

LOCAL LEVEL POLITICS IN BANGLADESH: ORGANIZATION AND PROCESS

Md. Abdul Wohab

*Department of Economics and Social Science
BRAC University, 66 Mohakhali C/A
Dhaka –1212, Bangladesh
email: wohab@bracuniversity.ac.bd*

and

Sanzida Akhter

*Department of Business Administration
East West University
Dhaka –1212, Bangladesh
email: nira209@yahoo.com*

ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on local level politics and the organization of political parties to examine how the political leaders mobilize their supporters at the local level. The involvement of local people is also analyzed here. Moreover, some aspects of political awareness from within and outside the party are covered in the paper. Here, how local level politics are important in our political arena and what sort of cohesion exists between local level politics and national level politics also focused. To what extent and under what conditions do the political leader in local area, the relation between local and national politics and their contribution to development activities are also focused.

Key words: Politics, local level, Bangladesh, organization, process.

I. INTRODUCTION

The contemporary politics in Bangladesh is characterized by conflicts and corruption both in national and local level i.e., simultaneous tendencies towards political interest and power exercise, process and activities. Within political arena, these tendencies towards political interest and power exercise have led to various attempts at different levels in our country. This attempt makes both inter-party and intra party conflicts, patron-client relations, and political development initiatives among political parties. ‘The general assumption is that weakened political processes exist in local level and the relation between political organizations and social organizations are not good (Ahmed, 1989)[1]’. The political party does not make favor to social organizations. In this sector, most existing studies focus on either the national level politics or on the establishment of democracy in party politics. There is a lack of comparative

research, which comprehensively studies what kinds of politics exist at local level i.e., thana level.

Local level politics is very important in our country. It has a great influence on national politics. Our experience from the last two regimes that when a party comes into power, it totally ignores peoples demand in local areas. Apart from this, the entire major political parties both national and local have introduced corruption and violence among young groups. The promising local politicians who were once our main strength in the struggle against oppression has now become more popular to national level. They are not driven by the ideas, which they proclaim as their political motivation from local level. Because of their evil power there is an ever increasing distrust among the common people and local level politicians.

Although national level politics might not always play a large scale role in local politics, local politics

are highly relevant to national politics because local politics often have significant role on the formation of national politics. 'As political scientists say local level policies ultimately impact national policies, which they reflect on local politics (Ahmed, 1989) [2]'.

It is noted that the local politics as a platform for national politics, also for the careers of individual politicians. But the important matter is the political clashes between local and central level.

Considering all of such matters the present paper is the outcome of a study taken up in local level politics in Kushtia district. In any democratic society local level politics is important. The performance of political parties at local level is crucial in preserving democracy. Since the restoration of democracy in 1991, political activities have spread from the capital to local level. As a consequence, the district level has an important link in national politics. Political parties at district level are actually significant as agents of democratic culture. But in Bangladesh there has been little research in local level politics and possibly no study on political parties at district level. Obviously it is a vital area of research, which demands attention from sociology and other discipline as well.

The study makes an in depth analysis of the existing causes of organizational relations among the local level political leaders and national level political leaders of different political organizations. However, political disputes among the political parties are existed in our country. But instead of setting any problems, even religious problems, conflict has created many new difficult and intractable economic and political problems. The objective of this research is to begin to fill up this gap.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND BASIC ISSUES

In local area two things, i.e., local power structure and party politics are very important in terms of power exercise. Both are closely linked and also have a reciprocal relationship. Local power structure means a process whereby the leaders, who have land, money, and well off conditions, make a platform for their privilege in rural area. They, however, exploit the rural poor and working class as well. On the other hand, they represent themselves as leader of social organizations. They

also dominate samaj, para/mahallah, community and other social organizations. But, politicians mostly lead the party politics.

Sartori, G (1984) [3] mentioned parties are the central intermediary structure of local and national level politics. But in Kushtia, political party is not working as an intermediary structure between local and national politics. So, limitation may be remained among the political parties in Kushtia district.

In Bangladesh local politics were influential rather than national. Traditionally the local leaders follow the central leaders.

Almond and G.B Powell (1966) [4] expressed their views on political process and faction of interaction. They found that all societies try to gain power through political activities. However, political activities may help them to be great leaders. In Kushtia, this practice is not exercised.

Neumann .S (1953) [5] made an attempt to point out the political parties' strength through organizational activities but this is not proved in Kushtia district because though some parties have the organizational activities even they cannot keep up their political strength.

Khan, Islam and Haque (1996) [6] mentioned the major political parties' activities of Bangladesh. Due to lack of fair politics, people involve in corruption and illegal activities and thus serve their evil interest. They also discussed about establishment of democracy, parties break up, organizational weakness, mode of conflict resolution in parties etc. This work is mainly in national level. So, in the context of local level politics, this work has not met up the crisis among the political parties.

Here we have tried to focus how political parties are working at local level and political leaders get benefited with the help of central leaders.

A. Objectives of the Study

The objective of this paper is to find out organizational characteristics of political parties, their role in local level politics and how they link up with national level politics. A research on national level politics has been worked out by Khan, Islam and Haque (1996). But it does not provide much more information on local level

politics and their organizational process and so on. In the absence of empirical research on local level politics, it has become difficult to test specific hypotheses. However, on the basis of Khan, Islam and Haque (1996) we can also sort out the following propositions to be tested in Kushtia.

- Local politics is leader – centered.
- There is high patron – client relationship within political parties.
- There is no inner democracy within these parties.
- There is high degree of factionalism within each party.
- It leads to a high level of conflict within a party and among various parties.
- Parties are not totally capable of contributing to the process of democratic consolidation in the country.

B. Methodology

Our study basically focuses on organizational strength, internal and external conflicts. When politicians want to take part in election, they involve in conflicts. But apparently they try to prove that they are people loving and peace loving. They also make a conflict with other political parties for their personal and party interest. By quantitative methods only it is difficult to cover all required information. Here we have used in-depth interviews and content analysis.

C. Data Source

The data were collected through in depth interviews from party leaders, workers, journalists, teachers, businessman, NGO,s workers, civil servants, lawyers, union leaders and women activists who have either been personally and actively involved in the political developments of Kushtia. The secondary sources include books, newspapers, and party documents.

D. Selection of Political Parties

We have selected five political parties on the basis of 1996 parliamentary election. (Endnote, Table: 1)

1. Awami League (AL)
2. Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).
3. Jatiya Party (JP).
4. Jamat-e-Islami.
5. Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD)

The district of Kushtia is our study area and this district consists of six thanas. We decided to choose two key informers from the thana committee. These are as follows:

(a) President/Central Member/ Vice-President (Thana Committee)	01
(b) General Secretary/ Joint-Secretary (Thana Committee)	01
Total	02

Thus, the total number of key informers (parties) for six thanas stood at fifty four (There is no existence of thana committee of Jatiya Party is Khoksa. We have excluded both president and secretary of this thana. The area of Bheramara thana is small. So, from there we have selected only the president from thana committee of five political parties. The BNP's organizing secretary of Kushtia Sadar is a prominent figure there. We have selected him as a key informer for study).

We then selected 36 key informers randomly among six thanas. So, the total member of key informers (parties and non-parties) for the district stood at =54+36 = 90. (Endnote, Table: 2)

E. Process of Local Politics in Kushtia

The area now constitutes Kushtia Zila comprise only the Sadar sub-division of former Kushtia district. The river Padma (lower Ganges) separating it from the district of Pabna and Rajshahi, on North-East by the Rajbari Zila and on the east and South-East by the Jhenaidah Zila, and on the West by Chuadanga, Meherpur Zilas and India. The total area of this Zila is 1621.15sq.km of which 63.09sq.km are riverine (Siddiki, 1976) [7]. On August 14, 1947 the whole province of Bengal were divided into two parts as Muslim majority and non-Muslim majority districts according to the plan of June 1947, so as roughly to determine the line of demarcation between former Pakistan and Indian Dominion. The division name was 'National Division' (Siddique, 1976) [8]. The basis of this 'National Division' was that any district having a Muslim majority was to be included in former Pakistan and similarly districts with a Hindu majority were to be included in West Bengal (India). The district of Nadia had a Muslim majority. By no stretch of imagination, it could even be suspected that the district of Nadia with 61.25 percent. Muslim population could be allotted to Bharat. The political history of Kushtia is the

contributions of different political personnel. They show their contributions when election comes. It exists not only in Kushtia district but also whole country (Ali, 1978)[9].

Titu Mir, who was one of the great freedom fighters of Bengal, was born in Kushtia. He revolted against the British rule. Next, he organized the people under his leadership and defeated the British army in several guerrilla encounters. His army used to raid Kushtia of the indigo-planters and intercept the trade routes of the East India Company.

Abdul Quddus Rumi started in 1904 a movement at Kumarkhali station under Kushtia district, called Anjuman-e-Ittefaq-e-Islamia for voicing the grievances of the Muslims to the authority. Agitation in Kushtia for voicing the grievances of the Muslims, Rumi organized conferences in present Kushtia district. As a result of this Ittefaq movement, political consciousness among the Muslims of the district was created.

After 1940, the Pakistan movement took a firm footing in Kushtia district. Dr. Abdul Muttaleb Malek, Shamsuzzaman B.L, Nowazish Ahmed, Abdul Hannan B.L and Shah Azizur Rahman actively made it a mass movement. In 1946, another conference of all Bengal Muslim Students League was held at Kushtia. Shah Azizur Rahman, a student leader from Kushtia was the chairman of the reception committee.

The political conditions of Kushtia were not good, as the local people want. After 1947, the people of Kushtia struggled to achieve their rights and privileges inspired by some leaders. At that time Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was very popular. Gradually he became the symbol of hopes and aspiration of the oppressed people of Kushtia. This popularity helped them to win all constituencies of Kushtia in the general election of December-January 1970-71. They bagged 90 percent votes. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman got the mandate of the people to frame a constitution for the betterment and welfare of the oppressed people of Kushtia district. Dr. Ahsanul haque, Golam Kibria, Barister Amirul Islam, Advocate Azizur Rahman, Abdur Rouf Chowdhury, Barister Abu Mohammad Afzalur Rashid, Mohammad Chhohiuddin etc were the great leaders of AL. They were called social workers as well as politicians. In 1973, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman gave the charge of food department to Barister Amirul Islam. After taking

charge, he did many development activities in Kushtia. He sanctioned lots of money for construction of educational institutions. Kushtia College, United school etc improved with special care of Barister Amirul Islam. Golam Kibria, Advocate Azizur Rahman, Abdur Rouf Chowdhury also got into involve in development of health care, agriculture and communication sectors. When the Awami leader was dead in 1975, the political atmosphere was totally changed in Kushtia. Golam Kibria, Barister Amirul Islam and Abdur Rouf also tried to continue the political activities of Awami League. They constructed new roads and hospitals in local areas. So, local peoples were pleased with them. They also maintained good relationship with central leaders. So, AL became more popular among the peoples of Kushtia.

On the other hand, leftist party, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) had a great influence on politics in Kushtia specially, Khoksha, Kumarkhali, Bheramara and Mirpur thana.(Daily Star, 1999-2000) [10]. They were verbally close with AL but not actually. The political ideology between Sheikh Mujib and leftist were not similar. Sheikh Mujib was positively anti-communist and the idea of any social revolution was far beyond his vision. After 1971, the leftist could have acted as a viable opposition to the Awami League; but did not.(Jahan, 1987)[11]

In 1974, Kushtia was attacked by a tragic famine and it was extended all over the country. Thousands of people died then. The leftist party propagated it as a failure of government. They told that government lost popularity. They also mentioned if we gave the vote to AL, India would capture Kushtia. So gradually AL lost their popularity. The question was that why JSD could not success in politics in Kushtia? In our discussion, everybody told JSD had a good relation with outlaw's party in Kushtia. So, they became unhappy with the political activities of JSD. After passing Awami period, BNP hold the power. Shah Azizur Rahman who was the popular leader of BNP and also hold the cabinet of BNP Government, constructed different educational institutions in Kushtia. He announced Medical College, TV center would be set up in Kushtia and also acquired lands for this purpose. After changing government this development activities was stopped. In the meantime as one of the powerful and effective political forces of BNP, Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal launched throughout over the country. This is the student wing of BNP. The

role of Chhatra Dal was very important in every political movement in Kushtia. The leaders of BNP maintained good relation with them. This student's wing was so powerful that they could easily motivate local peoples. BNP became more popular through students wing. The president of BNP visited Kushtia on foot and shared views with different classes of peoples. For this reason, common peoples were devoted on BNP activities. But the present leaders have failed to continue this situation. After BNP period, the political situation has been changed. At that time, BNP was far away from outlaws party. In 1981, Ziaur Rahman was killed and Military administration took the power of our country.

However, Jatya Party (JP) tried to mobilize people towards their own party. Ahsan Habib Linkon was the leader of JP. He motivated people by using his advantageous position in the society. But he failed to do so properly. So, when the president of JP visited to Kushtia he got into trouble. It showed that the supporters of JP were not as strong as BNP and AL in Kushtia. JP had a good relation with outlawed party in Kushtia. The influence of Jamaat-e-Islami is not much in Kushtia. Mr. Anisur Rahman was the Ameer and he looks after the sub unit leaders, Thana, union and ward level. In village level, they have a lot of supporters.

The process of the parties' activities of Jamaat is well furnished. Though the supporters are not much, the rules and the regulation of this party are very strong. It is difficult to be a member of the committee. Sometimes they take part into conflict in educational institution. That is why; they boycotted student's cabinet election last two years at Kushtia Govt. College.

After that, BNP again took the power in 1991 election and BNP won all constituencies from Kushtia district except Khoksha - Kumarkhali. During that time there were no pragmatic changes happened politically, economically nor even socially in Kushtia district. They just followed the previous leaders' way. At that time they had a strong relation with outlaws' party in Kushtia. In 1996 parliament election, AL took the power in our country. But BNP won all constituencies from Kushtia. However AL tried to move out the outlaw's leader from Kushtia and became successful. Siraj and Laltu, two top outlaws leaders have been surrender in 1999. Last 2001 BNP again took the power and they even cannot make ensure

the social security to the people. Now a day abduction is not a matter of fact in Kushtia. Daily newspaper is focusing the hidden causes of abduction. The daily star mentioned 20 peoples were abducted in six thanas in January this year (2004), according to police records, newspaper reports and victims' families report. Many incidents remained unreported for fear of reprisal (Daily Star, 2004) [12].

It seems that the political atmosphere is gradually changing in Kushtia. But the faction of inter party is spreading now a day. That means all the supporters are not completely devoted on their own political leaders and parties. Political parties rely on *mastan* (those who involved with illegal activities) to carry out their activities.

III. LINKAGE BETWEEN LOCAL LEVEL POLITICS AND NATIONAL LEVEL POLITICS

There are weakened relationships between local and national level politics in Kushtia. The role of political parties in Kushtia is mainly arbitrary exercise of power by the national leaders. It itself creates in the weak democratic structure within the major political parties of Bangladesh. Lack of inner party democracy acts as a poor foundation for democratic culture within the parties. We need to know much more about how the major political parties function, the routs to leadership, the way in which the cabinet system worked and the checks and balances constraining the power of the leaders.

In Kushtia, we have also seen a weakened relationship among parties. They always make a grouping headed by the influence persons in this territory. Local leader do not care central leader because central leaders do not visit to local area time to time. This process derives from the lack of vision and commitment within these parties and the opportunistic ways in which they design their agendas to appear as all things to all people. (Islam, 1989) [13]

In Kushtia, money and *mastan* influence the access to power. It is rare for poor people to generate the courage of resources to contest for office unless backed by some local civil society organization or NGOs. But they could not succeed in all times. *Mastan*, most of the time, get privilege of access to administration, to media and also use voters to

serve their interest. This tendency not only corrupts the political process but also places a premium on force as well as contempt for the rule of law.

The most serious threat on the democratic process in Kushtia lies in the degeneration of democratic institutions. In this area, MPs (member of parliament) have no capability to focus on their problems of respective constituency. Their capabilities are gradually deteriorating. Sober discussion is also deteriorating inside the party and outside the party. So, the politics within the party are not functioning properly. (Islam, 1974) [14]

The political conditions basically in local level are not advanced positively. The findings of our study have indicated some hidden causes that help us to realize the actual political conditions at local level.

IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Political parties have been created a network all over the country for holding power. However, all the political parties manifestation more likely same that means they want to serve peoples. But when they take power they forget everything of the given words to the local peoples. Same things happened in Kushtia as well. With consider such matters the findings and discussion of my study are presented as follows-

- Socio-economic background
- Role of political parties.
- Political parties and conflict

1. Socio-economic Background of Local Leaders

A number of studies on the Bangladesh politics have pointed out that the country's politics is still controlled by the urban-based educated middle class (Khan, Islam and Haque,1996) [15] . In Kushtia, the same connection has been practicing. We found the crisis between districts town and other towns.

In Kushtia, young people are very close with politics. They have not finished their education yet. It is largely seen that in the education institutions of Kushtia students get their first initiation into politics. In rural area in Kushtia, the educational institutions are the largest recruitment ground for the political worker. For example, Kushtia Islamia College, Kushtia Govt. College, Mirpur and Amla College. This is so because it is only the students

who have the time, the energy, and they will go for political activities. Indeed, many of them develop a passion for politics. This process leads to the presence of large number of highly educated people in the political arena.

2. Role of Political Parties

Political parties are playing a significant role at local level politics. According to our key informers view; there is no real politics in Kushtia. They are mainly making inter-party and intra-party conflicts. In Awami League (AL), two groups are clearly visible. Anwar Ali was the leader of one group and Advocate Jafor was the leader of other group. This group was extended at thana, union, word even village level committee. The BNP has a great influence at local level politics. BNP was also divided into two groups. Sohrab Hossain (present MP) was the leader of one group and Khalekuzzaman Chantu was the leader of other group. However, BNP was involved with maximum development activities in Kushtia.

The political condition of Jatiya Party was not good in Kushtia Sadar. Maximum supporters were in favor of Hossain Mohammad Ershad. The local leaders respected the decision taken by the central leaders. Ahsan Habib Linkon who was the office secretary of JP was lived in Kushtia. He took all decision of JP. Jaforullah Khan Lahori, former Upzila chairman was also the influential person of JP. There was no strong political activity at Daulatpur thana of JP. A young man named Jahangir led the JP activities. He was also very close with BNP.

Jatiya Samajtanrik Dal (JSD) was also influential political organization at Bheramara, Mirpur and Daulatdia thana. Marfat Ali was the great leader of JSD. He was killed by outlaws' leader just before 1991 election. Maximum key informers told those who took part in freedom fight, involve in abduction because they have a weapon.

Students' politics is very strong in Kushtia though their opinion is not considered for taking any decision. Maximum decision was taken by Sohrab Hossain. On the other hand, two clubs, i.e., Crescent and Tiger, dominate Kushtia town. The Tiger club of Aruapara controls over Power Development Board (PDB), Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) and the Crescent club of thana para controls over Municipal Market, gari Ghate etc. They do not

have a political identity. So, the members of a club cannot visit others area.

In Kushtia, some political parties are closely linked with outlawed party. They cannot play vital role on development activities as well. If someone start to construct road outlaws leader will demand for money. That is why; maximum work is not finished yet.

3. Parties' Fragmentations

There are lots of causes behind parties' fragmentation. According to the key informers view; central leaders do not evaluate the performance of local leaders. In sadar thana, Rauf Chawdhury was the leader of BNP. But, he keeps himself apart from BNP politics because the central leaders did not evaluate him.

In AL, intra party conflicts are more than that of others because in last 1996 election AL could not take proper decision who would get the nomination from Khoksha –Kumarkhali constituency. So, they lost this constituency. Another Important cause of factionalism is that the national level leaders have not good understanding with local leaders. Most of the key informers informed that, the central leaders are not visiting in local area.

Political leaders of local area did not have a strong communication with central leaders. Those who made this communication got chance in the thana committee but usually those who had active involvement with political activities were deprived from the party interest. But, every body in this territory noted that the political leaders have a strong communication with outlawed leaders.

4. Practice of Democracy among Parties

In Kushtia, BNP always got topmost priority in election because former president Ziaur Rahman once visited in Kushtia on foot and he shared views with villagers as a common person. In election campaign, they maintain democracy but they do not follow it after being elected. They were constantly emphasizing then that without a parliamentary system of government there could be no real democracy. Because every political party, which opposed the regime of Hossain Mohammad Ershad, made him (Ershad) responsible for the rampant corruption in the political arena. In this backdrop, for most of the political leaders, a corruption free

government seemed to be of prime necessity. Noticeably these responses appear to indicate that the key informers lacked any precise notion of democracy.

5. Thana Committee

Key informers opined that the political parties cannot form the thana committee according to their parties regulations. In sadar thana, the BNP formed their thana committee in 1998 after 3 years. Awami League formed in 1999 after 4 years. Jatiya Party (JP) formed in 1997 after 4 years. But there was no committee of JSD in sadar thana. Jammata_e_Islami regularly follows the parties order.

In Daulatpur thana, Awami League formed the thana committee in 1997 after 4 years. BNP formed in 1998 after 3 years. In Mirpur, BNP formed the thana committee in 1998 after 3 years. Awami League formed in 1997 after 3 years and Jatiya Party formed in 1998 after 3 years. In Bharamara, Awami League formed the thana committee In 1997 after 3 years and BNP formed in 1999 after 4 years. In Khoksa thana, Awami League formed in 1994 after 5 years and BNP formed after 4 years. In Kumarkhali, BNP formed in 1994 after 5 years, JSD formed in 1996 after 6 years and Awami League formed in 1998 after 3 years.

6. Other Political Conditions in Kushtia

It is noted that the political conditions of Khoksha, Kumarkhali and Bheramara thanas are similar in the context of development activities but they get into conflict when it comes to distributing tender among the political leaders. Mostly ruling party gets more privilege in that sector. They also have a good communication with central leaders. As a result, inter-party conflict is visible among all thanas in Kushtia district.

Now union parishad election has become closely involved with party politics. The Member of Parliament (MP) and central leaders nominate them. Sometimes it happens that those who have no idea about politics but have money and power can get nomination as Chairman or Members of Union Parishad. They are incapable of judging their political abilities. So, the local leaders involve common people into politics by creating pressure.

Intra party conflict becomes rampant when forming new committee in local areas. But, the interesting

matter is that, locally influential persons get high preference in forming committee. They can also change the political identity any time by using their influence.

At the time of election they campaign seriously because they think if someone becomes minister from this constituency, the supporters will get more benefits. They did the same for Ahsanul Haque Molla, although he remained in the cabinet for a very short period. Intra party conflict is very common in BNP because BNP has been elected from all constituencies in Kushtia last 1996 election. . If someone gets nomination from BNP he/she must win the constituency, as previous record says. Such kinds of conflicts also exist in Awami League. Most young leaders are trying to get into competition with older leaders.

The common feature we see in Kushtia district is the police file cases against opposition leaders. Same thing happened when ruling party fell from power. In the last 1996 electing, AL held the power and filed four cases against Khalakuzzaman Chantu (former sadar MP).

With regard to political ideologies in the rural areas, it is rather amusing that, with few exceptions, political ideologies are practically nonexistent. At the local level politics has almost always been to manipulate and use the people in vertical political faction built for narrow personal interests. Factional politics based on vertical political alliances are secured and continuous as long as local leaders continue to fulfill minimum demands and expectations from their supporters, and as long as the public demands do not challenge the basic economic interest of the leaders.

V. CONCLUSION

This article has tried to demonstrate how political leadership at the local level in Bangladesh works. The trends of political situation in six thanas of Kushtia are mostly similar but some differences are also visible. In Kushtia sadar, the strength of party organization is more active in comparison with other thanas. For this strength, politics is spreading in schools, colleges and even universities. In addition, local political leadership thrives on external political linkages with administrative bodies at different levels and with national political parties and changing governments. Kinship and

other primordial loyalties are still important factors for the emerging political leader, but their role beyond the local level is limited.

This study has highlighted different political parties performances in Kushtia. The Awami League, which was returned to power after twenty-one years in 1996. After holding power AL tried to control over the underground party. They became successful on this issue. So, after twenty-one year they regain some popularity from Kushtia. But they cannot solve the conflict between older leaders and young leaders. On the other hand, Bangladesh Jatiyotabadi Dal (BNP), born out of fragments of different parties, also showed remarkable resilience in the national elections of 1991. BNP has a large number of young supporters. So, they can easily campaign among the local peoples in Kushtia. In 2001, BNP won all constituency of Kushtia but they cannot control over the outlaws leaders. Now, outlaws leader are moving with weapons in a broad daylight. Law and enforcing agencies are unable to arrest them because they have a good relationship with local MP and union parishad chairman etc. So, the general peoples are suffering from outlaw party in Kushtia.

Jatiyo Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) also suffered a long. Kazi Aref Ahmed, leader of the Jatiyo Samajtantrik Dal or JSD, a small left-wing party in the governing coalition, became a prominent national figure as a result of his role in Bangladesh's war of independence. Mr Ahmed was shot while addressing a rally in the western district of Kushtia, speaking out against political violence. Bullets riddled his body as he finished his speech and was about to leave the rostrum. His colleagues, all from Kushtia, died while trying to save him, one police officer said.

Jatiya party is not active in kushtia though Ahsan Habib Linkon, office secretary of JP (Ershad) is working for his party. The supporters have moved to other parties because JP's intra party conflicts are more. The organizational process is very strong in Jammat-e-Islam but the supporters are not more. They try to develop their condition through organizational strength. But, the interesting matter is that some peoples keep believe on Jammat because they are not involve with outlaws party in Kushtia. All the peoples of this area want to live their life with peace and comfort. So, the popularity of BNP gradually was decreasing in compare with other party.

It needs to be pointed out that both AL and BNP draw their strength from the charisma of their two leaders—Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia. If these two major parties can retain their hold over the electorate, and can avoid extreme mutual hatred, a two party competitive system will become institutionalized along with the prospects for a stable democracy in Kushtia.

Analyzing the whole situation, local level politics is gradually coping with the national level politics.

The communication between local and national are also improving. National leaders realize that if they cannot visit to local area their popularity will be decreased. For that reason, all central leaders of all parties should visit to their respective areas so that the people think they are closely linked with central leaders. Then the distance between local politics and national politics will be perished at least for time being.

END NOTE:

Table: 1
Result of Seventh National Sangshad Election 1996

Name of Political Party	(Total Seat 300) Obtained Seat
Awami league	146
Bangladesh Nationalist party (BNP)	116
Jatiya Party (JP)	032
Jamaat-e-Islami	003
Jatiya Samaztantric Dal(JSD)	001
Total	300

Source: Daily Janokantha, July 29, 1996

Table: 2
Selection of respondents (political personnel)

Name of Thana	Respondents (political)	Respondents (non political)
Kushtia sadar	11	6
Bheramara	5	6
Khoksa	8	6
Mirpur	10	6
Kumerkhali	10	6
Daulatpur	10	6
Total	54	36
Grand total	90	

REFERENCES

- [1] Ahmed, Emajuddin. 1989 *Society and Politics in Bangladesh*, Dhaka, Academic Publishers.
- [2] *Ibid*
- [3] Sortori, Giovanni. 1984 *Parties and Party Systems*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [4] Almond, Gabriel A. and G. B. Powell, Jr. 1966 *Comparative Politics: A Development Approach*. Boston: Little Brown.
- [5] Neuman, S. 1953 Towards a Theory of Political Parties. ed , *World Politics*. Vol V. Princeton University Press.
- [6] Khan, S. A; S.Aminul Islam and Imdadul Haque. 1996 *Political Culture, Political Parties and the Democracy in Bangladesh*. Dhaka: Academic Publishers.
- [7] Siddiqui, Dr. Ashraf 1976. *Bangladesh District Gazatteers*, Bangladesh Government Press, Dhaka.
- [8] *Ibid*
- [9] Ali, S. 1978 *The History Of Kushtia*. (Bengali). Kushtia: Kallol Press.
- [10] The Daily Star. July 24, 1999; September 19, 1999; January 16, 2000; March 20, 2000
- [11] Jahan, R. 1987 *Bangladesh Politics: Problems and Issues*. Dhaka: University Press Limited.
- [12] The Daily Star, February 15, 2004.
- [13] Moniruzzman, Talukdar. 1980 *The Bangladesh Revolution and its Aftermath*. Dhaka Bangladesh Books International.
- [14] Islam, S. Aminul. 1989 “Social change, Power and Legitimacy in Rural Bangladesh”. *Journal of Local Government* 18.
- [15] *Ibid*