



Thoughts of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on agricultural and industrial development in Bangladesh: An analysis

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Abstract

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is one of the most undeniable and charismatic leaders in the world. He won the trust, support and hope of the general public as a result of his inherent and exceptional traits (East Bengalis). The purpose of this study is to examine the important roles he has played in boosting Bangladesh's economy. Secondary data was acquired from a range of sources, including journals, websites, articles and books, as well as descriptive and preferred qualitative approaches, and national and international media. Government documents, research papers and publications from international organisations, research institutes and individual academics were examined. Bangladesh has become a global role model for sustainable development in addition to achieving food security, thanks to its energetic efforts and future recommendations (1972–1975). Bangladesh is progressing quickly because of its ideologies and ideals. Bangladesh is on track to becoming a developed country by 2041, thanks to its ideologies and ideals.

Keywords: Agriculture, Bangabandhu, Bangladesh, development, economic;

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1. Introduction

Bangabandhu is the architect of Bangladesh's independence. Bangabandhu was released from Pakistani imprisonment on 10 January 1972, following Bangladesh's independence (The Daily Sun, 2017). He was greeted by a massive gathering at Dhaka airport, which included many political personalities and associates. From the national airport to the race course maidan, he was escorted (now Suhrawardy Udyan), where he delivered his famous address to the nation on 7 March 1971. Bangabandhu seemed intelligent and composed in his statement on 10 January as he spoke under the weight of the moment and the enormous load of leading a free nation. Bangabandhu was open and honest about the challenges we would encounter in the future. He emphasised the importance of individual and communal responsibility as well as the necessity of establishing national unity to confront the challenges that lay ahead. He outlined a 5-year strategy for harnessing the country's intellectual, cultural and economic assets.

On 26 March 1975, Bangabandhu gave a speech at the Suhrawardy Udyan in which he disclosed the design for the Second Revolution. In both speeches, on 25 January and 26 March, he laid a list of actions that the Second Revolution will seek to accomplish. These included a) reducing poverty; b) defending the values of democracy, nationalism, socialism and secularism; c) eradicating corruption, hoarding and black markets; d) anti-liberation and extremist groups, as well as their schemes against the country, are being combated; e) restructuring the country's administrative structure to shift the focus from governance to service delivery; f) doubling agricultural production to feed everyone; g) implementing effective family planning and population control measures; h) growing industrial production; i) building multifunctional cooperative societies in all villages in Bangladesh; j) providing better education through a 'new education system' that involves instructors and educators in providing the best possible education in their respective institutions; and k) restructuring the judiciary (Ahmed, 2004; Bala et al., 2018; Mondal, 2014).

In addition, Bangabandhu stressed the need for national unity, administrative decentralisation, boosting revenue and national income, and streamlining and implementing the national development plans. Bangabandhu was assassinated just a few months after the revolution began, and all of his policies and initiatives were destroyed, including the revolution's plan. The eventual effect was a descent into turmoil and a return to the instability that had characterised Pakistan's reign. As corruption became more common, politics became a forum for horse-trading and selfish power-mongering. As stated, the outset of this post, Bangabandhu inherited a war-torn country with damaged infrastructure, a shattered economy, millions of starving people and obstacles coming from challenging geopolitics in which the United States directly fought our battle for independence. He did not, however, give up hope. 'We will turn this war-torn country into a golden one', he said on the first anniversary of independence. In Bengal, people will be exploitation-free and happy. Begin the process of development in the fields, farms and factories. 'Through hard labour, we can undoubtedly reconstruct the country. Let us join forces to bring the Golden Bengal back to life'.

1.1. Purpose of the study

The major goal of this research is to learn about Bangabandhu's various perspectives on economic development. Aside from that, there are several other goals to achieve.

- To have a look at what was Bangabandhu's thoughts about agricultural growth and planning in Bangladesh.

- To talk about ideas for industrial development and planning in Bangladesh.

2. Materials and methods

The information in this article comes from a secondary source. Secondary data was acquired from a range of sources, including journals, websites, articles and books, as well as descriptive and preferred qualitative approaches, as well as national and international media. Government documents, research papers and publications from international organisations, research institutes and individual academics were examined.

3. Results

3.1. Bangabandhu's thoughts on agriculture development in Bangladesh

Bangabandhu tried to reform the country's resources and broken sectors after the 1971 liberation struggle. He underlined the importance of establishing an integrated agricultural operation that will lead to agricultural development. 'We can't guarantee our expected agricultural production', the leader remarked. To increase our food output, we have to emphasise an agricultural system with multiple components. To increase our food output, we must emphasise an integrated farming system. We must take steps to teach farmers about the most up-to-date farming methods, and the relevant authorities have to share their experiences with the cultivators. Then, we will be able to fulfil our 'goals' (Haque & Shamin, 2016; Trisha et al., 2017). He believes that if the county's farmers thrive, the country would prosper as well.

Bangabandhu adopted revolutionary methods to alleviate hunger and poverty among farmers. He devised strategies to provide better seeds, fertilisers, herbicides and irrigation to farmers so that they could grow more crops. Bangabandhu founded Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation, Bangladesh Sugarcane Research Institute and Fisheries Development Corporation to ensure management activities. Bangabandhu launched Bangladesh Krishi Bank to offer loans to farmers under reasonable conditions. He also took steps to allocate 'khas' lands to the country's landless farmers. He also paid taxes on a minimum of 25 bighas of land (Rahman & Ghose, 2019; Sarker, 2020).

He preserved farmers' crops on 18 lakh acres of land by building a dam around the coastal areas. In reality, after establishing the green revolution in Bangladesh, Bangabandhu received a massive response. He organised the rehabilitation of 22 lakh farmers in 1973. Several low-lift pumps and deed tube wells were built during his tenure. Farmers were given hybrid paddy (IR-8) and wheat seeds from the Philippines, which were subsequently shipped to them (Masud, 2020).

About 25–30 lakh tonnes of food were in short supply. Following the independence war, Bangabandhu placed strong emphasis on agriculture. His ambition was to achieve food self-sufficiency; therefore, he devised a long-term plan to develop the farm industry (Shahnawaz, 2015). Food is the basic requirement of life in the hierarchy of all requirements, and it is a persistent difficult issue for a healthy life of people. After independence, Bangladesh has made enormous strides in strengthening domestic food grain production. This allowed a significant amount of progress to be made in overcoming the limits imposed by a lack of domestic food supplies.

Bangabandhu desired Bangladesh to be awash in food grains, which he accomplished with the great sacrifice of 3 million lives. As a result, he coined the term 'green revolution' to describe the period

following the liberation war. Bangabandhu's ambition was to create a Bangladesh that was free of hunger and poverty. He aspired to see Bangladesh improve its agriculture and farmers as 'Sonar Bangla' (Ali, 2020; Rahman et al., 2014). Bangladesh became a role model in agriculture as a result of Bangabandhu's policies. Bangladesh has emerged as a global 'role model' for drastically increasing agricultural output in recent decades, making the country self-sufficient in stable food security and increasing rice production by nearly fourfold since 1972. Although arable land has dropped by almost 30%, food grain production of our country, including paddy, has climbed to almost 5 crores MT in the 47 years since independence, up from 1.10 crore MT in 1972 (BBS, 2018). 'Furthermore, the country has been ranked first in jute export and second in jute production, first in increasing fruit yield per hectare, first in crop variety development, third in vegetable production yield, fourth in rice and tea production, seventh in mango production, eighth in guava and potato production, and fourth in freshwater fish production' (Sarker, 2020). Bangabandhu said 'To build a Golden Bengal, we need Golden People. Bangladesh is plagued by exploitation, oppression and looting. To solve these problems and to build a happy and prosperous Bangladesh, the people need to work hard to increase production'. He recognised the country's catastrophic state following the liberation battle, but he also recognised the people's ability to overcome any obstacles and turned the tide. He was correct in believing that the only road to true prosperity was to unite the general people and lead them in the desired direction to reach the goal of inclusive development.

He was well on his way to leading the country in this direction. He was able to materialise a large portion of Bangladesh's economic potential a few years after independence. He came into office with an economy worth only \$8 billion. We did not have a single dollar in our foreign exchange reserve. Despite numerous insurmountable hurdles, such as war-ravaged physical and socio-economic infrastructures and a lack of regulatory institutions, the economy began to move forward, thanks to his determined leadership. Following national and worldwide natural disasters, there was a severe shortage of food grains. However, with limited domestic resources and international humanitarian assistance, Bangabandhu led the economy from the front in rebuilding this damaged economy. The people of the country began to believe in their strength. However, on 15 August 1975, Bangabandhu and his family members were assassinated, and our overall progress towards development came to a halt. The country began to move oppositely, ignoring the widespread desire for equality that arose from our liberation struggle. Following in his footsteps, his daughter Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has established that Bangladesh is a model of sustainable growth for the rest of the world.

3.2. Attempts by Bangabandhu to develop agriculture

Bangabandhu lay the foundation for Bangladesh's agricultural development. His positive ideas, policies and plans paved the way for Bangladesh's agricultural development to be more inclusive. Bangabandhu has taken some key steps for the sustainable development of farmers and increased food security after the country's independence. Bangabandhu made a huge contribution to the development of agro-based industries. The nation's father, Bangabandhu, implemented successful policy measures to modernise the country's agriculture industry, which was mired in outdated practices. Simultaneously, he took rigorous measures to ensure that farmers get fair prices to lead comfortable lives (Hasan, 2000). He also elevated the position of government employees who worked in agriculture. Agriculture would continue to be the principal source of income for the vast majority of Bangabandhu's people, not only as a source of food but also as a source of money (Reza & Yasmin, 2019).

As a result, he placed agriculture and industrialisation as the main forces in the correct order. He took several conservative measures to ensure agricultural success. Rebuilding the war-torn agricultural infrastructure; delivering free or reduced cost emergency agricultural equipment supplies; providing adequate seed supplies; 10 lakh certificate cases filed during the Pakistan period are being cancelled for loan default against farmers; agricultural credit for marginal farmers is being exempted; certificate cases against them are being withdrawn; 'khas' land is being distributed to landless people; minimum reasonable prices for agro-products are being fixed; cooperative farming is being encouraged, agricultural input subsidies are being increased; irrigation is being made easier; agricultural education is being emphasised; agricultural research reform and reconstruction; land reform; rationing facilities for poor and marginal farmers; and so on. Among the programmes implemented by Bangabandhu was the revitalisation of the agriculture research, education and extension system, as well as the introduction of the high-yielding technique of production in agriculture. He established the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute, the Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation and the Bangladesh Tea Research Institute. The Bangladesh Agriculture Research Institute and the Bangladesh Rice Research Institute were both improved and modernised during his time in office. The cultivation process was improved and accelerated by Bangabandhu. Bangabandhu's emphasis on agricultural research to extend the cultivation of high-yielding rice varieties in the country ensured that Bangladesh would be food self-sufficient (Roy, 2020).

3.3. Integrated agricultural policy: making Bangabandhu's Sonar Bangla

Bangabandhu's ambition was to resurrect Bangla as Sonar Bangla. In his various lectures and writings, he used the phrase 'Sonar Bangla' (Reza, 2020). He was always dreaming about re-establishing the Sonar Bangla, which existed a few decades before Bangladesh's independence. The past splendour of this region had led him to think in this way. He was well aware that the Bengal had once been a prosperous and happy land. The phrase 'Gola vora dhan, pukur vora mach' conveyed the story of happiness and the golden era of Bengal in the past. During the period, the country was known for its agricultural production. Muslin, silk, cotton, spices and other textiles were exported from the country. Many foreign traders were drawn to this country. Bengal was a major commerce centre during the time. Bengal's living standards were compared to those of Great Britain in the 18th century. Bangabandhu was aware of all of these glories of the past and wished to resurrect them. He believed that by achieving sustainable agriculture production, this country will reclaim its former greatness. His objective was to treble agricultural production to feed the massive population. He grasped the realities and means to do this. 'To construct a Golden Bengal, we need Golden People', he declared in one of his speeches. Expropriation, tyranny and looting are all problems in Bangladesh. People must work hard to enhance productivity to tackle these difficulties and develop a happy and prosperous Bangladesh. Bangabandhu said, 'We will turn this war-torn country into a golden country. Mothers will smile and children will play in the Bengal of the future. It will be an exploitation-free society. Begin the process of development in the fields, farms, and factories. Through hard labour, we can undoubtedly reconstruct the country'.

We have sufficient underutilised natural resources as Bangabandhu recognised. 'We have such fertile terrain where plants can be cultivated solely by spreading seeds, and those plants provide us fruits', he said often in his talks. 'So, why should our people go hungry?' He also emphasised in one of his speeches that while rice and bread can fill the stomach, if we want to establish an enlightened nation, we must assure that everyone gets balanced food and nourishment (Roy, 2020). No country can develop unless it has a talented nation (Rahman, 2017). As a result, he placed equal focus on the production of fish, meat, eggs, milk, vegetables and fruits, in addition to rice, wheat and maize. He came up with a brilliant idea

for integrated farming based on the joint farming method. His tenacious force had steered the farming community on the right path to increasing agricultural output (Roy, 2020).

3.4. Rural development and collective farming

Bangabandhu recognised that Bangladeshi farmers and their land had a strong tie, similar to that of a mother and a child. Farmers rely completely on land for their food and survival. This relationship, he reasoned, should be preserved at all costs. As a result, he attempted to implement a community farming system in which farmers cultivate their crops together without crossing land borders or ails. His goal was to create a unique village development movement that would benefit the entire rural community. He discussed the organisation of that in detail, including the development of rural cooperatives, funding, production, distribution systems and so on. Musa (2012) centred his plan on four key issues: increased agricultural production, distribution, employment and village development that is inclusive.

Landowners and farmers will create a committee consisting of 12 owners, 6 landless and agricultural labourers and 3 selected members. Each cooperative has an advisory board. The first 5-year plan ran from 1973 to 1978 (Alam, 2016; Chowdhury, 2014). If we look at the village development initiatives, we can understand what an imaginary power Bangabandhu had in properly balancing agricultural production and distribution. He claimed that the management committee will develop a production plan, pick crops based on the plan, develop a crop calendar and cultivate those crops without endangering land ownership or inheritance. He recommended that 33% of the produce be allocated to landowners and 68% to the cooperative, with the committee entitled to spend up to 70% on production and input costs, 7% on cooperative management and establishment costs, 12% on capital development, 1% on tax and tariffs and 4% on village welfare. Members will get 30% of their earnings, with the remaining 25% going to the management committee members and 50% going to rural development. At the time, he set aside roughly 1 crore taka for this. He intended to start with 75 villages as a test bed to form 60,000 rural cooperatives across the country. It was predicted that if those cooperatives would function successfully, roughly 1 lakh tonnes of rice would be produced annually, which is worth around 3,600 crore takas at the time. Furthermore, as a result of these programmes, about 10 lakh farmers and adolescents would be hired, and 25 lakh farmers would be trained. Without a doubt, if such a plan were adopted, a dramatic transformation in rural development would occur (Roy, 2020).

3.5. Bangabandhu's thoughts on development: focus on industrialisation

3.5.1. Proposal of 'two economies' in the fight for equality

Since its foundation, Pakistan's government has never treated Bangladesh (previously East Bengal/Pakistan) equitably. The circumstance was well known to Bangabandhu. He recognised that inequality has economic, social and political dimensions. He was vocal in his opposition to the 'Federal Control of Industries Act', which effectively gave the federal government sole control of the industrial sector, bypassing regional governments. Between 1953 and 1956, the Federal Government gave 150 large industrial units in West Pakistan 350 million (35 crores) takas, but only 20 million to 49 major industrial units in East Pakistan. Even though East Pakistan's agricultural growth potential was greater, the Federal Government spent more money on West Pakistan's agricultural development [1.98 billion (198 crores) takas] at the time. Even though the farmers of Pakistan's Eastern Province produced high-quality jute, more than 90% of the foreign income generated by jute and jute-related exports went to West Pakistan to pay for imports. Even large industrial undertakings in East Pakistan were given to West

Pakistani entrepreneurs (such as the Karnaphuli Paper Mill and the Platinum Jubilee Jute Mill). At the time, Pakistan was an oligarchy (just 22 families controlled the entire corporation) and development in Pakistan's Eastern Province was the furthest thing on their minds. Bangabandhu was adamant about changing the lives of the people of East Pakistan for the better (which is now Bangladesh). As a result, when he was in charge of the Ministry of Industry, he focused on the industrialisation of East Pakistan (The Ministry of Environment and Forests, 2012). He negotiated a fair share of the economic gains for East Pakistan's entrepreneurs and people with the central government. Some of Bangabandhu's recommendations were as follows:

- The provincial government will issue import permissions.
- The provincial government will have jurisdiction over industries including jute, cotton and garments in East Pakistan.
- (Bangladesh) East Pakistan will have its own office for the Director-General of the Supply and Development Department.
- (Bangladesh) East Pakistan will receive 50% of the foreign exchange (only 10% was previously allocated to East Pakistan).

East Pakistan (Bangladesh) was to have complete control of its industry and trade beginning in January 1957, according to Bangabandhu's proposals. He even requested the formation of an Economic Commission to investigate the causes of imbalance. His plan was well received by the central government and East Pakistani economists who shared his opinions and created an Economic Commission. The Pakistani government did not follow through on its promises. Bangabandhu eventually had to launch a long-term political struggle to remedy these disparities. He was in and out of jail. Despite this, he remained unwavering and uncompromising. The Ayub Khan dictatorship eventually fell due to this revolution spearheaded by Bangabandhu. Bangabandhu was not an economist; he was a politician. Nonetheless, he was the first to propose that East and West Pakistan have independent economies. He asserted, 'The fact that East and West Pakistan are 1,500 km apart is a geographical fact. As a result, developing separate economies for these two is not an option'. One of the main causes for the start of the liberation war held in 1971 and the independence of Bangladesh was Bangabandhu's desire for economic autonomy, which was denied by Pakistani administrations (mostly dominated by West Pakistanis).

3.5.2. Industrialisation and development for all in the new country

As stated above, Bangabandhu appropriately emphasised agriculture and industry as important factors to rely on. Agriculture would not only supply food for the people, but it would also continue to be their primary source of income for many years to come, which he realised. A thriving agricultural industry can assure a steady supply of inputs for a growing industrial sector. Bangabandhu took a variety of smart initiatives to enhance agricultural development shortly after the country's independence. Rebuilding the war-torn agricultural infrastructure, obtaining emergency agricultural equipment at no cost or a discounted cost, ensuring adequate seed supplies and dismissing one million certificate cases for loan default against farmers were filed, as well as minimum fair pricing for agro-products and rationing facilities for poor and marginal farmers are only a few of the measures. The government implemented these steps during Bangabandhu's early years in office. He attempted to adopt these measures because he considered that agricultural development was the most essential factor in Bangladesh's overall growth. Bangabandhu was also well aware of the synergies that occur between agriculture and industry.

Fertilisers, for example, are crucial agricultural inputs, thus he made the creation and operationalisation of fertiliser factories around the country a top priority. Bangabandhu's sole option was to industrialise the country. On the one hand, industrial expansion was essential to meet local and export demands and industrialisation could provide jobs for an expanding people. Industrialisation was likely the most difficult task that Bangabandhu faced soon after independence, with no foreign funding, no foreign investment, few backward and forward ties and, most crucially, few people with business experience. Bangabandhu, who was known for being pro-business, was always eager to help enterprises expand. He fought for measures to cut the cost of doing business even as the Provincial Minister for Industry (by saving time and overcoming red tape). During that occasion, he pushed domestic and foreign businesses to invest in East Pakistan and guaranteed the provincial government's complete support. The situation was very different in the post-liberation era. Due to the aforementioned factors, the private sector has little to no room to expand.

Bangabandhu made the wise decision to pursue state-led industrial development in the newly free country. He nationalised significant banks and insurance organisations, as well as the jute mills, sugar mills and textile companies, when all of the Pakistani owners and management left, frequently taking all of the money and inputs with them. When it became clear that Bangladesh would emerge, even the cars were moved to Pakistan. Furthermore, given Bangabandhu's commitment to social fairness, it was prudent for these firms to be handed to public ownership. And the initial results were encouraging. The jute mills produced at 56% of their capacity in the first year after independence. Textile mills, paper mills and fertiliser factories all had the same ratio of 60%, 69% and 62%, respectively. These factories were all performing better than they had in Pakistan.

Bangabandhu's long-term goal was to establish an enabling climate for the private body, even though he first chose to build the industrial sector through nationalisation (due to obvious circumstances). The government's initial 5-year plan and budget recommendations for the country that has recently gained independence reflect this. The highest private investment ceiling was raised from 250 thousand (25 lakh) takas to 30 million (3.0 crore) takas in the 1974–1975 budget, allowing the private sector to create new firms. Aside from this, during this administration, 133 abandoned industrial facilities were transferred to the private sector.

4. Conclusion

Without a doubt, via sound agricultural and industrial policies, Bangabandhu was driving the country towards inclusive growth. However, he was kidnapped by wicked forces, causing us to become disoriented. But we are coming back to the cautious development and growth path under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. To keep this journey continuing, we must do everything we can. We will have a flourishing country, the true 'Sonar Bangla'. To do so, we must stay focused on completing all the mega projects that the current administration has started, such as the Padma multipurpose bridge, special industrial zones, deep-sea port, metro rails etc. We should continue to encourage agricultural mechanisation in all forms, notably in the promotion of mechanised combination harvesting and cow-friendly mulching.

Finally, to meet Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on time, we must continue to focus on growing renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind. We have to urge the business sector and non-state non-profits to collaborate with the government to achieve the SDGs. We will also need to be accepting of foreign direct investments by seizing chances presented by foreign businesses fleeing China

due to growing costs and the threat of a trade war with the US. In a forward-moving Bangladesh, we shall undoubtedly be able to commemorate Bangabandhu's birth anniversary on its platinum jubilee. We will surely be able to realise Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's goal of transforming Bangladesh into an upper-middle country by 2031 and a developed economy by 2041.

Agricultural growth, a focus of Bangabandhu's attention, has, of course, played a key part in decreasing poverty under his daughter's regime. Bangladesh has risen at a quicker rate than its South Asian peers over the years and is on the verge of earning its well-deserved formal graduation, from LDC to a developed country. Its success as a rapidly expanding exporter of clothing and textiles, as well as other new products, such as ceramics and medicines, adds to the allure of its development path.

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