rajshahi University Syndicate and the University Tender Committee as well as through the Vice-Chancellor of the university who is his friend and a supporter of the AL, S. Ahmed, the Treasurer of Rajshahi University and a member of the Tender Committee, N. Alam, the University Engineer whom he helped to come to their present elitist positions and through some AL supporting chairmen of some university departments. However, J. Ali not only finances the election campaign of K. Zaman and works as a *dalal* for mobilizing political support for him and his partymen but also makes financial contributions to the local AL, the SL, the JSL and the Awami Jubo League (AJL). Consequently the leaders of these political organizations also extend their help to J. Ali in securing some big contracts from the Communications and Building Department whose elite officials are involved in either patron-client relationships or horizontal alliance with the leaders of the ruling party as well as with J. Ali and other contractors of the town. For
example, J. Ali has got the major contracts in earth-work, construction and other works in an ongoing project of building a big park in Rajshahi town mainly with the help of political leaders of the AL and by offering illegal gratification to the involved officers.

So far we have talked about a particular contractor’s network of relationship with K. Zaman and other local AL leaders because this contractor is so intimately connected with K. Zaman and other local leaders that he is widely known in the community as a powerful man. But other AL-supporting big contractors are also on very friendly terms with K. Zaman and local AL leaders and involved in an exchange relationship with the latter. Some of these contractors have been newly recruited to their elitist positions because K. Zaman and the local AL leaders have helped them in their upward mobility. They have mostly been recruited from among the relations and clients of the AL leaders. They not only give political and financial support to their political allies but also mobilize political support for the latter in exchange for their further favour in getting some contracts for construction works. These big contractors employ a large number of wage-labourers who are highly dependent upon their employers for their subsistence because they are generally very poor and have very little opportunity to get jobs elsewhere. The acute unemployment problem has created a condition which leads these workers to a life of dependency and subservience. Their continuity in their jobs depends upon the will of their employers because they have neither job-security nor are they
members of any labour organization which would fight for their cause. This is why this type of labourers try to remain loyal to their masters who can easily secure their political support for their political patrons.

Involvement of Academic Elites in the Political Process of the Community:

Our data show that the academic elites of Rajshahi are mostly divided amongst themselves into two groups: one group i.e., the progressive faction is always very critical about the activities of the leaders of the AL and is seen to criticize various policies and actions of the ruling party and its government. The top leaders of this group have close connections with the opposition political parties and are very unhappy with the internal policies of the University of Rajshahi. They criticize most of the decisions taken by the Vice-Chancellor (V.C.) and his associates. The other group is known as the conservative faction which supports the policies of the ruling party and its government and is always with the university authority providing support to the V.C. and his associates in their decision-making process on internal affairs of the university. The leaders of this group of academicians have very strong connections and close contact with the political leaders of the ruling party.

How do the leaders of the progressive faction face the challenge of the leaders of other groups? To answer this question we can say that they have their followers recruited from both teachers and students. Generally those teachers who are frustrated in securing adequate patronage from the V.C. and his associates either directly or through the leaders
of the conservative group have sided with the leaders of the progressive group with the hope and having an assurance of future patronage. They have recruited the student followers in two ways: First by admitting some students (into their departments) who are capable of mobilizing student support for them. Secondly, their connections with the leaders of the opposition political parties have enabled them to secure the support of the leaders of the student fronts of those opposition parties.

As we are interested in finding out the relationship between the academic elites of Rajshahi and K. Zaman and local leaders of the ruling party within the framework of politics of patronage we shall not discuss the complicated type of relationship that exists between the two factions of academic elites as such. First, we shall discuss the relationship between the academic elites in Rajshahi University and K. Zaman as well as other local AL leaders. Although the new university ordinance has been given effect the AL government-appointed V.C. is still there because the election of the senators of the university has been postponed midway due to the declaration of emergency in Bangladesh. We have already discussed at some length the V.C.'s linkages with K. Zaman and the local AL leaders. So we shall discuss here only those facts which have not been already covered.

As K. Zaman and some influential local AL leaders have

55. The new University Ordinance provides that the Vice-Chancellor should be appointed by the Chancellor (i.e. the President of Bangladesh) from among three candidates chosen by the members of University Senate. See The Rajshahi University Ordinance, Govt. of Bangladesh, Dacca, 1973.
56. See Chapter 2, pp.121-22; and also this chapter, p.431.
friendly relationships with the V.C., the subordinate employees of the latter give much importance to the recommendations of the ruling party political leaders, especially K. Zaman in the process of recruitment of persons to various clerical and administrative posts in the university. This allows the AL leaders to push their clients, relations and friends to various jobs in the university. K. Zaman and a few influential local AL leaders also influence some of the appointments to higher posts in the university by exploiting their friendship with the V.C. and by influencing some members of the university syndicate. The appointments of A. Mahmud and R. Chowdhury as Associate Professors in a Science department can be cited to substantiate the above statement. However, political manipulation in the appointment of teachers in higher posts is becoming increasingly difficult because of the reorganization of the University Teachers' Association which apparently creates some pressure on the appointing authority to stick to the fair and standard practice for such appointments. But interestingly enough the members of the executive committee of this association often try to advance themselves as well as push their own candidates sometimes in violation of standard rules of appointment. But political manipulation in appointment of university teachers is still there because the candidates themselves are often eager to take the help of the political leaders and also because some of the candidates have kinship ties with them.

57. See 'Rajshahi University Affairs', A University Teacher, The Holiday, August 11, 1974.
The local AL leaders' and K. Zaman's network of friendly relationship with the V.C. also helps the members of the SL in securing some privileges from the University. But as has already been mentioned the V.C. takes full advantage of his friendly relations with the influential AL leaders, especially K. Zaman by requesting them to arrange more financial grants and scholarships for the university with the Government of Bangladesh. This makes the V.C. popular among many teachers as well as the students of the university who are able to get a share of those resources as patronage. These patronised teachers and students provide him with strong support to consolidate his position.

K. Zaman and some powerful local AL leaders are also intimately connected with some department chairmen and senior teachers of Rajshahi University. These teachers are well known for their pro-government activities and direct or indirect support for the ruling party and its leaders. They are interested in their further upward mobility which is often facilitated by the manipulation of the political leaders of the ruling party. The political leaders also take advantage of their close linkage with these academic elites because with the help of these senior teachers and chairmen they can manipulate the cases of junior teachers for their promotion to higher posts, permanent position in the service, crossing of the efficiency bar, acquiring of one or two unearned increments and getting of scholarships or fellowships for higher studies abroad. If a chairman

58. See Chapter 2, p.122.
of a particular department recommends any junior teacher of his department for any of the above-mentioned privileges he may generally expect to get it provided the chairman is involved in a patron-client tie with the V.C. Moreover, K. Zaman and the local AL leaders send many fresh students to these teachers for admission in various departments in the university as well as for their accommodation in the university halls of residence. So it may be said that the political leaders' linkage and friendship with this group of teachers give them an opportunity to extend their influence over the students and their parents and guardians. These teachers, some of whom are the office-bearers of the Rajshahi University Teachers' Association, get much help from the political leaders of the ruling party, especially K. Zaman in the process of their upward mobility. Some of these teachers have already been taken to very high government and semi-government jobs. For example, Dr. A. Ahmed, Professor and Chairman of the Department of Economics, and Dr. R. Islam, Professor and Chairman of the Department of Bengali, have been appointed as members of the Planning Commission and the Director-General of the Bangla Academy respectively partly on the recommendation of K. Zaman and partly because of their direct linkage with the Education Minister Yusuf Ali and the General Secretary of the national AL, Zillur Rahman. Moreover, many of these teachers are invited to various types of meetings and functions organized by the AL leaders both at national and local levels. The exchange relationship between these academic elites and the AL leaders brings their families together, and frequent
formal and informal visits to each other's residence has become very common. Moreover, these teachers are closely connected with the leaders of the SL who secure certain favours from them and in return glorify the activities of their teacher-patrons.

As regards the academic elites in colleges and other institutions we have seen that some principals, vice-principals and senior teachers are generally in harmonious relationship with K. Zaman and the local AL leaders. Many of them are personal friends of these political leaders with whom some of them also studied together in school, college and university. But basically the relationship that exists between them and the leaders of the ruling party is based more on the distribution of patronage by the latter to the former in exchange for the former's political support than on friendship between them. These political leaders also use them to bring other groups of people into the chain of their supporters because through these academic elites they secure admissions of many students in different colleges, arrange their scholarships, stipends and free-studentships and thereby try to secure political support and services of these students and their parents and relations. However, some of these academic elites are not involved in any exchange relationship with K. Zaman and the local AL leaders, and do not support the AL because they are not happy about the AL leaders' pattern of distribution of patronage. They extend their political support to the local leaders of the opposition parties with whom they maintain linkage with a hope that when

59. See p. 412.
the leaders of these parties would come to power they would be able to dominate over their rivals who are being patronised by the AL leaders. These academic elites' linkages with the opposition party leaders are governed more by their frustration in securing patronage from the leaders of the ruling party due to antagonistic attitudes and personal jealousies of their AL-supporting rivals than their love for opposition parties except, of course, a very few dedicated workers. Sometimes, because of their political support to the opposition parties their appointing authorities under the instigation of the AL leaders stop their promotion and permanency in the job and thereby block their further upward mobility.

K. Zaman's Interactive Process with Landholding Rural Elites:

K. Zaman is a member of an extended jotedar family which possesses a vast landed property in rural areas and some buildings in Rajshahi town. His family has two homes - one at Rajshahi town and another at his village. His elder brother Rashiduzzaman looks after the family property. However, the lands are recorded against his, his father's and brothers' names. He occasionally visits their rural home to check their property and also to renew his connections with his relations and villagers. Being a jotedar, K. Zaman has a good number of bargadars (share-croppers) in his own village as well as in neighbouring villages. Like him most

60. For a detailed discussion, see Chapter 5, pp.316-17.
61. See Ibid., p.317 for the number of K. Zaman's bargadars. The total number of bargadars of K. Zaman's extended family is 257.
of the local AL leaders have their second home in villages and have lands mostly leased out to the bargadars.

On the occasion of K. Zaman's visit to his village the villagers many of whom are his relations receive him with warmth and urge him to do something for the improvement of the village by way of sanctioning more money for the development works programme. Moreover, many of these villagers approach him for personal favours which will bring some material benefits for them. The most popular type of favours the villagers seek from K. Zaman is his recommendation for jobs of their sons and relations. In return the villagers give him political support; and the rural elites often take the responsibility of mobilizing political support for him. The Union Parishad Chairman who comes from K. Zaman's own village and is distantly related to him is a member of the landholding rural elite. He helps K. Zaman in establishing linkages with the people from neighbouring villages playing the role of a dalal. Moreover, K. Zaman often visits other villages to establish his contact with the dominant landholding rural elites and through them with the general mass of the villagers. Here also K. Zaman employs his principle of distribution of patronage to the dominant landholding rural elites who are bound up with the general mass of villagers in a patron-client relationship. However, like many other local AL leaders K. Zaman himself is an absentee patron to his bargadars. Thus the type of patron-client relationship that exists in rural areas of the district helps K. Zaman and the local AL leaders to mobilize their political support through the jotedars who are themselves interested in
perpetuation and retention of power by the ruling AL leaders because most of these leaders are themselves big landholders and hence are not against the continuity of the jotedari system. They are only trying to widen the base of the system of jotedari by absorbing more and more people in it, of course, partially breaking the concentration of lands in a few hands.62

Interactive Process between Religious Elites and the AL Leaders:

The religious elites in Bangladesh as in many countries in the third world, are highly conservative. They generally side with the rightist group and never like the leftists for their critical attitude toward religion. There is no denying the fact that these priestly elites have some influence over the dogmatic people in the district as elsewhere in Bangladesh who sometimes listen to their advice not only on religious affairs but also on secular matters. The influence of a Muslim pir (spiritual guide) over the life of his murids (disciples) cannot be denied, and the murids are frequently seen to act on secular matters according to the advice of their pir. They often give political support to those political leaders who are supported by their pir. Similarly, the Hindu saints have some influence over the life of their disciples or devotees who take the former's advice on secular matters. Other religious elites such as the Muslim Maulanas and Moulvis and Hindu temple priests have also some influence over the life of some religious-minded people. K. Zaman and other local AL leaders

62. See Chapter 5, section on 'Land Reform', pp. 308-322.
are quite conscious of the importance of the religious elites and the necessity of their services in the mobilization of political support. Hence these religious elites are patronized by these political leaders so that their services can be utilized for the mobilization of some voters.

Caste and Community Politics:

The study of literature on caste and politics in India clearly shows that there are three broad formulations common to theoretical studies of caste and politics. These are: (i) caste provides an extensive basis for organization of democratic politics. The need to organize and articulate support in an open polity invariably turns those engaged in political competition toward organizations and solidary groups in which the masses are found. In a society such as India where caste remains the principal basis of social organization and activity this means turning toward caste groups and associations. In this way caste identities and solidarities become the primary channels through which electoral and political support is mobilized within the political system. Thus, as R. Kothari puts it,

"it is not politics that gets caste-ridden, it is the caste that gets politicized". 63

(ii) caste, however, is used more extensively in mobilizing support in rural than in urban areas. In urban areas regional and linguistic identities, or class and occupational

interests, or consideration of government policies and performance are often more salient as influences in voting than caste. Though ethnic factors are always present in urban environment, their influence is considerably reduced by the new functions and roles the individuals are drawn into, and the effects of a 'widening economic, intellectual and political life which occurs there'. Though these factors rarely operate in rural areas, caste identities and solidarities are not, even there, the only basis for mobilizing support. Patron-client relationships, kinship networks, and factional structures are some other channels used for this purpose. (iii) Caste communities that are differentiated internally on socio-economic dimensions, or become so under the impact of social mobilization processes, lose the capacity for unified action in politics, especially once their major goals and aspirations are fulfilled. Differences in education, income and occupation and in general life-styles reduce the area of shared interests within the caste community, and expose its members to other non-caste groupings and cleavage patterns in society. With the weakening of the hold of caste identities through these processes, political parties find it easier to mobilize support directly from the members of a caste community by appealing to them on the basis of ideology, class and occupational interest, or party sentiment. Under these

64. Rosen, Ibid., pp.38 & 42; and Rudolph and Rudolph, Ibid., pp.94-95.
conditions caste retains only a diminished saliency for partisan politics even when it retains considerable vigour in the non-partisan representation of community interests. Thus while the caste associations created by the Nādars, and Vinniyars during their search for larger solidary groupings for political action continue to exist and are often active in promoting and protecting educational, social and commercial interests of their community, they no longer control its votes.

Although the Hindus of Rajshahi are permanent members of their respective caste groups which play an important role in their interactive process or social relations, the factor of caste solidarity and identity does not play any significant role in the political process of the community mainly because the politics of the community is largely dominated by the Muslim political leaders and the Muslim population in general. The Muslim political leaders give very little importance to the factor of Muslim caste-like grouping for the mobilization of their Muslim supporters because the Muslim caste-like system is quite flexible in the sense that the Muslims of lower caste-like origin can easily move to a higher caste-like group when they are able to improve their socio-economic conditions and that the caste-like endogamy is not rigidly practised. However, the participation of the Hindus in the political process is indeed limited. The struggle for power remains more or less limited to the Muslim political leaders.

69. Ibid., p.97.
70. Ibid., pp.96-97.
71. See Chapter 3, section on 'Hindu Marriage', pp.198-209.
72. See Chapter 4, pp.264-265.
But in the process of struggle for political power some Hindu political leaders are drawn into politics as allies of their dominant Muslim counterparts who are seen to secure the political support of the Hindu lower and lowest caste groups by distributing certain patronage to the latter.73 Thus no coalition of the Hindu political leaders could hope to challenge the political dominance of the Muslim political leaders. The Muslim political domination is so secure that the Hindu political leaders can expect to achieve some influence and power only by allying with some influential Muslim political leaders. But the Muslim political leaders, in turn, are free to form political alliance with the Hindu leaders of their choice. Generally, a Muslim political leader such as K. Zaman is interested in forming an alliance within the framework of patron-clientage with those Hindu political leaders, regardless of their caste affiliation, who are considered capable of mobilizing voters, especially Hindu voters for him and other ruling party leaders. Thus it so happens that often some Hindu political leaders belonging to different caste groups form an alliance with K. Zaman or any other Muslim political leaders, and hence often develop co-operative type of relationship amongst themselves. In the formation of this type of political alliance cross-cutting the religious and caste boundaries, a high degree of emphasis is given to the factors of transactions and distribution of patronage for political support and services, not on the religious and caste affiliation of the involved parties.

73. See Ibid., p.240.
However, a Hindu political leader's success in the electoral process depends on the strength of his followers and supporters as well as on the backing of his Muslim ally. When there is no provision for a separate electorate system for the Hindus in Bangladesh, a Hindu political leader must try to mobilize the political support of both the Muslim and Hindu voters for his electoral success. In fact, he is required to pay more attention to the problem of mobilization of the Muslim voters because they constitute more than 85% of the voters in any electoral constituency. For the mobilization of the Muslim voters his caste identity does not serve any useful purpose. In this situation although he is helped by his Muslim political ally, generally he has to take recourse to the distribution of patronage as well as promised patronage to the Muslim voters in exchange for political support.

But the fact remains that he is a member of a named caste group where he has kinsmen and caste mates. Obviously he will try to exploit these existing networks of relationship for the mobilization of political support, but the efficacy of such an appeal is indeed very limited. Such a politician's caste fellows respond to his appeal only when he can distribute patronage in one form or the other to the latter, especially to some influential members who work as his agents or dalals for the mobilization of the political support of his caste fellows. Thus, if his access to resources and power of distribution of patronage are higher than those of his rival he usually becomes successful in mobilizing the political support of his caste fellows; but if on the other hand, his

74. See the Rajshahi District Voters' List, 1973, Office of the District Election Officer, Rajshahi.
direct or indirect access to resources of power of
distribution of patronage are lower than those of his
rival from another caste group or even from the Muslim
community, his appeal to his caste fellows for political
support on the basis of caste solidarity or caste
identity becomes more or less ineffective. His caste
fellows do not hesitate to extend their political support
to his rival in order to secure more patronage from the
latter. It is important to note that if his rival also
belongs to his own caste group the ground for an appeal
for political support on the basis of caste solidarity
and caste identity is lost. Members belonging to other
caste groups as well as the Muslim community are recruited
as supporters in each factional group, and in the process
of this factional recruitment the factor of caste solidarity
or identity does not play any significant role. The
process of recruitment, mobilization and alliance formation
is achieved on the basis of transaction of one sort or
another in an exchange relationship. Moreover, caste per se
is not a significant factor in determining the relative
politico-economic status of the Hindu political leaders
coming from different caste groups.

One important point is that the political mobilization
outside a particular caste group is essential because a
political leader needs the support of a majority of the
voters of his constituency in which he runs for a political office or tries to maintain his existing one. Thus in a particular constituency, even in a small constituency such as a village or a town ward, the members of a particular caste form just a minor proportion of the total electorate. Both in intra- and inter-caste factionalism the rival candidates for practical reasons must try to establish an exchange relationship with as many voters as possible without paying much attention to the caste and religious affiliation of the potential supporters. Moreover, the rival candidates try to form political alliances with some other political leaders belonging to different caste and religious groups. Thus, the process of political mobilization and the formation of alliance generally cross-cuts the caste and religious boundaries and thereby makes both caste and religious factors very weak forces in the political process of the community which as has already been stated largely revolves round the factor of transaction within the frameworks of patron-clientage and horizontal alliance. 75

75. See pp.449-50.
Footnote 75

In a study of politics in Dewas District, Madhya Pradesh (India) Mayer found that caste membership was not a determining factor in political alliance and patronage distribution. Although Rajputs formed the core of a ruling faction in the rural portions of the district, they could not maintain their position on the basis of Rajput support alone. They formed alliances with and distributed patronage to members of other castes, "not exclusively on a caste basis, but rather as politicians seeking support on a variety of bases" (Mayer 1967: 130, see also 1963 and 1958). At least as important as caste, then, is a different unit of loyalty and recruitment. Such a unit may be based on ideology, party programme, and party membership; but at present it tends to be based on the individual's political interest and factional membership. As Bailey has observed, the recruitment of supporters is here a craftsman's job and not the simple application of mass-produced blue-print. By this he means that the followings of the candidate or the district party leaders are composed of people recruited on diverse transactional linkages, and that they vary over time according to people's perception of their own interests ... clearly caste is a factor in the recruitment and maintenance of such following; but it is only one among several factors (Mayer 1967: 135).

According to S.C. Dube, "Rival factions of a caste in a village are often allied to rival political leaders or rival political factions of the region. Regional and state leaders do not often side with any party in inter-factional disputes of their caste. Voting along caste lines, thus, need not necessarily be construed as evidence of caste solidarity on the political plane at the village level. Intracaste dissensions and intercaste alignments can still be a feature of the community power structure at the village level. Factional alignments can also determine, in many cases, the outcome of voting by the village people for representative institutions at the state or national level". (Dube 1968: 2).

Carter's study on 'Elite Politics in Rural India' suggests that where there is an entrenched political class, caste is not very important as a determinant of political alliance. Conflicts which appear to pit caste against caste are in reality conflicts between particular leaders supported by allies from several castes. It is often thought that caste solidarity is more likely a determinant of political alliances in situations where two castes have relatively equal numbers and influence, but Weiner's detailed studies of district and village politics in Guntur and Kaira show that even in these situations caste is of minor importance. (Carter 1974: 171).

Speaking about the Gujarat Kshatriya Sabha, Kothari and Maru have made it clear that, in fact, no 'Kshatriya Community' ever existed in the past. On the contrary, the Kshatriya Sabha is a coalition of political allies drawn from a variety of named caste groups, including the semi-tribal Bhils and
Footnote 75 (contd.)

middle status Bariyas as well as high status Rajputs (Kothari and Maru 1970: 72-73). For the understanding of this type of alliance formation it would be necessary to rely on Mayer's notion of an alliance as a transactional link in an action-set because the notion of caste solidarity is unable to explain this case in which the high caste Rajput and Maratha political leaders attempted to capture power in Gujarat politics by exchanging high caste status for political support against the dominant Patidars. They offered Sabha's version of Kshatriya status to the Bhils and Bariyas in return for their political support in the elections. According to Carter this is a transaction involving ritual status which voters desire but do not have and which a group of leaders promise to provide. It is not an appeal to caste solidarity, and in fact, the pattern of political alliance actually cuts across named caste groups. (Carter 1974: 173). The exchange of high caste ritual status for the political support of the lower caste claimants or aspirants has been mentioned by several authors (see Rowe 1968, Mayer 1966: 109 & 120; and Carter 1974: 174).

A.H. Somjee shows that in the village in Gujarat which was studied neither caste nor religion had a preponderant influence upon the voters' choice. Every caste in the village was divided in its political alliance, and only one caste even attempted to influence its members to vote for a particular candidate. A major factor in the voters' choice was economic interests, ... (Somjee 1959).

In his study of 'Caste and Electoral Politics' B. Ahmed (1970) suggests a restricted role for caste in support mobilization. According to this author because the Hindu population of the community are internally differentiated, caste has a lower salience in politics for its members. As a result, caste loyalties and identities are not very effective as means for mobilizing group-wide support in election and politics.

However, there are authors who hold different views on this problem. Thus Rudolph and Rudolph believe that caste associations provide the means for horizontal mobilization of caste communities and that in certain circumstances caste may act as political groups in areas of varying inclusiveness (Rudolph and Rudolph 1967: 36-154). Führer-Haimendorf and Harrison hold similar views. In support of their arguments these authors cite a number of cases, especially conflicts between Raddi and Kammis in Andhra (Harrison 1965, 1960), the caste associations of the Nadars in Southern Madras (Rudolph and Rudolph 1967). If we closely examine these cases it becomes very difficult to say that castes ever act as political groups, regardless of whether or not they have caste associations. From these cases it is clear that the leaders of caste associations offer the support of their caste fellows to potential allies, and that the government may offer concessions to caste association leaders in the hope of winning the promised support of the caste. But what is not clear is the degree to which caste association leaders are able to mobilize the political support of their caste mates in favour of their allies by making an appeal on the basis of caste solidarities and identities.
Role of Kinship in Community Politics:

Our data from Rajshahi show that ties of kinship rarely form a basis for the mobilization of political support and the formation of political alliance. It is the mutually beneficial transaction between a political leader and his kindred which constitutes the crucial factor for the establishment of an exchange relationship in the field of politics. The kinship network of a political leader, of course, provides him with an already connected arena for the mobilization of political support as well as the formation of political alliance. This is true for both Hindu and Muslim political leaders of the community. In general a political leader can expect to secure the political support of his kinsmen only when he distributes patronage to them, promises them future patronage and becomes active to secure patronage resources for them from other sources often through manipulation. However, he can more easily mobilize the support of his kinsmen by promising future patronage than that of the non-kin and often unknown voters who are generally after some immediate gain as well as future assurance of patronage. His failure to do so generally gives rise to dissatisfaction among his kindred who, except in a few cases of very close kindred, turn to his rival provided that the latter agrees to distribute
patronage to them as well as help them in securing patronage from other elite members. Thus, when a political leader's exchange relationship with his kinsmen breaks down or does not function properly or is not at all established because of conflict over the question of inheritance, family dispute, personal jealousies, political rivalry etc. his ties of kinship with these dissatisfied or antagonistic kinsmen do not serve any useful purpose in his mobilization of political support and the formation of political alliance. 76

Political Factionalism:

In discussing political factionalism among the leaders of the local Alit would be useful to keep in mind that according to one view, 77 factions are units of conflicts activated on specific occasions rather than maintained by a formal organization. They are 'loosely ordered' and with 'structurally diverse' bases of recruitment, and they are made manifest through a linkage of personal authority between leader and follower. 78 They are also more based

on transactions than issues of principle. Factions appear as groups (or perhaps better, as quasi-groups) only during conflict. Often several factions co-operate with each other and form an alliance or coalition to defeat the more powerful opponent. However, they do not lose their separate identity and may break ultimately by quarrelling over the share of power if they can capture power.

But in our discussion the concept of factionalism has been used to refer to a type of conflict in the political sphere between two or more leaders of a particular political party who must have their respective groups of followers supporting their cause. In this sense it is just one type of conflict within the general concept of conflict which may take varieties of forms such as conflict between two individuals, between two or more classes, between two states etc. However, factional conflict may appear in other arenas such as bureaucracy, labour organization, university, kinship, caste etc. But here we are exclusively concerned with the problem of political factionalism among the local AL leaders.

In Rajshahi factionalism among the local leaders of the ruling party is not well-organized. It grows and dies as

the issues on which the conflict is based appear and disappear in the process of interaction between these political leaders. Factional conflicts generally arise over the distribution and sharing of power, resources and privileges, and often over the question of nomination of candidates for memberships in the parliament and local party hierarchy as well as for offices in the zilla parishad, municipality, chamber of commerce, the local branch of the Jatiyo Sramik League etc. Sometimes personal jealousies and conflicts in other spheres of life become important factors to give rise to factional conflict.

But although factional conflicts are always there among the local leaders of the ruling party these conflicting leaders have not yet been able to develop the type of factional politics as has been found by P.R. Brass in his study of factional politics in an Indian state of Uttar Pradesh because of the fact that so far the national AL leaders, especially K. Zaman who is regarded as the most powerful political leader and patron of the community, have been successful in putting a check on open factional conflict and sharp divisions among the local leaders mainly by working as arbiters between the leaders of conflicting groups. Up to now factional conflicts among the local leaders have not reached such a magnitude as would compel the national leaders to expel one or the other local faction leader from the party. The main reason for this is that because most of the local leaders are eager to enjoy as well

as to distribute some patronage and favours to their clients, potential clients, relations and friends, they are generally seen to obey the directions, suggestions and arbitration of the national leaders of the ruling party, especially K. Zaman who is a patron to all the local AL leaders. In addition to K. Zaman they have also patrons from among other national AL leaders who are friendly and often involved in horizontal alliance with K. Zaman and generally work jointly with him to minimize the possibility of factional conflict. Thus if a local faction leader fails to abide by the decision of his political patrons at the national level he is sure to lose his privilege of enjoyment of patronage which is so valuable to him for his personal advancement as well as for building up a network of patron-clientage which helps him in remaining entrenched in the power structure of the community. However, disobedience on the part of local leaders is very rare indeed; and there has not been any case of the showing of disrespect to a patron's, especially K. Zaman's decision by a local faction leader. But if it becomes difficult for K. Zaman to bring about some sort of compromise between the faction leaders he tries to pacify them by distribution of patronage so that they remain within the party organization and do not pose any threat to party solidarity as such. Thus whenever factional conflict arises between the local leaders the case is immediately referred to K. Zaman and his intervention is sought by the involved leaders. As a result, he has to make frequent visits to Rajshahi town to play the role of an arbiter in the factional conflicts of local political leaders (i.e. his clients).
But K. Zaman seems to be not very worried about factional conflicts among the local leaders as long as they remained attached to the party and often fight with each other for power and privileges because these types of factional conflicts have become a common pattern of behaviour of political leaders of the ruling party. Thus his main concern is with the factional conflict which may lead to one or the other faction leader to sever connections with the AL because in that situation K. Zaman will lose not only the political support of a defecting faction leader but also many of his followers. Moreover, the defecting faction leader along with his followers may even join an opposition party and thereby weaken the supporting base of the AL in the district.

It is worth mentioning here that although the local leaders of the ruling party having their respective groups of followers fight with each other over the question of acquiring more political power which ensures their higher direct and indirect access to resource-bases of patronage, effective control over the decision-making process in the community and increases their power of manipulation, they generally make common cause and form an alliance when there is any outside threat to their political positions, especially threats from the local opposition political leaders. In this situation they generally, with the help of their patrons, especially K. Zaman, find out some sort of compromise for sharing power and privileges so that the local opposition leaders might not take advantage of the situation. The factional leaders are well aware of the fact
that once the power of the ruling party is lost they would lose their power, prestige and privileges; and moreover, there is a risk of confiscation of their properties and wealth, a major part of which has been illegally acquired through manipulation and irregular practices. They are also apprehensive of political retaliation by the opposition party leaders whom they have harassed and are still giving troubles in various ways. They have genuine grounds for this apprehension because when in the Ayub regime they were the opposition leaders and were harassed by the then local Muslim League leaders of the ruling party, they were waiting for a chance to come to power and to take political retaliation against those Muslim League leaders. After capturing power they took extreme retaliation by victimizing most of the local Muslim League leaders to such an extent that some of them, especially the influential ones had to leave the community and many were imprisoned, their properties and wealth were confiscated. Thus when the local leaders have done and are doing the same to the local opposition party leaders as the Muslim League leaders did to them, they have relevant grounds to think that if the opposition party leaders, especially the leaders of the JSD and the NAP (E) come to power they would take extreme retaliation against them for their present political oppression and harassment. Moreover, there are writings on the walls threatening extreme measures against them, depicting them as fascist oppressors, which have also become the causes of their concern about their future safety. This fear of political retaliation often unites the faction leaders to try to keep the opposition leaders out of power.
But as soon as they jointly are able to frustrate the opposition leaders' design they become involved in factional conflict. This shows that the local faction leaders are united and co-operative to keep power within their own political organization, but they often become involved in factional conflict on the question of sharing of power and privileges. For example, in Rajshahi as in other districts of Bangladesh, a very important source of strength for a faction leader is the gaining of control over the institutions of local self-government such as the Zilla Parishad, Municipality, and Town Committee or Union Parishad. These are the institutions which enable a faction leader to have access to resource-bases of patronage that can be easily used for showing some favours to his clients and potential clients. Thus the competition for gaining control over these local bodies gives rise to factionalism among the local leaders each of whom is highly motivated to get his own nominees elected in important positions in these organizations. But they prefer to fight amongst themselves without leaving their party organization. The logic for this type of attitude is that in the event of defeat of one faction leader by the other the control over these institutions would remain with the local AL leader. But when the local opposition leaders appear on the scene as rivals, the local faction leaders are seen to unite together to defeat the opposition candidates. Thus when in the last 1974 election of the local self-government institutions, especially of the Zilla Parishad and the Municipality, the opposition JSD set up its candidates, the faction leaders of the ruling party came to
an understanding to nominate a joint panel of candidates coming from various factional groups. To come to an understanding the local faction leaders required the help of their common patron, K. Zaman whose main interest was to see that his clients could remain in control of these institutions because his power and position are intimately linked up with the power of the leaders of the District AL.

It has been found that the exchange relationship between a faction leader and his followers plays an important part in giving strength and cohesiveness to a faction which remains integrated, at least temporarily, only when the leader of a faction is able to distribute patronage to his followers in exchange for their political support and services. It is the material consideration which is important to the followers while the leaders are after acquiring or maintaining political power which provides them with access to community resources which in turn brings higher status and prestige for them. Thus, a faction leader must have at least some resources for distribution as patronage to his followers and potential followers. Although the local faction leaders of the ruling party always try to use official resources as patronage for the mobilization of political support of their followers and potential followers, sometimes they are seen to bring their private resources into local factional politics to mobilize and maintain the base of their political support. For example, Mahendra K. Bagchi, a local AL leader is in conflict with Mesbahuddin, the General Secretary of the District AL because the latter was opposed to the former's nomination for membership of parliament in the election of 1973. Both the leaders come
from the same village and have developed enmity over the possession of 10 bighas of lands. A serious fight took place between men of these two leaders who have their respective dal (group) in the village which is composed of mainly their dependent bargadars, kindred and other favour-receiving people; but the disputed lands are still in the possession of Mahendra K. Bagchi. Masbahuddin has instituted a case against his rival Mahendra who is a rich mango trader as well as a money-lender. He possesses about 100 bighas of lands and six big tanks for raising fish for commercial purposes. Because he is in conflict with Mesbahuddin he has not yet been able to occupy any formal position in the local ruling party hierarchy. At present he is an informal leader of the local AL. Although he is somehow in a disadvantageous position to build up his network of patron-clientage he has mobilized his private resources such as his landed estate, fish-raising tanks, mango trading firm and money-lending power to recruit his clients and supporters. But the use of private resources has been proved to be inadequate to recruit a large number of supporters who are mainly interested in getting patronage from official resources in the form of licence, permit, dealership, promotion, new job etc. for themselves as well as for their relations. Being an informal leader and involved in conflict with Mesbahuddin, Mahendra's access to official resource-bases of patronage is indeed very limited. For this reason Mahendra in spite of his private resources could not recruit a significant number of clients and supporters which would provide him with sufficient strength to occupy any formal leadership position in the local party hierarchy in the face of serious opposition and rivalry from Mesbahuddin.
On the other hand, Mesbahuddin is a lawyer in the town and a rich landholder, owning 82 bighas of lands leased out to his bargadar-clients. He has built up his patron-client network largely by exploiting the official resource-bases of patronage and by manipulating things in favour of his supporters and clients with the help of high-ranking government officials of the district. His position as a lawyer has also enabled him to recruit some of his clients as his political supporters who come to him for legal aid by showing them favours when they demand reduced fees and delayed payment.

Although both these faction leaders are clients of K. Zaman and enjoy patronage from him, Mesbahuddin's linkage with K. Zaman is much more effective than that of his rival. He is one of the trusted dalal-clients of K. Zaman and his extensive patron-client network is highly valued by his patron. This close linkage with his highly influential patron has given Mesbahuddin an added advantage to bring more official patronage for the mobilization of his followers for political actions to keep Mahendra out of any formal position in the local party hierarchy. However, K. Zaman is trying to bring about some sort of compromise between these two faction leaders.

Another important aspect of political factionalism is that the kinship bond is also exploited by the faction leaders to recruit their supporters in two ways: a) First, when a faction leader has an elaborate network of kindred with which he is in co-operative and harmonious relationships he is able to recruit these kindred as his supporters, of course, in
exchange for his patronage in one form or another. Distribution of patronage is very important and essential because ties of kinship as such have very little efficacy in the mobilization of political support of the kindred.\textsuperscript{82}

(b) Secondly, if a faction leader is in a conflicting relationship with a large number of his kindred who are antagonistic to him and want to see his power curtailed his rival faction leader gets an opportunity to recruit them as his followers in exchange for his patronage as well as his promise of distribution of patronage in future. However, this situation arises only when a faction leader fails to distribute patronage to kindred followers or does not honour his promise to them as well as when he develops personal enmity with his kindred on certain issues.\textsuperscript{83}

Internal Factionalism: A Factor for the Increase of Party Strength:

The occasional factional conflicts among the local AL leaders give some positive services to the party organization in view of the fact that each faction leader tries to extend his patron-client network by recruiting more and more clients who will not only have personal ties with their leader but also accept primary membership of the ruling party. Moreover, because a faction leader is identified with the ruling AL his supporters are also know to be the AL supporters even though personal ties between a leader and his followers constitute the basis on which the exchange relationship between them is established. A local faction leader's involvement in a network of patron-clientage with the national leaders of the ruling party also draws his clients and

\textsuperscript{82} See pp.451-52.
\textsuperscript{83} See \textit{Ibid}. 
supporters into a chain of patron-client network extending, on the one hand, to the national level and on the other, to the villages in the district. In fact, when the local AL leaders and their nominees are in competition and conflict to attain formal positions in the local party hierarchy, various local self-government organizations, the local branch of the JSL, the Rajshahi Chamber of Commerce, various associations (e.g., small shop-keepers' association, wholesale traders' association, school teachers' association, college teachers' association, the Rajshahi University Teachers' Association, contractors' association, various categories of employers' associations, voluntary associations of various kinds etc.), the SL, the AJL and the students' unions in various colleges and Rajshahi University, they as well as their nominees become highly motivated to extend their patron-client network by distributing patronage as well as by promising to distribute the same to their clients and potential clients in order to strengthen their supporting base. Although the mutual interests of the leaders and their supporters become a major consideration in the politics of patronage they go a long way to help the AL to secure the political support of a large number of clients of its local faction leaders and their nominees who can enjoy various kinds of patronage and distribute the same to their clients and supporters as long as they remain affiliated to the AL and thereby provide strong political support to the ruling party and its government so that they can remain in power. This shows that factional conflicts within the local branch of the AL have helped in the process of mobilization of party supporters and in widening the supporting base of the ruling party.
Role of Faction Leaders of the District Awami League:

As P.R. Brass has mentioned in his study of factional politics in five districts of Uttar Pradesh (India) we have also found in our field study in Rajshahi that the most important quality a faction leader must have, in order to maintain and strengthen his support, is loyalty to his followers and clients. Whether a faction leader attracts higher or lower numbers of supporters would depend upon the leader's ability and desire to meet some of their demands. 84 This means that a faction leader should give higher priority to the interests of his followers or clients, but certainly not at the cost of his greater interest because in the factional politics in the District AL a faction leader who tries to strengthen his supporting base by recruiting more and more supporters, clients and dalal-clients through the distribution of patronage his highly motivated to consolidate his own position in the power structure of the community so that he can enhance his power and prestige to ensure his enjoyment of more privileges than his rivals. However, a faction leader should be very careful not to attempt any immediate gain at the cost of his followers' interests; he is expected to be patient for his success. If he fails to do so his effectiveness as a faction leader does not last long because his followers and clients sever connections with him and establish linkage and exchange relationship with other faction leaders causing a great damage to the

84. See Brass, P.R. *op.cit.*, p.237.
supporting base of their former patron who has grossly neglected their interests for his personal gain. This does not, however, mean that the followers or clients of a faction leader are against their patron's advancement and enjoyment of privileges. In fact, they are not; but they like to see that their leader or patron is not indifferent to their interests for making his personal gain and advancement. Although most of the followers or clients are after some immediate benefits from their leader or patron it is not uncommon for some followers or clients to wait for receiving benefits until their leader has acquired access to certain resource-bases of patronage because they seem to be aware of the fact that their leader's ability to distribute patronage to them is highly correlated with his acquisition of power and access to patronage resources. In this situation they usually insist on their leader's promise of distribution of patronage as soon as he is in a position to do so. But the promise of distribution of patronage alone cannot mobilize the support of an adequate number of followers. Thus the actual distribution of some material benefits and the promise of future distribution of patronage must go side by side to have an effective network of patron-clientage. This is one of the reasons why a faction leader should have, at least, some resources for the start of the process of recruitment of his followers. Our data show that all the local AL faction leaders had/have some personal or official resources for such recruitment. The data further indicate that all these faction leaders have built up their patron-client networks and mobilized their supporters by actual and
immediate distribution of some material benefits and favours as well as by promising future distribution of patronage to their clients and potential clients.

However, for his success a faction leader should be an accommodating politician having informal types of relationships with his clients and followers, especially with influential ones. He should have the ability as well as the desire to talk in the language of his followers and keep them in good humour often chatting with them in an informal meeting over a cup of tea or a glass of sarbat. In fact, the leader demands that his followers should attend such an informal meeting because this enables him to demonstrate his power and the control over a good number of people. His door remains open to his clients and followers; and he should be quick to come to the aid of the latter when necessary. But a faction leader generally asks his supporters or clients to be reasonable in making their demands on him as well as to think about their mutual interests and his limitations. But he always gives a patient hearing to his clients' grievances and assures them that he will try his best to remove those grievances. If a faction leader cannot acquire some of these qualities he is generally displaced from the leadership position.

A faction leader has needs as his followers or clients do. Our data demonstrate that the local faction leaders of the ruling party seek both power and prestige and are involved in conflicts with each other for gaining more power, prestige and privileges. The political support of a large group of clients or followers is essential for a faction leader to
gain effective control over the community power structure and decision-making process, access to economic resources, influence over the district-level administrative machinery and effective linkage with the national-level political leaders of the ruling party. Moreover, the building up of an effective network of followers or clients by a faction leader enhances his prestige in the public eyes. Thus according to P.R. Brass, the leader receives from his followers and clients both direct and personal admiration and the indirect benefit of status in the broader society as a leader of men.85 But we have seen that in the political arena the question of acquiring prestige is highly dependent upon the possession of power. Thus the possession of higher political power by a faction leader implies his higher prestige. Here prestige is the by-product of politico-economic power. This has been clearly reflected in a Bengali proverb: "Jar khemota ache tar man – samman ache" (those who have power have prestige).

**Relationship between the Local Leaders of the Ruling Party and the Leaders of the Local Branch of Other Political Parties:**

In Rajshahi as in other districts of Bangladesh a significant aspect of political process is the relationship between the local leaders of the ruling party and those of other political parties. Before we begin our discussion on this problem it should be mentioned here that the national leaders of some pro-Moscow political parties such as the

85. Ibid., p.237.
NAP (M) and CPB (M) who were previously opposed to the ruling AL, have made an alliance with the leaders of the ruling party because they have given and are giving political support to the programmes and policies of the AL leaders and the government in exchange for patronage as well as an assurance for future patronage from the former. They also hope to have some access to political power as junior partners of the AL leaders. But the AL leaders do not like the idea of any type of sharing of power with their client political leaders of the NAP (M) and the CPB (M). So far the AL leaders have managed to keep the alliance active and effective only by distributing certain privileges to these political leaders, their relations and some of their influential clients. However, the AL leaders are willing to give them a few politically important positions provided they join the AL and secure the support of their clients and followers for the programmes and policies of the ruling party and its government. But no leaders of these allied parties have yet joined the AL because they do not like to disintegrate their party organizations. Their motive is to have a share in political power not by leaving and thereby damaging their party organizations. They demand for a minor share in the power structure in exchange for their political support to the AL and its leaders and government so that they are able to gain some degree of access to official resources of patronage for distribution among their own clients and supporters.

86. See Umar, B. Politics and Society in East Pakistan and Bangladesh, Dacca, 1973, p.334.
Thus when there has been an alliance between the AL leaders and their counterparts of the NAP (M) and CPB (M) at national level the alliance has also been effected at the district-level politics. In Rajshahi district the local leaders of the ruling party are found to be in alliance with the local leaders of the NAP (M) and CPB (M). The basis of the alliance at the local level is also the flow of patronage from the leaders of the ruling party in exchange for the political support of the leaders of these two allied parties to the AL and its leaders. However, the district-level leaders of these allied parties supporting the ruling party leaders are able to secure patronage both at the local and national levels through the powerful AL leaders, especially K. Zaman. The following example may be cited to show the role of K. Zaman in the process of distribution of patronage to an influential local leader of the NAP (M): Recently after the formation of an alliance between the leaders of the ruling party and those of the NAP (M) and CPB (M), K. Zaman has become very friendly with his cousin A. Rahman, a Vice-President of the NAP (M). And he is quite generous in distributing patronage to friendly client relation A. Rahman and some of his (A. Rahman's) influential clients. Thus when the names of the newly appointed district governors appeared in the newspaper it was found that A. Rahman had been appointed as the governor of Rajshahi district.87 A. Rahman's appointment to this post was surely a patronage to him managed by his patron K. Zaman in exchange for the

87. See Janomat (Bengali Newsweekly) 24th Issue, July, 1975. A. Rahman could not enjoy this patronage because of recent political change in Bangladesh.
valuable services and political support of A. Rahman to K. Zaman, to the local AL leaders and to the programmes and policies of the AL and its government.

Similarly, Waziul Haque, brother of Mujibul Haque, the General Secretary of the local branch of the CPB (M) has been issued a licence to import bicycles from India. Because Mujibul Haque is in alliance with the local AL leaders he has been able to secure this patronage for his brother with the help of the AL leaders.

Interaction between the Local Awami League Leaders and The Leaders of The Opposition Parties:

At the national level the leaders of the opposition parties such as the JSD, the NAP (B) and CPB (Marxist-Leninist group) are in conflict with the leaders of the ruling party.88 This national-level conflict has direct impact on the district-level parties; and hence in Rajshahi the local leaders of the opposition parties are involved in a conflicting relationship with the local leaders of the ruling party. At the community level the bitterness of political conflict and rivalry is highly reflected in the personal accusations made against each other. It seems that the leaders of both the ruling party and opposition parties are after elimination of each other from the political scene. There is absence of toleration on the part of both the sides.

However, as the local AL leaders have control over the power structure and the decision-making process in the community as well as access to various resource-bases of patronage, especially official resource-bases of patronage they are

88. See p. 377.
easily and quite genuinely branded as the manipulators and protectors of patronage-seekers. But when we see that the politics in the community largely centres around the distribution and the promise of distribution of patronage by the political leaders to their clients and potential clients in exchange for the latter's political support there is good reason to argue that there is widespread manipulation in the political process in the community. True, the local ruling party leaders by virtue of their control over the power structure and decision-making process in the community as well as their linkage with the national power structure, have more facilities to indulge in manipulation of various sorts to keep their politics of patronage in proper order by building up an elaborate network of patron-clientage for the purpose of mobilization of political support. But the local opposition party leaders are not free from manipulative practices. Some of these local opposition leaders have been found to be involved in some sort of network of exchange relationship with some government officials who, to some extent, help them to get things done through manipulation or illegal transaction. However, often some opposition leaders do not find much opportunity to indulge in manipulative practices. But the same opposition political leaders are seen to be involved in manipulative practices and illegal transactions when they come to power. They indulge in all sorts of manipulations to secure patronage for their clients and potential clients as well as for their personal advancement so that they might remain entrenched in the power structure of the community. For example, during the Ayub regime the
local political leaders, who were affiliated to the Muslim League, were involved in all sorts of manipulations and transactions under the umbrella of the bureaucrats and military officers who had effective control over the patronage resources and the decision-making process in the community. At that time the AL leaders were playing the role of the opposition leaders and had a limited opportunity to indulge in manipulative practices in securing patronage from official sources for themselves as well as for their clients. But now in independent Bangladesh all the local Awami League leaders are seen to indulge in manipulation of one sort or the other to remain in power, to enjoy privileges, to distribute patronage to their clients.

One important point to note here is that in the political interaction between the local AL leaders and the local opposition party leaders it has become quite common on the part of the former to implicate some of the latter in false criminal cases with the help of the district police administration. Sometimes, some supporters or workers of the opposition political leaders are also implicated in false criminal cases by the local AL leaders. For example, Nalini Sen, an executive committee member of the local NAP (B), Ahad Ali Mondal, the Publicity Secretary of the local JSD, the JSD workers - Sirajul Islam, Mihir Khan, Karim Mollah and the NAP (B) workers - Abdul Hamid, Matin Chowdhury, Mrinal K. Ray, Habibuddin have been recently implicated by the local Awami League leaders in some false criminal cases. It has been observed that when the local AL leaders or their agents fail to secure the support of an influential supporter of an opposition leader by offering
patronage or by a threat of political retaliation he is generally implicated in a false criminal case. The local ruling party leaders are seen to take all necessary steps in collaboration with the district law maintaining and administering authorities to keep him in jail for a long time without trial. Because the AL government has still retained the Collaboration Ordinance, promulgated in 1971 to try the people who had collaborated with the Pakistan Army during the period of the Liberation War of Bangladesh it has become easy for the ruling party leaders to implicate the opposition leaders and their supporters in false cases of collaboration. This ordinance has been and is being highly misused for victimizing the people who are openly opposed to the local ruling party leaders. In addition to their supporters the local AL leaders are using the Jatiyo Rakkhi Bahini (National Security Force) to break up peaceful protest marches, strikes and meetings of the opposition leaders and their supporters which in many cases, end in bloodshed resulting from Rakkhi Bahini's attack. For example, one such attack was in March 1974 when a demonstration led by the leaders of an opposition party was fired upon by the Rakkhi Bahini resulting in 50 demonstrators dead and more than one hundred wounded. Moreover, the Rakkhi Bahini has arrested and is arresting the leaders and supporters of the open opposition parties i.e., the NAP (B), JSD, CPB (Marxist-Leninist) as well as the underground radical revolutionary parties such as the Burbo Bangla Sarbohara party, Purbo Banglar

89. See The Holiday, Dacca, October 27, 1974.
Sammobadi Dal (Marxbadi-Leninbadi), East Pakistan Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) and the Bangladesh Communist League. It is now an established fact that the ruling party-patronized Rakkhi Bahini is not only arresting and torturing their captives but systematically killing some workers of both the open and underground opposition parties without leaving any trace of record anywhere. After killing these workers the Rakkhi Bahini circulates the false news that the executed prisoners have escaped from the Rakkhi Bahini camps.

The local Special Branch of the police is no stranger to the field of torturing captives. Old hands, apprenticed from Pakistani days in methods of torture, are still enjoying a supply of human guinea-pigs at the police camps to practise their grotesque art. It is a fact that the communist revolutionaries and underground party workers are almost certain to receive special attention of their Special Branch captors in the torture chamber.90

In the field of political persecution the distribution of patronage plays an important role because the officers of the Rakkhi Bahini and the Special Branch of the police are heavily patronized by the leaders of the ruling party through the AL government in the way of giving them promotions and handsome material benefits. Patronage is also distributed to some kindred of these officers. In return for such a lavish patronage these officers generally under an informal instruction from the leaders of the ruling party indulge in all sorts of oppression often to the extent of killing

90. See The Holiday, Ibid.
of the opposition leaders and workers. Here a question may arise, do the opposition leaders and workers remain inactive and face this type of torture and liquidation? To answer this question we must say that they are not at all inactive. They are trying to take retaliation by resorting to secret killing of some AL leaders, their workers and supporters, especially in rural areas. In a town their scope of operation is limited because of the presence of the vigilant Rakkhi Bahini, the Special Branch of Police, the AL Chesyasevak Bahini (the AL Volunteer Corps) which try to keep track of the movements of the leaders, workers and supporters of the opposition parties.
CONCLUSION

The analysis of the networks of relationships of the elite members in an urban community - Rajshahi town - in Bangladesh shows that in the socio-economic and political spheres of the community the elite members who have control over the power structure possess differential power and control over the decision-making process in the community. They develop both patron-clientage and horizontal alliance amongst themselves with the national-level elite members as well as with the supporters and potential supporters. These relationships are found to be transactional in nature. They are governed by the factor of distribution of patronage in one form or another. The analysis further reveals that the ties of kinship and the caste or caste-like group affiliation reinforce and facilitate the emergence of exchange relationships within the frameworks of patron-clientage and horizontal alliance. Similarly, the pattern of relationship in a semi-feudalistic system of production in the agrarian structure (with which the elite members being themselves landholders are intimately connected) reinforces and facilitates the growth of exchange relationships between two or more parties. The involved parties perceive their mutual advantage in the transaction even if sometimes in the patron-client network a process of economic exploitation and social domination of the influential and powerful party or parties over the party or parties with less or no power and influence can be observed.

However, to establish, maintain and expand this system of exchange relationship patronage resources must be available for distribution among the clients and potential clients as
well as for the mutual exchange between the elite partners of more or less comparable politico-economic status. This leads us to examine the sources of such resources. In our discussion of the socio-economic and political processes in the community we have talked about the distribution of resources - private and official - for the mobilization of political support and the formation of alliance, but have not paid much attention to this problem even though we have mentioned that often such resources come from the national and international levels through the governmental machinery and the national organizations of the ruling party and other political parties.

We have found that the patronage resources of the patrons such as possession of land and wealth are not adequate to maintain the system as a whole and that the official patronage resources play an important part in keeping the system operative because a major part of patronage resources are directly or indirectly controlled by the government. Even the creation of patronage resources in some private sectors, such as private industries, commerce etc. is dependent upon the issuance of licences and permits controlled by the government. However, at the local level the official resources are indeed limited and are largely under the formal control of the bureaucratic elite members. Thus, the flow of resources from the national level to the community is necessary for the smooth functioning of this type of political process at the community level. But some private resources, such as money, motor vehicles and other material goods controlled by the
national-level business elites also flow down to the community-level leaders mainly through the national-level political leaders. This leads us to examine the pattern of relationship between the bureaucrats, the political leaders and the business elites at the national level as well as to examine how the national ruling elites secure resources in the form of aid, grants, reliefs etc. from foreign powers and distribute a part of these resources as patronage to their supporters and potential supporters.

First, let us discuss, in short, the pattern of relationship between the national bureaucratic, political and business elite groups. Our data from Rajshahi town show that at the community level these three groups of elites are by and large in alliance with each other within the framework of a vertical and horizontal network of relationships to maintain the social order in which they are able to appropriate maximum benefits. Of course, some members of various other categories of elites have joined hands with the above mentioned elite groups. But these three groups of elites feature most prominently in the power structure both at the community and national levels. In discussing the politics of patronage we have tried to examine the pattern of relationships between these three groups of elites since the partition of Bengal in 1947. The pattern has undergone a fundamental change in that the bureaucracy has lost its supremacy over the political leadership.

Today, in Bangladesh the political leaders of the ruling party as a group have gained dominance over the bureaucratic and business elites both at national and community levels.
This supremacy of the political leaders is a new phenomenon in Bangladesh. The history of political development in East Pakistan clearly shows the dominance of the bureaucratic-military oligarchy over the political leadership.¹

To understand the present situation it is necessary to begin our discussion from 1971 when the liberation movement started in Bangladesh because the liberation movement and the succession of Bangladesh as an independent state had some consequences on the pattern of relationships that have emerged between different groups of people.

The attack by the Pakistan Army on the then East Pakistan largely snapped the connection of the Pakistani rulers with those who were formerly their allies and clients. These allies included the major section of the landowning groups as well as those who owned business and industrial concerns. On the other hand, the increasing power of the liberation forces, to some extent, changed the local power balance between the exploiting groups and those who belonged to the groups of the exploited, but it could not in any significant way break up the existing patron-client relationships between the exploiting landholders and the exploited cultivators such as the bargadars (sharecroppers), agricultural labourers and poor peasants.

Non-Bengali industrial and business groups were predominant in East Pakistan owning about 70 per cent of industrial and commercial interests. They became as much

alienated from the people as the army because of their close alliance with the latter. The position of the Bengali business and industrial groups owning about 14 per cent of the total business and industrial interests became very shaky owing to two factors. First, because the big Bengali industrial and commercial elements built up their positions as junior partners of former West Pakistani industrial and commercial houses and very largely owed their existence and growth to the direct and indirect patronage of the central government. During the period of liberation movement these Bengali vested interest groups who supported the right-wing Muslim League in the 1970 election decided to change their political allegiance. This change in their attitude did not go unnoticed by the army and the government of Pakistan; and as a result, their position was very much weakened in relation to them. Secondly, owing to their former relationship with the West Pakistani interests and the central government and their support to the Muslim League in the 1970 election they were faced with difficulties in making any inroad into the Awami League and any other political party involved in the liberation movement. Their last minute change of attitude and allegiance did not at all help them in building up their position and power within any of the Bengali political parties including the Awami League. As a result of all these a large section of big Bengali industrial and business

2. See Alavi, Ibid., p.78.
3. A section of these groups, however, extended their support to the Awami League in the 1970 election.
interests were delinked both from their former patrons and allies and from the Bengali political forces and continued to count days in state of suspended animation.

The Bengali bureaucracy went through almost the same process as in the case of industrial and commercial interests. They were essentially a creature of the central government with which their links were quite firm. This firm relationship began to weaken with the advance of the liberation forces, and they made a dramatic last minute attempt to demonstrate their patriotism by changing their allegiance over to the Awami League and thus became, along with the police forces, the leaders of the non-violent and non-cooperation movement which was launched by the Awami League in the month of March, 1971. But significantly enough, in spite of this 'leadership', the bureaucracy, unlike the provincially controlled police forces, did not really suffer at the hands of the Pakistan Army. Of course, a few of them were killed and a few crossed over to India. The army behaved quite magnanimously with the bureaucracy. In spite of their short-term 'patriotic' drama, this return to the fold of the army administration weakened their position in relation to the Bengali political forces even in relation to the Awami League. This was the position of various groups discussed above at the time when the Pakistan Army surrendered to the commander of the Indian forces on December 16, 1971.

With the formal surrender of the Pakistan Army the Awami League leaders and following them others entered Bangladesh. They, though unofficially, declared all those who could not or did not cross over to India as second class citizens of Bangladesh. The superior rights of the India-returned civil servants, academicians, political leaders etc. became quite established. In practical terms it meant that the Awami League supporting India-returned 'patriots' (excluding, of course, the poor general mass who also crossed over to India) had superior rights to lay hands on the properties of the non-Bengali and Bengali collaborators. These people in all walks of life began to push their own selves to positions far superior to what they used to be before. Government employees, the university teachers, the 'patriotic' intellectuals etc. claimed superior rights and pushed their rivals and former superiors out of their respective fields, of course, except a few. In doing so they got all possible help from their allies among the leaders of the ruling Awami League. Then these people along with their political allies began to talk about 'socialism'. After what has been said so far it may appear very surprising to many. But there will be nothing surprising if one tries to understand the character of their urge for socialism.

Socialism actually became a popular sentiment among many, especially among the exploited people because they were told through various mass media of communications and public speeches that it would bring material benefits for

them even though the government made it clear right from the beginning that "the ideal of socialism cannot be translated into reality as easily or as quickly as the other three principles of state policy". But the political leaders of the ruling party and their agents went on assuring the people of its phase by phase implementation. The ruling elites took a few steps toward that direction by nationalizing the bank, insurance companies and some big industrial establishments. But their aim was not to introduce pure socialism because private investment in industries and commerce up to Tk.3½ million was allowed.

However, the Awami League leaders and the people connected with them proceeded to use "socialism" for the advancement of their own economic and financial interests. Their nationalization programme became the most important instrument of policy through which they achieved this objective. The nationalized industrial and business establishments were put under the charge of administrators. These new 'administrators' were all either Awami Leaguers or men closely connected with them. In the case of the taken-over Bengali industries and business establishments some of the old proprietors who supported the Awami League in the 1970 election were retained as administrators. So the Awami Leaguers, who in the initial few weeks, were busy in occupying and acquiring houses, shops, lands, automobiles, etc. previously belonging to the non-Bengalis now began to raise their economic position still higher by plundering the nationalized industries and business houses. On the one hand, through this large-scale plundering they became rich and on the other hand, they gradually

consolidated their position as industrial bureaucrats. It is this government-patronised industrial bureaucracy which has now largely replaced the previous industrial and commercial elites.

So far as land relations are concerned practically nothing has happened. These relations, as stated earlier, were, to some extent, temporarily shaken up during the period of the liberation movement, but now under the political protection of the ruling party leaders the landowners and the money-lending groups have fully recovered their former positions of power and privilege and control over their dependent bargadars, agricultural labourers and poor peasants.

The administrative bureaucracy faced certain initial disadvantages owing to their participation in the military administration after March, 1971. But in spite of these disadvantages and difficulties the Awami League government also behaved with a vast majority of them rather magnanimously because their help was essential for the administration of the country and the distribution of patronage. But they have been made the junior partners of the political leaders. By and large the bureaucrats co-operate with the leaders of the ruling party in the process of the latter's manipulation of public or official patronage resources in favour of their supporters as well as for themselves. In return, these political leaders help the bureaucrats in accruing some benefits such as promotions, transfer, political protection etc.8

The relationship between the Awami League leaders and the army officers was, at the initial stage, apparently harmonious, except those few army officers who were openly critical about the behaviour of the Indian Army in Bangladesh and accused the latter of taking away all the sophisticated arms captured from the Pakistan Army. These army officers were immediately sacked because at that time pro-India feeling was very high among the Bengali elites, especially the ruling elites and their associates and supporters. The reasons for this are too well known to call for any elaboration here. However, most of the army officers who were associated with the liberation army were not happy with the posture of the Indian Army in Bangladesh even though they did not give any open expression of their sentiments. But beneath the surface there was a group of army officers who did not like the pattern of Awami League leaders' distribution of patronage and favours to their kinsmen, friends, friends' friends, supporters and workers. The Awami League government's very low allocation of resources for the army in successive budgets since 1972 and its reluctance to expand the army were not liked by the army officers. Moreover, the interference of the ruling party leaders including Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in the promotion and personal affairs of the army officers and the sacking of some of these officers on the prompting of some Awami League leaders who had personal scores to settle with the officers concerned created dissatisfaction among the army officers.

10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
The creation of a para-military force called the Jatiyo Rakkhi Bahini (National Security Force) as a coercive mechanism of the ruling party and its increasing power and privileges were not liked by many army officers. The army officers and personnel repatriated from West Pakistan were, to some extent, dissatisfied because they were not paid a salary for the 18 months they had to spend in the "camps" in Pakistan. But because they were readily integrated in the army their grievances were not very high. But they were not altogether absent because some junior officers associated with the liberation force were promoted to higher ranks, whereas some of these repatriated army officers having seniority and requisite qualifications and training for such promotions had to remain stagnant. This was the state of the army when three dismissed officers of the army in collaboration with some dissatisfied army majors and captains, supported by about 1400 soldiers staged a coup and killed Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his family members and some other Awami League leaders. It is widely believed that the army coup was backed by the leaders of a faction of the Awami League. It is also believed that due to the army coup some smugglers in Bangladesh have lost the patronage of powerful circles in the former Mujib government.

So far we have not paid attention to the question of how foreign aid, grants, reliefs etc. help the ruling elites of Bangladesh to maintain the strategy of the politics of

12. Ibid.
patronage. In this section we shall make an attempt toward that direction. Among the leaders of the ruling party there developed two groups on the question of acceptance of aid, grants etc. from the U.S. and its Western allies. One group was led by the then Finance Minister Tajuddin Ahmed and the other by the Commerce Minister Mushtaque Ahmed. The first group was anti-American and was opposed to the acceptance of aid, grants etc. from the U.S., whereas the second group was highly pro-American and pro-Western and was very much in favour of accepting aid, grants etc. from Western countries, especially the U.S. Initially Sheikh Mujibur Rahman tried to maintain a balance between these two groups. But the chronic food shortage, the falling economy of the country accompanied by a very high rate of inflation of prices of essential commodities creating dissatisfaction among the general mass of the people prompted Mujib to side with the pro-American and pro-Western group. He immediately dismissed six cabinet ministers including Finance Minister Tajuddin Ahmed, and three state ministers to remove the leaders of the anti-American group. In fact, Mujib along with other leaders of the ruling party became closely linked with the Western powers, especially the U.S. and could secure a large quantity of relief materials, loans, aid, grants etc. from the latter. He also could secure some aid, grants etc. from the U.S.S.R., India, Japan etc. These foreign resources helped the ruling elites to indulge in politics of patronage both at the national and local levels.

One should not, however, assume from the above statement that these foreign powers have supplied resources with the intention of perpetuating the politics of patronage in Bangladesh. What we wish to argue is that many of these resources, especially relief materials, grants, scholarships or fellowships etc. have been largely used by the ruling party leaders and their associates as patronage resources for distribution among their kinsmen, clients and potential clients. They have also appropriated a significant amount of resources to enrich themselves.

Although it has been argued by some scholars\(^{17}\) that the neo-colonial powers exercise control over the aid-receiving countries in the third world through their aid programmes, we cannot attempt to make any elaborate discussion on such a complicated international issue in relation to Bangladesh. However, because the ruling elites of Bangladesh receive the major part (about 80%) of the aid from the U.S., other Western countries and the U.S.-dominated international agencies\(^{18}\) they are likely to be more dependent on these Western powers to maintain their privileged positions in the country. To show their gratitude these ruling elites take appropriate measures to protect the economic interests

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of the Western countries in Bangladesh. 19

It may be relevant to mention here that many people of Bangladesh believe that most of the political parties in the country have linkages with some foreign agencies which secretly supply them with cash for the mobilization of political support. The political leaders of the rival parties often accuse each other of receiving cash from a foreign agency. But it is very difficult to ascertain the validity of this type of popular belief because the political leaders of each party have told us that their party does not receive any cash from any foreign agency. Moreover, there are no recorded materials on this issue.

Here a question is likely to arise about the relevance of our discussion of the issues of foreign aid, grants, reliefs etc. to Bangladesh while we are concerned with the study of the network of relationships of the elites of Rajshahi town. To answer such a question we may say that it is quite relevant in the sense that the ruling elites of the community get a part of these foreign resources through their national level patrons for distribution among their supporters and potential supporters as well as for their own enjoyment.

19. According to Umar, while working out the nationalization plan the ruling elites of Bangladesh decided not to touch and harm any British and the U.S. interests. Thus their interests in jute, tea, banking, insurance etc. remained unaffected and they continued to extract all the privileges to which they were entitled before. The ruling elites did this to keep the flow of aid, grants, loans, reliefs etc. from the U.S., other Western countries and the U.S.-dominated international aid-giving agencies steady. See Umar, B. op.cit., p.174.
In our analysis of the political process in the community we have found that the political mobilization and the formation of alliance are transactional in nature and based on the crucial factor of distribution of patronage; and both the ruling party leaders and their counterparts in various opposition parties follow the same strategy. We have also seen that because the leaders of the ruling party have control over the power structure and higher access to official patronage resources they are in an advantageous position to distribute them to their clients and potential clients, whereas the opposition leaders try to mobilize political support largely on the basis of assurances of future patronage. We have also argued that in the political arena the question of ideology plays an insignificant role because politics is largely guided by pragmatic considerations. The factional recruitments are also found to be based on the same crucial factor of distribution of patronage for political support.

However, the analysis of the political process in the community has given rise to the following questions which we propose to deal with in this section: (a) Why does this system exist? (b) What are the effects of this system? (c) What factors can lead to a change in the system?

To answer the first question we have to say that the political process in Bangladesh is intimately connected with the economic structure of the society. The economy of Bangladesh is predominantly agrarian in nature and based on the semi-feudalistic system of production. About 95% of the people live in rural areas and are directly or indirectly
involved in an agricultural network. Even most of the urban-dwelling people are also connected with the agrarian structure. The system of production in the agrarian structure has given rise to a type of relationship between the landowners and their dependent cultivators which goes a long way to perpetuate the politics of patronage because the semi-feudalistic system of production has pushed a vast number of rural people such as bargadars, agricultural labourers, poor peasants, poor artisans etc. to a socio-economic condition where poverty predominates. These poor people's struggle for the maintenance of their existence makes them highly susceptible to patronage of one kind or the other. Thus, a political leader's offer of money, food, cloth etc. in exchange for the votes of these people is highly desired by the latter. Moreover, the landowning groups themselves are in alliance with the political leaders who ensure or promise to ensure the continuity of their privileged positions and offer them additional patronage in exchange for their political support. The political leaders find it more convenient to distribute patronage as well as to make promises of future patronage through these rural landowners who have a tight grip over their clients associated with the cultivation of their lands.

In urban areas the situation is not in any way better than that in rural areas. Most of the people in urban areas are economically handicapped and hence are after some material benefits. They do not hesitate to extend their political support to those political leaders who distribute certain patronage to them or assure them to do so in the
near future. The urban vested interest groups are generally eager to extend their political support to those who assure them of some sort of political protection and help them enhancing their privileged positions.

The pattern of kinship system, family, marriage and the caste or caste-like grouping reinforce this type of political process because in a normal situation political leaders having direct or indirect access to patronage resources generally show favours to their kinsmen and caste fellows, of course, in exchange for the latter's political support and services. As political manipulation is one of the important devices for the upward mobility of a good number of people as well as an effective device for the acquiring of material benefits the patronage system remains in operation in the political process. A political leader's role as a dalal (broker) between his supporters and the resource-controlling authorities further reinforces this system of politics. In other words, the social distance between the general mass and the authorities controlling patronage resources creates a congenial condition for the functioning of the politics of patronage because the political leaders and their agents who are more easily accessible to the general mass are approached by many of their ordinary supporters to secure for them certain favours from the resource-controlling authorities to whom they have no access.

Moreover, the availability of some amount of resources from the foreign allies of the national political leaders is also helpful for the continuity of the politics of patronage.
From the above discussion one should not, however, assume that the ruling political leaders by virtue of their much higher access to patronage resources will always remain in power. We shall discuss below why this does not happen. The amount of patronage resources available to the leaders of the ruling party are hardly adequate to satisfy all the voters. Thus a portion of the voters remain dissatisfied. The patronage resources are generally distributed through the dalals or agents and influential political workers. These people may and often do misappropriate a significant amount of resources. As a result, a good number of voters who could be satisfied remain frustrated. The political leaders themselves often cannot check the temptation of misappropriating a certain amount of patronage resources available from the national and international sources. Moreover, there is a competition among the supporters or potential supporters for a limited number of opportunities or an amount of patronage resources. Those who become successful continue to extend their political support to the ruling party leaders, but those who become unsuccessful remain highly dissatisfied and generally withhold their political support from their political patrons of the ruling party. Sometimes, the large-scale maldistribution of patronage leads to a stoppage of the flow of resources to the leaders of the ruling party from their foreign allies.

The situation discussed above provides the opposition political leaders with an opportunity to mobilize a large number of supporters largely on the assurance of future patronage. These opposition leaders along with their supporters become quite active to challenge the leaders of
the ruling party openly by holding large public meetings, street corner rallies, processions, demonstrations, strikes etc. This situation prompts the leaders of the ruling party to intensify coercive measures against their opponents with the help of the government-controlled coercive machineries. The situation gradually reaches such a point that the legitimacy of the ruling elites is challenged by a vast majority of the people. In the face of the crisis of legitimacy the ruling political elites either hold an election only to be displaced from the power structure by their opposition counterparts or are overthrown by the military. In both the situations a group of ruling elites is replaced by another; but the important point is that the politics of patronage does not disappear. If the military officers want to remain in power they become active to secure the support of the people through the distribution of patronage as well as by promising future patronage. But if the army officers are not interested in retaining the state power in their hands they arrange an early election through which the opposition party leaders having a large number of supporters to whom they have promised patronage come to power and begin to distribute some promised patronage, but many aspirants remain unsatisfied and become frustrated because the new ruling elites are not able to satisfy a large number of supporters who were assured of patronage because of lack of resources, misappropriation of resources by themselves and their agents even though they become allies of some foreign powers in order to secure resources.
To answer the second question we may say that in the system of the politics of patronage manipulation becomes predominant at the cost of formal rules and regulations; and favouritism and nepotism become very prominent. The economic condition of the society gradually deteriorates because a large part of the resources distributed to the people as patronage are used for unproductive purposes. The administration and law and order suffer. The system leads to the emergence of conflict between the patronage-receiving groups and the frustrated groups and creates a legitimacy crisis for the ruling elites only to be replaced by new ruling elites who follow the same strategy for political mobilization as their predecessors did. Sometimes, it leads to factional conflicts among the ruling elites over the question of sharing of patronage resources as well as over the mode of distribution of the same. It largely blocks the effective concerted movement of the exploited groups and creates various vested interest groups who often indulge in exploitation of their dependents under the coverage of patron-clientage. It is quite helpful for these vested interest groups to maintain their privileged positions. This system facilitates the upward mobility of some people at the cost of others who may often be more deserving than the favoured ones. It creates a favourable condition for the foreign powers to get themselves indirectly involved in the politico-economic process of the country. It largely blocks the adoption and implementation of any radical land reform measures. It also creates a congenial atmosphere for the functioning of the system of dalali (brokerage) in the society. Lastly, the system gives impetus to a parochial
approach to a problem, and at the same time hinders the
growth of universalistic and rational approaches to the same.

To answer the third question we may say that the
following factors will lead to the end of the predominance
of the politics of patronage: First, the break-up of the
semi-feudalistic system of production and the abolition of
all vested interest groups through a radical revolution and
the subsequent introduction of a communist type of social
system may largely wipe out the politics of patronage.
But the possibility of this type of action seems to be
remote because of the lack of mobilization of the exploited
peasantry along class lines. Even the exploited peasants
having a small size of landholding may not be willing to
surrender their right of ownership of the lands.20

Most of the workers or labourers in industrial and
commercial plants and factories in urban areas in Bangladesh
are also connected with the cultivation of lands and have
their rural homes. They come to their villages on leave and
become engaged in cultivation of their own lands or barga
lands. These groups seem to be not organized along the class
line. More importantly there are no such strong organizations
as are necessary to mobilize these exploited groups and
create an atmosphere for staging a radical revolution.
Moreover, the vested interest groups and some of the

20. The history of the peasant movements in Bengal shows
that they are always directed to the acquiring of land-
ownership by the landless or near-landless peasants or
the securing of a higher share of produce in a share-
cropping system. See Ray, K. Chashir Lorai, Calcutta,
1946; also see Haque, A. East Bengal: Semi-Feudal and
privileged groups enjoying certain benefits from the former are likely to make a common cause to frustrate such a move. The conservative and dogmatic religious leaders who have some influence over the life of the illiterate poor peasants are always against radical revolution and the introduction of any communist type social system.

Second, a possibility to end the predominance of the system is the transformation of the semi-feudalistic system of production to a capitalistic system of production which will lead to the emergence of a Western type class system, universalistic values, rational bureaucracy, rule of law, value of efficiency and achievement etc. But this cannot be achieved overnight and the leadership for a gradual movement in that direction is lacking in the country. The people of the maddhabitta category who are expected to take the lead have not yet come forward. In fact, they are providing support to various elite groups which are connected with them through kinship ties.

More significantly there are very little internal resources necessary for the establishment of industries and factories. Even the small amount of available private resources is not invested in projects which do not promise any immediate profits. The only possibility open to the ruling elites and the government is to depend on foreign aid for industrial development as well as to invite foreign capital investment into Bangladesh. This is not likely to solve the problem because the profits of the foreign investments will flow out of the country and the aid-giving
countries may not be interested in the real growth of capitalism in the country. Even if the aid-giving countries sincerely try to help in the growth of capitalistic system of production it is likely to be a long-term process in a country where a vast majority of the people live in rural areas and are directly or indirectly associated with the semi-feudalistic system of production in agriculture.

Given the above facts there are good reasons to assume that the semi-feudalistic system of production and the predominantly agrarian character of the economy of Bangladesh will continue for quite a long time. As long as the country remains like that there is little hope that the politics of patronage will disappear. Thus, one group of ruling elites may be replaced by the other, but the politics of patronage will remain. The history of political development in East Pakistan gives testimony to our argument.
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We have selected 330 persons as the elite members of Rajshahi town. The selection of these elite members is based on the criteria suggested in Chapter 1 (see Chap.1, pp.29, 59 & 60). But it is necessary to mention who these 330 people are that we have selected as the elite members of the community. We shall give, below, a short account of these elite members in various occupational or professional groups.

(i) **Bureaucratic Elites** (53): All the heads of various administrative, executive and judicial departments, all the officers of class I status in these departments and all the executive committee members of the Class I and Class II Officers' Associations have been taken as elite members in the bureaucracy. Five Class II officers who are widely known to be highly important persons, and the administrators, directors and managers of Class I status of the nationalized industries have also been included in this category.

(ii) **Military Elites** (7): All the Class I Military Officers; that is, of rank Colonel, Lt.Colonel, Major, Captain and Lieutenant constitute this category.

(iii) **Elite Lawyers** (36): Those lawyers who are well-reputed in the community and who have attained a high degree of professional success have been included in this category. Moreover, all the executive committee members of the Rajshahi Advocates' Association and the Rajshahi Mukhteers' Association have also been taken as elite lawyers.
(iv) **Elite Physicians** (41): All the well-reputed physicians with prestige, plus the executive committee members (who live in Rajshahi town) of the Bangladesh Medical Association and the Rajshahi Medical Association comprise this category.

(v) **Elite Contractors** (23): All the rich and wealthy contractors of the town as well as the executive committee members (who live in Rajshahi town) of the Bangladesh Contractors' Association and the Rajshahi Contractors' Association constitute this category.

(vi) **Elite Politicians** (21): Those persons who hold politically important positions (i.e., Minister, MP, executive committee members of political parties, Chairman, Vice-Chairman and executive members of the Zilla Parishad and Town Committee, and the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Commissioners of the Rajshahi Municipality) have been included in this category. In addition, three widely reputed informal political leaders belong to this category. It may be noted here that when a politician is more widely reputed and identified as an elite member of another occupational or professional group, he has not been taken as a member of this category. (See Chap. 2, p. 77).

(vii) **Elite Traders** (24): Rich traders, the office-bearers of the Rajshahi Traders' Association, and the President, Vice-President, General Secretary and the executive committee members of the Rajshahi Chamber of Commerce belong to this category.
(viii) **Industrial Elites (6):** All the proprietors (who live in Rajshahi town) of the private industrial establishments have been included in this category. Some industrialists can be seen to be the proprietor of more than one industrial establishment.

(ix) **Academic Elites (73):** All professors, associate professors, chairmen of various university departments, deans of various university faculties, university teachers who hold important positions such as provostship, proctorship, the members of various university committees (i.e. Tender Committee, Committee for Advanced Studies etc.), the members of the University Academic Council, Senate and Syndicate, the executive committee members of the Rajshahi University Teachers' Association, the top officials of the University administration such as the Vice-Chancellor, the Registrar, the Treasurer, the Controller of Examinations, the Librarian, the Inspector of Colleges, the Director of Accounts, the Director of Physical Education and the Director of Student Guidance have been included in this category.

The Principals and Vice-Principals of different colleges in the town, the chairmen of various departments of Rajshahi Govt. College, all professors and associate professors of Rajshahi Engineering College, and the executive committee members (who live in Rajshahi town) of the Bangladesh College Teachers' Association, the Rajshahi College Teachers'
(ix) **Academic Elites** (contd.)

Association, the Bangladesh School Teachers' Association are included in this category. In addition, the Deputy Director of Public Instructions, the Chairman and Secretary of the Rajshahi S.S.C. & H.S.C. Board have been taken as members of this category.

(x) **Elite Engineers** (18): All superintending and executive engineers as well as the executive committee members (who live in Rajshahi town) of the Bangladesh Engineers' Association and the Rajshahi Engineers' Association comprise this category.

(xi) **Religious Leaders** (13): This category consists of all the well-reputed religious leaders of the community.

(xii) **Trade Union Leaders** (5): Those persons who are widely reputed as labour leaders and hold important positions (i.e., President, Vice-President and General Secretary) in the labour organizations belong to this category.

(xiii) **Elite Student Leaders** (10): All the well-reputed student leaders of major student organizations in the town constitute this category. They hold important positions (i.e., President, Vice-President and General Secretary) in these organizations.

It must be mentioned here that in all these cases "reputation" is assessed by me alone on the basis of my knowledge of the community.
Number:
(1) Name ........... (2) Sex ....... (3) Age .......
(4) District of origin ........... (5) Religion ...........
(6) Caste or caste-like group ........... (7) Education ...........
(8) Occupational or Professional Status ............
(9) Name of the locality of residence ..............
(10) Living in the town: permanently/temporarily
(11) Types of houses: Rented/own
(12) Do you have village home? Yes/No, If yes, (a) How often do you visit it? ... (b) Why do you do so? .......
(13) Marital Status ........... (14) No. of times married ......
(15) If married, what are the factors you emphasized in selecting your wife? ............
(16) If unmarried, what are the factors you will emphasize in selecting your wife? ............
(17) Previous kinship ties with wife: None/ ...........
(18) No. of children:

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<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
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<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

(19) What are the factors you will emphasize in arranging your son's and daughter's (if any) marriage? .......

(20) Household Composition:

Respondent's common economic pool ............
" joint residence ............
" common hearth ............

(21) No. of members living in the household or family: .......

(22) No. of married couples living in the household or family ............

(23) Head of the household or family: Respondent/father/grandfather/brother/any other ............
(24) Size of landholding: ...... (a) Mode of management ......
               (b) No. of bargadars ...........

(25) Whether planning to purchase more lands? Yes/No.

(26) If yes, why? ......

(27) Other property: .......... (28) Mode of management:........

(29) Frequency of Respondent's visits to his parents' family (if parents are living separately): .........

(30) Frequency of Parents' visits to Respondent's family ..... 

(31) Respondent's attitude toward tadbir (manipulation of things in his own favour or in favour of others) .......

(32) Information about Respondent's father, wife and wife's father:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Wife</th>
<th>Wife's father</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eminent position</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size of landholding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode of management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of bargadars</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other property</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode of management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of people engaged</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caste or Caste-like group affiliation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-economic group affiliation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(33) Respondent's club membership: ...........

(34) Frequency of visits to the club (if member): ......

(35) Whether the Respondent participated in the following community Issues? Yes/No.
(36) If Yes, 1. Construction of Rajshahi Airport .....

2. Extension of the jurisdiction of Rajshahi Municipality ..........

3. Establishment of a Cotton Textile Mill near the Town.......... 

4. Introduction of Town Bus Service ....

5. Distribution of Relief goods to 1975 Flood victims .......

6. Town Development ..........  

7. Establishment of Regional Science Lab. ...... 

8. Opening and Location of a Town Park ........

(37) People say that you have connections or contacts with some highly placed people in Dacca city, could you tell me the following about them:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Occupational or Professional Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


The urban maddhabitta category consists of people with moderate income (i.e., around Tk.400-500 per month) and property (i.e., around 30-35 bighas of lands) and with some Western education, who are employed in non-manual occupations in various towns and cities in Bangladesh. They are "gentlemen" with a lifestyle characterized by the avoidance of manual labour and by the urge for some sort of cultural refinement. Misra has termed this category "Middle class". According to him, "They consisted of a number of functional groups which in point of income as well as respectability came next to the upper class of aristocracy, official, landed, or mercantile". (See Misra, B.B., 1961, p.57).

The people of the rural maddhabitta category, however, may not necessarily have any Western education. They are landholding gentlemen with moderate income largely derived from the produce of their lands which they get cultivated either by bargadars (share-croppers) or by hired agricultural labourers. Avoidance of manual labour is highly valued by them.

The urban nimnabitta category consists of people with low income (i.e., around Tk.100-200 per month) and small property (i.e., around 2-5 bighas of lands). These people are generally engaged in various types of manual work.

The people of the rural nimnabitta category also belong to low income group and possess small or very small property. They are generally employed as bargadars or agricultural labourers by the rural and urban landholding groups.