

Rahman 1778

Introduction

I am thankful to the organizer of the conference for inviting me to speak after this delicious Bangali meal. Since I do not have any credentials as an after-dinner speaker, I find it quite intriguing to see myself standing before you ready to talk for the next 40 or so odd minutes. What happened is that when I was first contacted by Mrs. Kelly regarding this workshop, I told her that since my current activities will not permit me to prepare a paper for the meeting, I shall be willing to do other supporting activities to make the conference a success. Mrs. Kelly in her gracious manner accepted my offer and assigned me to preside at a session. However, a few weeks before the meeting Mrs. Kelly informed me of her difficulty in getting a speaker for tonight and requested my help to fill the position. Noting a sense of urgency in her offer, I accepted to do the job. The reasoning I followed in accepting this offer was that in the event my performance did not come up to your expectations, Mrs. Kelly could always say that I was not her first choice and was only a last minute replacement! As for myself, since I do not have any aspirations to build my credentials as an after-dinner speaker, my performance will probably save me from any future requests! Be that as it may, this evening, I would like to propose that all of you share some of my thoughts and experiences on rural development in Bangladesh. I fully realize the magnitude of irrelevance involved in the discussions of the problems of the world's poorest country in the affluent atmosphere of the world's richest nation. But this is the reality of today's interdependent world; slums and skyscrapers do not only exist together but worry about each other. Similarly, rich and poor nations do coexist in today's world and although little positive results have been accomplished, they continue to worry about each other.

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Concept of Rural Development

Conceptually, rural development is a complex and messy phenomenon. Its increasing usage in development vocabulary is equally matched by its widening gap in conceptual agreement on its goals, means and strategies. Rural development covers a wide spectrum of goals ranging from agricultural productivity to socio-political change. While some of the goals, say increased crop production, may be defined and measured, others such as greater socio-political harmony will be neither easy to define nor easy to assess. Even the means employed to achieve a set of rural development goals may involve conflict of interests between classes of society as in the question of emphasis on either commercial farmers or subsistent farmers to achieve increased agricultural production. Similarly, the difficult choice of allocating scarce resources on directly productive projects or service activities such as education and health has been baffling the development policy makers. Even in the strategies of rural development, there is considerable disagreement ranging from a "visibility approach" such as integrated rural development in selected areas favoured by some while others argue for a minimum package program widely distributed within a country. All these diversities and disagreements on rural development goals, means and strategies are also related to ideological orientation of the ruling classes and the level of articulation each developing country has been able to reach with respect to its overall development programs.

I make this brief diversion on conceptual issues only to suggest my awareness of the problem and to indicate that my reference to rural development in Bangladesh will be broad enough to include a general well-being of the rural population. Although my reference is quite broad, the focus of my talk will be on the kinds of approaches/experiments made to mobilize rural population to achieve the certain type of goals and the impact that each of these approaches have on the welfare of the rural population. I must admit that in my discussion I will not be able to examine development activities in specific areas of agriculture, health, education etc. I will attempt a brief review of three types of rural development approaches namely, colonial, technocratic, and reformist that have been followed in the area now known as Bangladesh. Following the brief review, I will seek to examine the reasons I think important in perpetuating the neglect of rural areas in Bangladesh for the last thirty years.

Facts about Bangladesh

Let me first show you how poor and rural Bangladesh is by stating some figures which I am sure, are already known to many of you. At approximately 55,000 square miles, which is over a quarter the size of France, Bangladesh accommodates 75 million people which threatens to rise annually at the rate of 2.9% to 165 million by year 2000. In this most densely populated country in the world, over 90% live in rural areas and about 75% are engaged in agriculture. Its per capita income is estimated at about US\$ 70 and extreme poverty is the lot of the vast majority of the population. The immediate cause of the poverty arises from the inability of Bangladesh to produce enough food for its own requirements despite the fact that 90% of the cultivated land is used to grow rice. Most of the farms, located in 65,000 villages in Bangladesh are small, averaging three acres only. Approximately one-fifth of all farms are more than five acres and in the context of Bangladesh these farms which are two or three times the average size, constitutes large landholdings and their owners form the hard core of the rural elite. It is estimated that 15% of the villagers are landless and another 12% of farmers families with less than half acre of land may be classed as near landless.

The depressing low per capita income of US\$70 is only a proxy for many different kinds of deprivation. According to a World Bank report "more than half of all families are below the acceptable calorific intake, while more than two-thirds are deficient in proteins and vitamins. Houses are single rooms made of clay, which must be repaired every two or three years and have no water or electricity. Less than 20% of the population are literate. Estimates of unemployment and underemployment range from one-quarter to one-third of the labor force. About one in every four live-born children die before their fifth birthday. The expectations of life of 48 years contrasts with 70 years in developed countries.

The productive structures in Bangladesh are largely agricultural and except for some natural gas, there are not any known industrial raw materials in commercial quantities. This led to little industrial development in Bangladesh except for the processing of jute into hessian, sacking and carpet-backing for export and spinning and weaving cloth from imported cottons. The problem of insuring that productive capacity in Bangladesh grows at a rate substantially higher than population has been extremely difficult mainly because the ratio of resource endowment to that of population has been perhaps lowest in comparison with other countries. The richest resource

endowment in Bangladesh, its people, are yet to be mobilized effectively.

The Colonial Approach

Rural development during the British days comprised mostly of the activities of functional departments, such as agriculture, health, education, cooperatives etc. at the lowest level. The mobilization of local resources, both urban and rural, was left at the discretion of the civil officials (district, subdivisional and circle officers) and the rural gentry. As the activities of the functional departments were mostly confined to urban areas, so was the initiatives of civil officials, as reflected in the Foundation stones of many schools, playing grounds, stadium, girl colleges etc. in several towns. However, there were many cases where the officials or local councils including local gentry took initiatives in organizing rural resources to build schools and clubs, market places and health centres. It must be noted here that these instances of locally-initiated or official-initiated rural mobilization are usually exceptions and in the first half of the twentieth century, we are only familiar with three officials who sought to mobilize rural Bangalees for development work. They were Messrs. Ishaque, Nuranubbi and N.M. Khan. The nature of projects organized by officials and local gentry were mostly service oriented except the well famed canal excavated under the leadership of N.M. Khan in the sub-division of Brahmanbaria. The colonial approach for rural development in Bengal was mostly laissez faire with minimum government support for technical ministries and local councils and occasional initiatives of civil officials for rural welfare. Incidentally, the British approach in Bengal contrasts sharply from the massive efforts made by the same rulers to build the world's first canal irrigation system in Punjab.

Technocratic Approach

During the Pakistani period, both reformist as well as technocrats solutions to develop rural areas were tried. The technocratic approach consisted of big projects aimed at providing agricultural inputs such as water, power, seed and fertilizer etc. The creation of Water and Power Development Authority, Agricultural Development Corporation, and similar other Corporations signal the emphasis of technocratic solutions in the early sixties. A few examples of big projects undertaken by large corporations include Ganges-Kobadak Irrigation Project, North Bengal

Tubewell project, and supply network for fertilizer and seeds. The assumption behind these big projects is that rural development is mostly an agricultural problem and agricultural production will rise once the provision for missing technical inputs is provided. The slow completion of these big projects, due mostly to a shortage of technical and administrative manpower and the very low utilization of existing inputs due to inadequate technology and extension network show the limited usefulness of technocratic approach in Bangladesh.*

Of the several reformist solutions, two programmes deserve our examination. These are in order of time sequence, Village Agricultural Industrial Development, or commonly known as V-AID programmes, and Comilla programmes. The major differentiating points in these two programmes have been the role of bureaucracy and its problem of interaction with the villagers in building appropriate organizations for mobilization of rural resources and transfer of technology. The V-AID programme is the standard community development programme which was tried with American material and conceptual support in the fifties. The programme relied heavily on creating a new development oriented bureaucracy with multipurpose village workers as its centrepiece for organizing the villagers into action groups in various aspects of rural life. The focus of V-AID programme was too broad and as a result the village councils tended to devote more energy on common social services like adult education, roads, community meetings than on specific projects for raising incomes. As the programme and its leaders showed great distrust of colonial civil bureaucracy and elected local councils, intra-bureaucracy and village factional conflicts were very common in the areas covered by V-AID programmes. Although, some noticeable mobilization activities were undertaken in some V-AID areas; in general, the programme was usually long on rhetoric and short on achievements. The lack of cooperation from the bureaucracy, especially law and order and agriculture officials, conflicts between V-AID sponsored village councils and elected local councils and finally the withdrawal of USAID had led to the discontinuation of V-AID programmes in 1960 - at a time when the programme covered about 1/3 of East Bengal.

* Of the several big projects that failed to reach their target, we can note the Ganges-Kobadek irrigation and flood control project where US\$ 170 million had been spent by 1970. After 16 years of construction design and reconstruction, the project failed to perform at even 50% of the original expectations. As a result, the anticipated benefits of 350,000 irrigated acres were not realized.

The burial of the V-AID programme was done without any noticeable mourning except that the Academy for Village Development, Comilla, originally planned as providing research and training support for the programme, had to find new clientele for its support. It was in this atmosphere of goal vacuum that the Academy started making rural development experiments which later came to be known as the Comilla approach and was duplicated in selected areas of East Pakistan. These experiments sought to avoid the mistakes committed in the V-AID program. They eliminated full time multi-purpose V-AID workers and instead, depended on village leaders and continuous training of selected villagers in various fields of expertise and skills. Replacing overall village councils, the Comilla experiments tried to develop village groups on the basis of one or more common interests. Thus, there were farmers' cooperatives, dairy cooperatives, fisherman cooperatives, rickshawpuller cooperatives etc. Regular savings and systematic plans for improvement of the members of each cooperative was a pre-condition for their incorporation at the federating level where training, supervision, inputs and marketing were organized. It is at the federating level (Thana) that bureaucratic and technical resources were mobilized to provide services and training for the village level cooperatives. Along with the development of cooperatives, Comilla programmes emphasized, unlike V-AID, the role of local government councils to mobilized villagers for organizing public works and irrigation schemes. As a physical symbol of development orientation, the Comilla approach provided for the creation of a Training and Development Centre in each Thana for accommodating offices of various functional departments.

I am sure many of you are aware of the details of the Comilla programmes and for reasons of time, I find it difficult to go into further elaboration. Suffice it to say, that the Comilla programme was also expanded in selected areas of East Pakistan under the title of Integrated Rural Development Programme (IROP). There are four major criticisms of the programme and following the liberation of Bangladesh, these criticisms have become more pronounced and as a result, the programme has seen some changes. These criticisms include the charges that the village cooperatives were increasingly coming under the control of surplus farmers, that the Comilla programmes do not provide much scope of improvement for landless labourers, that the programme depends heavily on bureaucratic leadership, and that the programme originally developed under the aegis of highly dedicated and skilled leadership, will not have similar support in its process of country-wide replication. Although

all these criticisms have had certain validity, yet one will find that these criticisms had their origins mostly in personality and interdepartmental jealousies which have been one of the powerful constraints to the success of any development programmes. For example, one alternative to the Comilla programme offered by agriculture and cooperative ministry officials, who never forgave the initiators of Comilla experiments for stealing their thunder, is the Rangunia project - an experiment organized to restore flood affected areas in the Rangunia Thana of Chittagong by Mr. Mahbubul Alam, a retired foreign service officer. The Rangunia project claims to have achieved considerable mobilization of rural farmers based on volunteerism rather than bureaucratic supervision and this model was reported to have been duplicated in the whole district of Chittagong. Although the avid supporters of the Rangunia project claims its superiority to Comilla project, one will find very little recorded data on these projects to substantiate their claim. Mr. Alam who was the initiator of the Rangunia project, has been the head of the Comilla project after Mr. Akhter Hameed Khan left for West Pakistan in 1971.

New Programmes

Following the liberation of Bangladesh, there has been several initiatives in mobilizing rural people. Almost all of these initiatives were confined to rhetoric and individualized ventures, as they usually are, and as a result very few survived the test of time. One of these experiments is Savar Gonoshashta Kendra, meaning Peoples Health Centre, a project covering a population of 200,000 in 300 villages of a Thana at the outskirts of Dacca city. The project originally sought to provide health services through a team of medical doctors and their helpers. But over the last three years the health programme expanded, in response to real needs encountered in the course of medical work, into programmes in family planning, agriculture, nutrition, education and vocational training. Although the project is still in the process of expansion, its initiators claim some success in the area of family planning activities as indicated by increasing demands for pills and ligation.

Two other rural mobilization programmes aimed at achieving self-reliance in rural development projects and zero population growth in selected areas of Bangladesh are being planned. The newspaper coverage of these initiatives are so sketchy that one has to wait for hard data to develop any reasonable understanding of these efforts.

Impact of Rural Development Programmes

So far we have reviewed briefly some of the rural development experiments tried in Bangladesh. But in terms of impact these rural development efforts along with other development programmes in the field of agriculture, education, etc. have not been adequate for the maintenance of the status quo, not to speak of enhancing the welfare of the rural population. By all the known criteria, such as income, education, etc. rural population became more impoverished in 1974 than they were in 1951. For example, during the 1950's and 1960's, the agriculture sector in Bangladesh was not even able to provide enough food for its growing population, let alone take a leading role in the economy. While policy-makers gave increasing rhetorical emphasis to the importance of agriculture, the sector as a whole grew by only about 2.0 percent per year causing foodgrain imports to grow from less than 200,000 tons in 1955/56 to over 1.5 million tons by 1969/70. One study found that real per capita rural incomes fell during this period from Rs. 275 in the early 1950's to Rs. 268 in the late 1960's. The levels of the economy in terms of production and income was highest in 1969/70 and the efforts of Bangladesh Government to reach the 1969/70 figures have not been successful except in the field of population where the 1969/70 level has been exceeded considerably. In retrospect, it looks utterly incredible that a country with 90% rural area and population has not been able to preserve the level of rural prosperity it inherited from the British in the following quarter century of its independent existence. I am not aware of any other developing country where the real income declined for a substantial portion of its people in the three decades of its independent existence.

Reasons for Limited Impact

The usual explanations provided for this state are unsuitability of the nation-wide development pattern (mainly urbanization and capital-intensive-industrialization) followed by the Pakistani rulers for East Bengal, relative neglect of East Pakistan's needs and interests in the development planning process, a weak administrative machinery with excessive centralization of decision making at 1,000 miles away central headquarters. The usual explanations are quite palatable to the Bangalees because of two reasons: first, it fits into the habitual pattern of individual Bangalees blaming others for any adverse situation, and secondly, it insulates the

Bangalee society from any critical search for conditions that have facilitated the perpetuation of development policies inimical to the interests of rural Bangalees.

But these external directed explanations do not tell the whole story - not even half of it. It is my strong opinion, which is confirmed by my current exposure to other developing countries that the internal characteristics of a society, including its cultural traits and leadership patterns are as important or even more, than external influences in determining its development policies and programmes. For external influences to have a significant impact, there must be favourable internal conditions which require closer scrutiny for a better understanding of development dynamics. The rural impoverishment in Bangladesh is as much a creation of dominant forces in Bangladesh society as it is the result of inappropriate policies and relatively step-motherly treatment meted out by its Pakistan rulers. There can be no better testimony for the cruciality of internal factors in the development process than in the fact that in four years of independent existence, Bangladesh's policy makers, as shown vividly in the three volumes of 1974 World Bank reports, have not made any substantial departures from their Pakistani predecessors with respect to changing the marginal importance of rural development in its total development perspective.

Internal Reasons

For the next few minutes, I propose to identify a few of these internal conditions that has determined the development pattern and is likely to do so in the future. (First, is the dominance of government by an urban educated group consisting of bureaucrats, businessmen and industrialists, professionals, and politicians. Nearly one and a half century of British education in Bengal and the policy of British rulers to prefer English educated Bangalees in the bureaucracy, profession and businesses created this group of dominant elites who tended to flock to a few urban centres. The main entry to this elite group was education and wealth and since good education was confined in urban centres, wealth usually moved to urban centers for a better share of future education. With time, the urban group began to form its own culture, distinct from its rural illiterate brothers and to develop its own economic and political interest which was not always in harmony with that of the rural population. Following independence in 1947, it was these urban educated groups who took the responsibility for guiding the affairs of the province. The thrust of capital intensive industrialization mainly through private enterprise in

Pakistan's development policy which was totally inappropriate for an overwhelmingly agricultural labour-rich and resource-poor East Pakistan was however met with little opposition from East Pakistan. The persistent conflict of opinion between the central rulers and East Pakistan administration centered more around fund allocation, greater bureaucratic discretion, and other minor issues and not upon the appropriateness of national development policies for East Pakistan. It was only in the later part of the sixties, that some opinions began to be ventilated about two economies and again the movement for two economies was inspired more by a desire for the greater autonomy for East Pakistan's government in handling its economy, especially the control over its exports, imports and foreign aid. But there was not much local opposition to the overall development policy of building big industries, spending more on higher education, and medical colleges and hospitals located in urban centres, planning for big hydraulic and irrigation projects when the immediate need was to resuscitate rural life with major human and material mobilization through small and manageable projects in rural agriculture, rural education and rural health.

The reason why this is not done and why the national development policies were carried out without much opposition in East Pakistan was that the benefit from these policies and projects coincided with the interests and development image of the urban educated ruling class. The development image and motivation of those responsible for East Pakistan ran counter to the needs and interests of the vast majority of East Pakistan's rural people. This is not to suggest that this hiatus was carried out in complete ignorance or without some opposition within the ruling groups. The dynamics of this process requires more elaboration which I propose to do in the next few minutes.

As I mentioned earlier, the development image of the policy makers many of whom were western educated professionals, were largely formed by the confluence of two historic experiences - that of a western industrialized state and British colonial rule. On the one hand, the planners and economists most of whom had been educated abroad and who dominated our development policies were genuinely seeking to industrialize the country with surplus capital gained from agriculture and by creating private entrepreneurial and industrialist groups. On the other hand, many politicians and civilians who participated along with planners and economists in development policy-making thought that development consisted mostly of expanding welfare services such as schools, hospitals, houses, as was done in the good old British days. The result was

a combination of big industrial and physical infrastructure and welfare projects largely confined to urban areas. The development of rural areas, especially increasing agricultural productivity and creating rural industries was relegated to secondary importance. Writing in 1973, Dr. Akhter Hameed Khan, the founder of the Comilla project and a man who had close contact with Pakistan's policy makers notes:

"In spite of pious professions, rural development was a very minor concern of our government. It was obsessed with industrial, urban and military development. It desired greater agricultural production chiefly because it wanted cheap food for the cities and raw material for industries and exports. Under Imperial rule our villages had been impoverished as producers of cheap food and fibre and consumers of manufactured goods. Our government, dominated by urban and industrial interests, followed a well recognized method of transferring wealth from the rural to the urban sector when for instance, it controlled grain prices while giving tariff protection, subsidized foreign exchange, and tax holidays to industries. The rural majority, viz. peasants and labourers, had little organization and few spokesmen. They were not in a position to influence the planning or administrative machinery in their favour. While the urban push and pull was immediate and irresistible, the possibilities of rural revolt seemed remote. Our President (Ayub Khan) sometimes expressed paternal sentiments about "the villagers" but he was doing nothing more than reverting to the tradition of imperial Viceroys, who had similarly proclaimed themselves the protectors of the poor".

The emphasis by East Pakistan policy makers upon urban and industrial activities in development focus was reinforced by their cultural habits, consumption patterns, and personal and family interests. As experienced by the speaker himself, one can say that by the time a rural Bangalee gets a higher education he becomes alienated from his rural culture and is drawn to a city culture largely patterned after western life styles reflected in the cinema,

press, journals and novels, and contact with foreigners. The consumption patterns of city dwellers reflected in greater demands for automobiles, refrigeration, television shows, greater desire to conform to what an urban centre should offer according to international standards and this leads to further alienation of urban Bangalees from the rural folk.

The development image followed by East Pakistan policy makers were greatly reinforced by the elite's personal and family interests. In almost 90 out of 100 cases, the educated classes are going to settle in urban areas and are interested in supporting projects that will make these centres more livable with better roads, schools and colleges, better water supplies, and other amenities. One reason why more money was spent on higher education and expensive curative medical facilities was to provide an opportunity for urban children to get an education and medical treatment. The maintenance and expense of higher education is also supported by the elite group because this is the major avenue for sending their children to the universities of the western world and also to provide avenues for them to emigrate in the future. The argument can be stretched to hypothesize that large infrastructure projects which perhaps were not as beneficial as smaller projects could have been undertaken to provide employment for higher educated Bangalees.

We must pause here to question how could urban educated power groups carry out the development policies so inimical to the interests of the rural areas without support from rural groups. Alas, the picture here is more depressing than that of the relationship between central Pakistani leaders and urban educated groups of East Pakistan. The rural elites, largely the surplus farmers, were more closely united with the prospering city middle classes. Because they possessed surplus land and capital, they could rule over the two other classes in rural areas - peasant proprietors and landless peasants. The large proprietors approximately 10% possessing surplus land and capital were in a very privileged position. They leased land or loaned money at exorbitant rates. Their affluence brought them to social and political leadership. They used their savings accumulated from leasing and lending for the educational advancement of their children and for investment in trade and urban housing. The ultimate movement to an urban centre from the stagnation of rural life, if not for themselves but for their children was the dominant thought of most of the rural elite. To this end, they will seek to get maximum income from minimum investment in rural property so that they can invest the surplus in urban activities. Their interest in the rural prosperity is only

marginal - marginal to the extent it helped them to stay in power and to get increased income.

One must, however, note that this process of confluence of interests of urban groups and rural elites capped by the British imperialists or Pakistani rulers did not go unchallenged. The individual villagers were acutely aware of this process, but being poor and highly individualistic they had no organization, and sustained leadership to challenge this process and protect their interests. On the other hand, the beneficiaries of the system itself did not allow it to go beyond the limits of the poor villager's endurance. This was done by liberal policies of relief and credit, occasional exemption or reduction of land rent during bad harvesting years, regular flow of rural students to urban centres and most effectively by maintenance of rural links through ownership of homestead and agricultural land, and patronizing rural relatives and rural visits.

Even these efforts were not enough to keep the continual neglect of rural interests from providing fuel for a major crisis. On two occasions in recent memory, when things became explosive, the Bangalee ruling groups were lucky to find the external targets - one the British rulers in 1947 and the other the Pakistani rulers in 1971. On both these occasions, especially the latter, considerable sacrifices were made by peasants and students. But the ruling groups have been able, in both cases, to consolidate their hold and perpetuate the neglect of rural interests in government policies and programmes.

It is perhaps symbolic of this state of rural impoverishment in Bangladesh that there exists no viable deep rooted organization capable of mobilizing rural people in the social or economic or political spheres. The rural cooperatives and the union councils are in disrepute. The bureaucracy has been thoroughly discredited. The opportunity we had in 1971 to build viable institutions has been lost through empty slogans, rampant corruption, and senseless destruction of all inherited systems of work. The only system that has survived is the civil and police bureaucracy supported now by the Bangladesh army establishment. One becomes pretty disillusioned when one realizes that there has been quite a good number of useful experiments in building rural institutions in Bangladesh and not one of them has taken any deep roots. Of course, one can always argue that all of these experiments were sooner or later dominated by the rural elite whose interest in rural uplift was only marginal. None of these experiments was able to truly reflect the needs and interests of the vast majority of the rural popu-

lation and that is why as of today we do not have an organization or leaders who truly represent the interests of the farmers.

Prospects

Bangladesh is in a state of flux and its agonies have just begun. In this state, it is very difficult to make any predictions. If the last four years of Bangladesh's independent existence is an indication of the average Bangalee's capacity for organizing developmental activity, the long term prospects for development are gloomy. The World Bank report on Bangladesh predicts a bleak future unless the Bangladesh policy makers concentrate on population control, labor-intensive rural development and efficient use of scarce resources over the remainder of the century. Even if these policies are implemented with the utmost efficiency which is almost impossible, economic development can, according to the World Bank experts, match population growth and attain only one and a half percent growth over the next 25 years. Even this level of attainment, in the possibility of Bangladesh population rising to 160 million by the year 2000, seems uncertain.

One does not necessarily have to accept the World Bank analysis as something inevitable to occur. Many imponderables like socio-political re-organizations, which the World Bank analysts have not considered and which are very crucial to the future development of Bangladesh can be identified. Even the recent political events, although unfortunate in many ways, followed by a good harvest make Bangladesh look less poor, Bangalees feel more liberated and aid agencies more optimistic than a year ago. Yet I find it difficult to conclude that all these factors would signal any significantly increased attention to the rural problems in Bangladesh. The immediate problems of Bangladesh now are similar to the ones that confronted the country immediately after the liberation. But instead of physical and human restoration, it is now more of a psychological, political and economic restoration. In this restoration process, establishment of legitimacy and political framework are likely to take precedence on economic growth and social justice. Economic development will continue to dominate the political rhetoric, but the major emphasis of the present rulers will go to restore and strength pre-liberation socio-economic balance and the institutions that provide such a balance. We are likely to see the strengthening of private enterprises, increased role of technocrats and bureaucracy, and greater attention to urban areas.

There are, however, some conditions that are likely to create more awareness about the seriousness of rural impoverishment. These conditions include the increased involvement of rural people in the liberation movement which have made some rural groups more familiar with organizing movements and using arms. Another equally important factor, as shown in the dynamics of the November 7 Sepoy Mutiny, is the representation of substantial rural interest in the Bangladesh Army and their willingness to fight for a better deal for rural people. One hopes that these factors along with friendly cooperation from nature and technology will lead to some betterment of rural Bangladesh. The staying power of Bangalee bourgeois has so far been quite remarkable. Even in the recent power struggle during the first week of November 1975, the nationalists survived the heavy thrusts of radical socialists. Being a bleeding heart liberal, I would hope that the nationalists bourgeoisie will solidify its ranks and enhance its staying power through increased sharing of social economic benefits with rural people.

In closing, I would like to thank you for your time and patience in listening to my talk.