

# Folk Weapon, Tactic and Belief in the War of Independence of Bangladesh in 1971 in the Context of Sector 8

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## Abstract

The deadliest genocide since World War II culminated in 1971 with Pakistani massacres in Bangladesh. Nine counts of crimes against humanity were committed by the Pakistani military. Approximately 3 million people were killed, 2 hundred thousand women were raped, and more than 10 million were forced to seek asylum in India, a neighboring country. Additionally, during the brutal nine months of the War of Liberation in Bangladesh, 45 million people experienced internal displacement. The Freedom Fighters and the Indian Allied Forces, who fought with weapons for a long time, freed the country completely. Since the country got its independence, this conflict has been studied and researched like any other war. Despite being largely a people's war, it has never been the subject of a folklore study. In order to look at the new academic side of things, the research will focus on the folk aspects of the War of Independence of Bangladesh in 1971, such as a folk weapon, a folk technique, and a folk belief. This academic endeavor will have a strong connection to and contribution to the knowledge societies of Bangladesh and India, both neighboring countries, and it will aid in understanding how Bangladesh came into being from a folk spirit, sense of unity, and larger context.

**Keywords:** Folk Weapon, Folk Tactic, Folk Belief, War of Independence, Sector 8

## 1. Introduction:

The most horrendous killings, genocides, and crimes against humanity ever perpetrated by the Pakistani army took place in Bangladesh in 1971, causing atrocities and the largest human exodus in recorded history. Tens of thousands of refugees crossed into India to avoid being killed in a planned way. Foreign media outlets and journalists, however, took great risks. They told the world about how hard the then-Pakistani government and its horrible military worked to stop the revolt in Bangladesh. No effort was spared by the Pakistani army of occupation to hide its crimes. The Pakistani occupying troops attacked the defenseless Bangladeshis on the night of March 25. International media covered Pakistan's butchery of innocent Bangladeshis. Deseret News, an American newspaper based in Utah, said, "Today, civil war erupted in East Pakistan, and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the East Pakistan leader, declared his province's independence from West Pakistan." Within hours, the incident rose to the top of news headlines throughout the globe. When the people of Bangladesh fought back in response to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's call, the Pakistani occupation force and its local traitors, known as Rajakar, Al Badr,

and Al Shams, did horrible things. These stories were spread around the world. The scale of the Pakistani army's butchery in East Pakistan was first made public in a horrifying essay by a Pakistani author called Anthony Mascarenhas that appeared in the British journal *The Sunday Times* on June 13, 1971. We hope that the global backlash against Pakistan was a result of this worldwide media exposé. It made India want to join with the brand-new Bangladesh and play a strong and important role. A national reporter from Pakistan had to go into hiding in order to create history (*The Daily Star*, December 13, 2014).

Indira Gandhi, who was the Indian Prime Minister at the time, did a lot to bring attention to Bangladesh's plight around the world. In order to prepare for India's military engagement, she launched a sophisticated diplomatic campaign in Moscow and the capitals of Europe after being so deeply outraged by the narrative (Harold Evans, former editor of the *Sunday Times*). The Pakistani invading force's massacre in East Pakistan caught the attention of people all around the globe. Liberation fighters valiantly battled to save their nation from the terrible Pakistani assault. On December 16, 1971, 90,000 Pakistani soldiers and their leader, Amir Abdullah Khan Niazi, gave up (Ahmed 118). Bangladesh, a developing country, was welcomed by the world, and new history was created. The world media covered the atrocities, mass murders, and crimes against humanity done by the Pakistani army. The country, which was still emerging, began to restore and reconstruct.

## **2. Statement of the problem:**

Unprecedented atrocities occurred in both metropolitan and rural areas in 1971. However, the majority of the atrocities took place in the villages. In the 1960s, most people who lived in the area that used to be Bangladesh, then east Pakistan, lived in rural areas. For this war-torn population, it was always hard to stay alive. People were running away and escaping because it wasn't just an armed invasion; it was a crisis for survival. The conflict had a significant impact on everyone, even young people and the elderly. Furthermore, because of its widespread nature, the War of Independence in 1971 became a "folks' war" (Chowdhury 1). People in Bangladesh went to war with the Pakistani troops who were occupying their country until every last drop of blood was spilled. Students, people from the general public, and members of Ansar attacked the Jashore Cantonment with bamboo sticks and an old gun. The expedition was headed by Sub Divisional Officer (SDO) Kamal Siddiquee (Ahmed 39). To liberate the land from the control of the Pakistani hyena, individuals from a variety of professions, including grocery store proprietors, mechanics, drivers, small business owners, farmers, night guards, and wage workers, enlisted in the struggle for freedom. These individuals' ages varied from 15 to 45. (Ahmed 76). People blocked and damaged bridges, culverts, and roads so that the vehicles of the Pakistani enemy couldn't get through. Pakistani troops were slain by boatmen who turned over their vessels; soldiers were killed with axes by farmers, fruit vendors, vegetable vendors, sweepers, and other people who were not who they claimed to be. Football players and singers have both performed and played for their nations. They engaged in conflict in diverse ways. Singers used to perform songs to uplift freedom fighters and inspire them to fight for their country. Football players competed in games at the same time as contributing ticket proceeds to a government fund for the independence fight. In 1971, Pakistan was the target of an all-out folk war.

### 3. Rationale of the study:

The role of folk weaponry, folk tactics, folk beliefs, and the courage of rural people in Bangladesh's fight of freedom has never been thoroughly researched academically. This is an untapped field of information that needs to be investigated by academics, future generations, Bangladesh, and the rest of the globe. Unarmed people engaged in a struggle for their lives in order to overthrow the militaristic Pakistani military and create an independent nation-state. Additionally, learning about the 1971 War of Bangladesh's Liberation from the perspective of traditional strategies and weaponry is intriguing. This broadens the scope of scholarly knowledge.

### 4. Literature review:

A reliable knowledge base is essential for research. It is really difficult to locate enough literature for the study. Books and articles about the Bangladesh Liberation War are readily accessible; however, there are few publications on the Bangladeshi field in question. Most authors have concentrated mostly on traditional military equipment and strategies, which makes it more difficult for students and scholars to reach meaningful conclusions. Books and essays about Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Liberation War, and Bangladeshi folklore may sometimes be found. The book "Loko-Sanskritite Bangabandhu O Muktijudha" was written by author and researcher Ronjona Biswas. The author of this book discussed political history, the War of Liberation memoirs, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's memoirs, and other relevant topics, however, she made no mention whatsoever of folk warfare, tactics, or beliefs used during the War of Independence. Similar to this, scholar Mamun Talukder attempted to concentrate on folk music associated with Muktijudha (the Battle of Independence) in his study named "Loko-Sanskritite Muktijudho," but did not stress folk weaponry, tactics, or ideologies in the war of 1971.

In his works, Gramer Ekattor and Hindu Janagoshtir Ekattor, Bangladeshi journalist and author Afsan Chowdhury said that rural Bangladeshis participated predominantly in the 1971 Liberation War. As a result, it was a fight of the masses. Muktiuddhavittik Folklore EbongBangladesherSomaj was published by Prof. Mazharul Islam, a pioneer in Bangladeshi folklore study, in the Bi-Annual Journal of Bangladesh Folklore Society, Vol. 3, No. 2, July-December 2000. This article has taken a close look at folkloric elements. However, it is crucial to discuss how traditional methods and weaponry were used in Bangladesh's independence struggle.

The folkloric aspect of the Great War of Liberation was effectively introduced when a few rebels and war veterans from Bangladesh attempted to communicate their combat experiences via their remembrance books. The warriors attempted to narrate the tale from a military perspective, but they were unable to ignore the significant engagement and contribution of common people to the conflict. They discussed the astonishing and crucial fact that Bangladeshis fought back against the Pakistani troops using conventional techniques and weaponry. Major (Rtd) Hafiz Uddin Ahmed's book RoktevejaEkattor, Major (Rtd) Qamrul Hasan Bhuiyan's Jonojuddher Gonojuddha, Major (Rtd) Rafiqul Islam's Bangladesher Gerilajuddha, and Major (Rtd) Qamrul Hasan Bhuiyan's Ekattor Bisti Boihaboha Juddha all provide Some of these active-duty military veterans have provided essays that support this

assertion. However, the War of Liberation has been extensively discussed and examined historically in some books, including Banglar Lokayoto Sangskriti and Lalon-Rabindranath Banglar Lokosangskriti by Muhammad Abdul Jalil, Sanskriti O Lokosangskriti by Mahbul Haque, Lokosangskriti Annesha by Sarwar Murshed, History of the Emergence of Independent Bangladesh by Muntassir Mamoon. These texts have not yet attempted to examine the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War from a folkloric perspective. Additionally, this is the sole English-language international endeavor that has been located on the subject or is anticipated to be explored in the planned study.

It is important to note that during the War of Liberation of Bangladesh, Bangladeshi folklorists like Shamsuzzaman Khan, Selina Hosen, Abdul Wahab, and Habibullah Pathan, among others, began to examine folk culture. To offer a thorough sense of how folk weaponry and tactics were used during the Liberation War of Bangladesh, however, more information is required than what is provided in this debate. Furthermore, even folk beliefs from times of conflict need scholarly study.

### 5. Research questions:

Considering the above facts, the research problem has been presented through the following research questions:

1. To what extent the War of Liberation of Bangladesh was a people's war?
2. What kind of Folk Weapons did the Bangladeshis use against the Pakistani occupation army in 1971?
3. What were the Folk Tactics of the unarmed Bengalis applied against the brutal Pakistani military and the local collaborators?
4. What were the major indigenous techniques to make the Pakistani army a fool and defeated?
5. What were folk beliefs during the War of Independence of Bangladesh?
6. How did the folk songs encourage the freedom fighters and Mukti Bahini to fight the occupation forces back strongly?
7. How will this research benefit in learning about the War of Independence of Bangladesh from a folkloric perspective?

### 6. Research objectives:

The research is to appraise the role of Folk and folk weapons and beliefs in the War of Independence of Bangladesh in 1971. To attain this, there are some specific objectives which are as follows.

- To review the war of liberation from a folkloric perspective.
- To evaluate folkloric knowledge in the milieu of our struggle for emancipation in 1971.
- To study how and to what folkloric extent the war of liberation of Bangladesh expedited the independence.
- To understand the indomitable aspiration of the common people of Bangladesh who fought against modern weaponry with folk weapons?
- To identify the major Folk tactics which were used against the Pakistani military occupation?
- To learn academically the folk belief of the people of Bangladesh in 1971.

- To understand folk war culture in Bangladesh.

### **7. Scope of the research:**

In order to evaluate the war of liberation of Bangladesh in 1971 from a folkloric perspective following areas will be integrated into the study:

- The study focuses on reviewing the folk angles of the war, especially folk engagement, tactics, and weapons in the fight for life and existence of Bangladesh (the then East Pakistan).
- The study collects stories of bravery and fighting off the unarmed farmers, potters, plumbers, wage laborers, women, and youths against the Pakistani occupation military. It is about those who had nothing but courage and unity to fight back with folk knowledge.
- To identify the folk weapons which were used in the war in Sector 8.
- It focuses on recollecting those first-hand brave stories from people who were on the battlefield and from those who witnessed the folk struggle for independence.
- The study explores how much academics and researchers have tried to find out the folkloric discourse in the war of liberation of Bangladesh, most particularly as far as folk tactics and weapons are concerned.
- The study assesses other related studies concerning the field.
- The research makes an in-depth search and get into the specific detail and evaluation of the folk war from the military angle as well.

### **8. Limitations of the study:**

Only Sector 8 of the War of Liberation in Bangladesh will be covered, which restricts the scope of the study. The remaining eleven areas will not be the subject of this study's attention. Some of the acknowledged difficulties of this study include the formation of conceptualization, the issue of keeping the work's impartiality, the challenge of validating the insinuations, unpredictability, etc. A social science study is seldom without some serious issues. They are developing a sound methodology for data collection; ii. interpretations of field data with regard to a conceptual framework, iii. reliability and validity of the collected data, iv. target groups' reluctance to engage in interaction or provide answers, v. time management, vi. quantification of qualitative data, and vii. preparing the final report, among other things. Further research might be done on secondary sources of information. Social science evolves throughout time and as conditions change. The country's liberation warriors, who are at least 65 years old and five years old, would be the interview subjects for the research. Many people are dying from problems associated with aging. So it would take effort to manage their interview. Since 50 years have passed since independence, it would be difficult for people to remember the past after 50 years. Additionally, the research has difficulties in finding the appropriate participants and organizing their interviews. Despite all of these restrictions, they may be overcome with vigor, insight, and dedication by appropriately adhering to the scientific research approach.

## 9. Methodology:

### 9.1. Types of research:

The research is qualitative in nature. Furthermore, in its various stages of development, the research dimension may appear descriptive, exploratory, and evaluative. An in-depth interview will be conducted to authenticate the basis of the work, and the knowledge gained from the interview will explore many unknown stories regarding the study. That description of the witness will add a seemingly extraordinary degree to this. Moreover, all the findings under this investigation will merit some substantive evaluation. Existing witness stories and interviews with living freedom fighters will be evaluated using content analysis of primary and secondary data based on availability and needs. It will assess how much of it was a folk war and how folk weapons were used against the Pakistani occupation army. Through a folkloric analysis, this study will try to figure out how real the War of Independence was. To carry out the research, the MLA documentation style will be followed.

### 9.2. Type of data:

Both Qualitative and quantitative data have been used with a view to evaluating the liberation war from a Folkloric perspective.

## 10. Sources of data:

### 10.1. Primary data Source:

The primary sources of data includes field practicum, study respondents, key informant interviews, FGD, etc.

### 10.2. Secondary data source:

In the study, secondary data sources included research reports and articles, official documents, pertinent books and magazines, unpublished study documents, reports, theses and dissertations, journals, daily newspapers, etc. As an additional source of data for this study, online platforms have been employed.

### 10.3 Selection of the study area:

The study was conducted in War Zone 8, vastly known as Sector 8, during the War of Independence of Bangladesh. According to the history of the war of liberation, Sector 8 covers Kushtia, Jhenaida, Meherpur, Jashore, Khulna, and part of Pirojpur in Bangladesh. Regarding the study of the War of Independence of Bangladesh from the folkloric dimension, selecting the study area is an unavoidable and inextricable component of the research. Moreover, as far as the researcher is concerned, this kind of research has never been conducted in this area. So, it is an unexplored area for accomplishing such an academic endeavor.

### 10.4. Sample size and sampling procedure:

The respondents for the study is categorized into six type; viz. living freedom fighters, witnesses of the folk war, folk warriors, and commanders of the war zones. Story-tellers and folk singers who sang for the freedom fighters to encourage them on the battlefield is also brought in for the purpose of this research work. All the respondents are selected through a purposive sampling procedure.

## **11. Data collection techniques:**

### **11.1. Face to face interview:**

The main procedure of primary data collection is face-to-face interview using questionnaires among the respondents. A set of questionnaires were prepared skillfully, and the respondents were asked to fill up the questionnaire by themselves as well.

### **11.2 Key informant's interview:**

This research approach is absolutely dependent on the critical informant interview technique. Because they oversaw major military operations and saw what transpired in their area of responsibility during the war of liberation of Bangladesh in 1971, commanders of the battle zones and war of liberation organizers were regarded as the study's crucial informants. In this study, they are regarded as crucial informants. Based on their availability, a semi-structured and casual interview plan was employed to gather information from the key informants.

## **12. Techniques of secondary data collection:**

Using the content analysis approach, both qualitative and quantitative data were gathered from secondary sources. This information was gathered using paraphrases from relevant books, magazines, reputable journals, electronic journals, published and unpublished theses, newspapers, and other publications. This research has made use of the libraries of several universities and organizations. Additionally, the historical examination of the Bangladesh Liberation War using documentary footage In both print and electronic form, pertinent papers were gathered from every conceivable source.

## **13. Validity and reliability:**

The main method of gathering data from the field has been key informant interviews. Each respondent has given their permission and consent. Each respondent received a detailed explanation of the study's aim and significance before being invited to participate. They received detailed instructions regarding the purpose of the study, the data required, and the format of the responses. Additionally, the informants were made aware of their entire freedom to provide the information. The informant was only interrogated after giving prior consent. Without regard to individual identity, the survey's contents were kept private. Personal data was entered into the field notes and interview sheets of key informant talks. The interviews were conducted as privately as possible and with the utmost regard for the religion, beliefs, values, and social standards of the valued respondents. As a result, it is anticipated that the research's data collection will yield high-quality results. It is possible to morally guarantee the confidentiality and propriety of the respondents' information.

## **14. Data analysis:**

Both primary and secondary data has been used to establish the main theme of the research. Especially, the primary data has been analyzed on the basis of the interviews and discussions with the freedom fighter and witnesses in the war of liberation in 1971.

**15. Expected result:**

From a folkloric viewpoint, this study should be able to present a detailed image of the Bangladesh independence struggle. In 1971, the year Bangladesh began its struggle for independence, 75% of the country's people resided in villages, as was previously reported. The majority of the inhabitants worked as peasants. Therefore, the history of the War of Independence of Bangladesh is really the history of the farmers and villagers in the countryside largely. The study's findings are probably going to be really folkloric and reliable in this historical setting based on this substantial fact. In addition, it is envisaged that this research will result in a dissertation, which will advance the field's knowledge and excellence for upcoming domestic and international scholars as well as assist it get reputation.

**16. Ethical issues:**

In this investigation, ethical issues have been given major importance. The use of unfair methods, such as plagiarism, is carefully examined while gathering factual facts and information. It is not permissible to intentionally or unintentionally misuse any information. The responders were nonetheless held to certain moral obligations. In the study, people's rights, the public interest, as well as their privacy and sensitivity, were scrupulously observed, upheld, and conserved.

**17. Discussion and evaluation:****17.1 Operation Searchlight and the Genocide in 1971:**

The onslaught on unarmed civilians by the Pakistani military on March 25 in the evening marked the start of the genocide in Bangladesh. Before Bengali nationalists and the Indian army liberated the nation from Pakistani occupation troops on December 16, 1971, it had been under occupation for over nine months.

The rest of the nation was instantly informed about the Dhaka atrocity. The Pakistani army undoubtedly believed that by beginning the savage deaths, it would intimidate the unarmed Bengalis into surrender. Instead, it just fueled nationalist sentiment. Bangladesh went to Chittagong after declaring its independence from Pakistan on March 26, 1971. There had just been one day since the violent uprising in Dhaka. The statement was made over the radio, which was under charge of Bengali nationalists, by the Awami League and its leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The end result is that deliberate genocide gave rise to the birth of a new country (Jahan 1972; Ayoob and Subrahmanyam 1972). The Pakistan army's 1971 crimes were extensively covered by the world press (Mascarenhas 1971). The eyewitness testimonies that were documented during and soon after the genocide in 1971 provide a basis for analyzing the major elements of the Bangladesh genocide, including the reasons and methods for its execution, the perpetrators of the atrocities, and the identities of the victims. Both international observers and Bengali nationalists were shocked by the massacre in Bangladesh. After fact, up until March 25, 1971, Bengali nationalists were not engaged in any violent conflict. In essence, they were leading a nonviolent constitutional campaign for democracy and independence. According to Senator Edward Kennedy, their only crime seemed to be winning an election (Malik 1972). What motivated Pakistan's ruling class to order such a brutal military operation? It's possible that the main goal of the crimes was to terrorize the public into submission. Reports state that the military's top commander in Dhaka has



pledged to kill 4 million people in 48 hours and "for good" solve the Bengal problem (Jahan 1972). The Bengalis lacked experience in armed battle, therefore the Pakistani military leadership reasoned that they would be intimidated and defeated in the face of massive armament, immense casualties, and damage.

### **17.2 Folk war and resistance:**

Rather than being terrified, they revolted and decided to use force to fight back against an armed assault. When news of the slaughter in Dhaka reached neighboring towns and cities, mobs surrounded police stations and stole guns. The Bengalis' first attempt at armed resistance, however, didn't last long because they didn't have enough weapons and their opponents were better trained and had more people on their side. The bulk of the towns were eventually taken back by the Pakistani army. Unsurprisingly, the procedure was violent, and the troops randomly executed unarmed individuals. Mahbub Uddin Ahmed Bir Bikram, a front-line freedom fighter, said that what touched him the most during these crucial days was the spontaneous rise of people. It's hard to understand how everyone in the countryside turned into a single, strong group that wanted to swim in a river of blood to get away from a terrible ruler. Unbiased people would see this as a country wanting to use a lot of force to get to the truth and do what is right. It was a crucial time in global history (The Daily Star, 2022).

After their first attempt at an armed rebellion failed, Bengali nationalists kept trying to get their country free. The liberating warriors opted for guerilla warfare over direct conflict. About 100,000 young men were able to cut off the supply and communication routes for the Pakistani army after they learned how to use guns in Bangladesh and India. The Pakistani army began a strategy to destroy the places and the people where the rebels were allegedly operating in order to exact revenge on them. During these "search and destroy" operations, there was a great deal of murder, theft, burning, and rape (Coggin, Shepherd 1971; Malik 1972). But the genocide wasn't only carried out to scare the populace and punish them for their resistance. This act of genocide also had aspects of racism. The Pakistani army, which is mostly made up of Punjabis and Pathans, thought that Bengalis were a lower-class race, not good at fighting, and too weak to work for the army (Marshall, 1959).

The leadership of the resistance was made up of the police, soldiers, students, and intellectuals of Bengal. Although it only lasted for around six weeks, the first phase of the fight to liberate the enslaved people may have been more ambitious and well-planned. The Bengali nationalists in exile set up an administration, and they worked to get the word out about their cause. Also, they got about 100,000 young men to join the fight for freedom. After receiving military training, they launched guerrilla campaigns in Bangladesh. During the Liberation War, young males who were not crippled were considered to be real or potential liberation fighters. Thousands of people were slain, tortured, and detained. Young men who ran away to India or joined the fight for freedom left cities and towns without young men. During the third phase of the war of independence, which lasted from October until around the middle of December, there was increased guerrilla warfare as well as a brief military conflict between Pakistan and the combined forces of India and Bangladesh.

## **18. Observation from Folkloric perspective:**

### **18.1 Folk Weapons:**

Folk weapons are the home weaponry that citizens and the resistance force utilized to fight the Pakistani military for Bangladesh's independence. The oppressed people of Bangladesh fought the invading Pakistani military with a variety of locally available weapons, including a bamboo stick, a gaff, a coulter, a harpoon, a plowshare, a bow and arrow, a knife, a machete, a sickle, a catapult, a boat, a punt pole, and an oar.

### **18.2 Folk tactics:**

In this research, the folk strategies that were used during the War of the Liberation of Bangladesh in 1971 against the Pakistani occupying army were looked at in more depth. The 1971 war of independence was heroically fought by Bangladeshi freedom fighters, Mukti Bahini, and freedom- and peace-loving ordinary citizens of the nation, employing folk methods at their homes and in the battlegrounds and locations they were in because of the conflict. Sector commanders and freedom fighters said that common citizens blocked Pakistani military trucks from traveling by cutting down trees and blocking the roads with their trunks. Guerrilla assaults were also made against the war's adversaries. Freedom fighters killed Pakistani troops by sinking their boats in the middle of rivers over and over again. On the battlefield, spying is seen as a more effective strategy for defeating the opposition. People in civilian clothes used to spy in Pakistani army barracks in order to gather information for Mukti Bahini's quick, precise, and careful attacks on the Pakistani military.

### **18.3 Folk belief:**

The best way to understand folk beliefs is as impressions of how people live their lives and what they value (Wishart, David J., "Folk Belief"). In this situation, folk beliefs and practices give important clues about how people build their worlds and make sense of their experiences. Within a society, folk beliefs may take on a variety of shapes. Some people work hard in secret and are only known to others in their group, while others adopt a more public stance. The conduct and attitude of the average person toward natural forces and commonplace happenings are substantially influenced by some religious interpretations of the universe. In 1971, Hindus all over Pakistan tried to hide in mosques and shrines to avoid being killed (Chowdhury, personal interview). They felt that the Pakistani military wouldn't execute Muslims. As a consequence, Hindus used to seek sanctuary in mosques. Thus, it was evident that traditional beliefs played a crucial role in the Bangladeshi liberation struggle.

### **18.4 1971 Liberation war:**

Right after Pakistan got independence, the struggle for rights started. West Pakistan and Bangladesh were the two linked regions that comprised Pakistan at the time. In the early years after Partition, Pakistan's official language, Bengali, was not acknowledged. The incompatibility of the two halves was exacerbated by their disparate economic circumstances, the influence of West Pakistan's ruling class over East Pakistan, martial law, and a mistrust of Bengali culture and people. The national elections in December 1970 were won by the East Pakistan-based Awami League party. The party's leader was Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. It got worse as a result. The Pakistan People's Party (PPP), however, resisted handing up power to Mujib's Awami League. The Pakistani Army prevented East Pakistan from becoming more nationalist in March 1971. To murder Bengali nationalists, it used local pro-Pakistan Bengalis as well as other individuals, such as Jamaat-e-Islami members. Pakistani murdering robots murder, torture, and rape helpless Bengalis. Unarmed Bengalis heroically resisted Pakistani butchery for

independence and self-determination. They fought each other directly and stepped up their guerrilla campaign against the Pakistani military all over the country. As violence in the country got much worse, a large number of refugees fled to India. This forced New Delhi to send in the military at the beginning of December 1971 for humanitarian reasons. So, on December 16, 1971, the combined forces of the Muktibahini and their Indian allies quickly gave up and let the Pakistani military that was occupying the country give up. Through a bloody War of Liberation, Bangladesh, an independent nation-state, appeared on the global map and forged a new history.

### **18.5 Sector 8:**

During the War of Independence in 1971, the whole country was split into eleven different parts for convenient military engagement. In order to beat the Pakistani military, each sector had a commander who oversaw military operations and coordinated them through a number of sub-sectors under the direction of a sub-sector commander. In April 1971, the districts of Kushtia, Jessore, Khulna, Barisal, Faridpur, and Patuakhali made up Sector 8's operating area. It was reorganized at the end of May to include the districts of Kusthia, Jessore, Khulna, the Satkhira subdivision, and the Faridpur district's northern portion. The sector's first commanders were Major Abu Osman Chowdhury and, subsequently, Major MA Manzur. Sector 8's headquarters were at Kalyani, West Bengal, India (Islam 100). There were 25,000 guerillas and 3000 regulars in Sector 8. The regular soldiers held control of some of the freed districts, while the guerillas constructed many camps deep within Bangladesh. There were innovative strategies used in this industry. Regular forces were forced to cross seven to eight kilometers into Bangladesh and set up a strong defense around a strategic point. This made the Pakistani army attack. In doing so, they severely wounded the Pakistani adversary that was attacking (Bangladesh Army).

### **19. Bangladesh was obvious:**

In 1971, Bangladesh's rural villages were home to more than 80% of the country's inhabitants. In order for Bangladesh to establish itself as an independent nation, millions of innocent people perished in the 1971 Liberation War against the Pakistani military. In other words, the Bangladesh War of Independence is fought by farmers, potters, blacksmiths, boatmen, fishermen, barbers, women, young people, and those who labor for a living. Without these groups of villagers, it was hard to step up the fight for independence and win. Bangladesh's independence has been made clear and swift by the folk groups of the countryside. The emancipation of the nation would have remained a distant hope without their influence. According to legend, Bangabandhu Sheik Mujibur Rahman, the great leader and nation's founding father, earned the nickname "Bangabandhu" because he had a deep understanding of the populace. In terms of the title, the Bangladeshi struggle for independence has never been looked at from a folkloric point of view. In order to learn more about this subject, innovative and empirical studies must be conducted with a high degree of academic significance. This research is necessary to expand our understanding in a new way. This work may have instructional value and point future academics in the direction of more advanced research on the Bangladesh Liberation War. This research could preserve the role that local people played in Bangladesh's battle of freedom. The independence warriors are between 65 and five years old, and since they are aging now, numerous old age issues are leading to their demise. So, writing down their experiences of battle from a folk point of view could be a very important part of keeping folklore alive.

The Pakistani army lost up on the war on 16 December 1971 (Palit 1972; Ayoob and Subrahmanyam 1972). The Pakistani army increased its "search and destroy" operations as rebel activity increased. Every day during this period, a number of communities were obliterated. As soon as Pakistan's leaders recognized they would lose the war, they started their most horrific and well-planned scheme to murder everyone. Villagers were randomly slain and their homes set on fire during this time. In order to prevent the new nation from having the greatest leaders, the Pakistanis made the decision to assassinate the most well-known and influential academics, professionals, and companies in every city and town. Between December 12 and December 14, many academics and professionals were kidnapped from their homes and slain. Many of their identities were discovered in the journals of Major General Rao Forman Ali, the Martial Law Administrator's counselor and the governor of occupied Bangladesh (Malik 1972).

In 1971, Bangladesh became a nation-state for the first time after winning a liberation war against a postcolonial state. This was a remarkable turn of events. The nine-month war of independence in Bangladesh garnered attention from across the world as a result of Pakistan's genocide, which resulted in the deaths of over three million people and the rape of about a quarter of a million girls and women? According to international media reports, 30 million people were internally displaced, and 10 million Bengalis fled to India to escape the Pakistani army's killing (Loshak 1971; Mascarenhas 1971).

## **20. Triumph of people's war:**

Armed with powerful, cutting-edge weaponry such as automatic rifles, mortars, artillery vehicles, tanks, and aircraft as well as an abundant supply of ammunition, the Pakistani military launched a crackdown. The Bengalis, on the other hand, lacked both weapons and preparation for such a cruel and unfair conflict. People in East Pakistan started the resistance movement by making their own weapons because they didn't have access to modern weapons or training. The research will be centered on the War of Independence of Bangladesh in 1971, which is regarded as the most important "people's war" in the political history of the contemporary world. The study of folk beliefs, folk weaponry, and traditional strategies will be covered. This kind of study has never been done on the history of Bangladesh's Liberation War, both in academic and popular books. The spread of folklore information will be aided by the findings of this investigation. Finding a new aspect of the Bangladeshi War of Liberation and writing about it could be a big intellectual task.

A popular uprising against Pakistani domination led to Bangladesh's independence war. Bangladeshis fought against the hostile, aggressive, and well-armed Pakistani army with little more than their determination and a strong desire to be free. Bangladeshis waged the war using their knowledge and their tools in an effort to achieve their goal of freedom. In response to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's, the Great Leader and Bangladesh's Founding Father, timeless and universal demand, they took this action. In his historic speech on March 7, 1971, at the Racecourse Ground in Dhaka, Sheikh Mujib told the people of Bangladesh to be ready. He said, "Get ready with everything you have." In every house, erect fortifications. Use all of your resources to confront the foe, said Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Now, we are engaged in a struggle for our freedom (UNESCO). Because it was a warning to them, the people of Bangladesh fought for their freedom with only their bravery and weapons they made themselves. People of all ages, castes, creeds, colors, and religions did everything they could to get rid of the occupying army.

Folk uprisings were never considered a novel phenomenon in Bangladesh, according to history. There have been several mutinies against British governments since British control, including the Peasant Revolt, Fakir Revolt, Vermin Revolt, and many more (Rahman 67). Also, this is what made Bengalis want to fight against the evil tyranny of Pakistan in 1971 for their independence and right to choose for themselves (Ahmed 29). Using bamboo sticks, gaffs, coulters, harpoons, ploughshares, bows and arrows, knives, machetes, sickles, axes, gads, catapults, boats, and oars in opposition to modern armaments, Bengalis, downtrodden strugglers in what was then-East Pakistan, became strong, resisted, and opposed the military occupation. The stories of the 1971 War of Liberation of Bangladesh and the veterans and freedom fighters who fought in it show how strong, united, and brave the people of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) were. Relevantly, first-hand accounts from veterans of the People's War, folklore, rumors, and other sources can sometimes give scholars new information about the war from rural parts of the country.

### **21. People's power constituted nation's constitution:**

The Liberation War of Bangladesh against Pakistan continues to influence its people's attitude. The people's feeling of nationality is rooted in this horrible historical incident. East Pakistan's citizens now have the freedom to create their own state constitution thanks to Bangladesh's independence. Bangladesh is a sovereign, independent country that won its independence in 1971. Nationalists from Bangladesh did not struggle for independence; instead, religion and religious activities were one of its main factors. Bangladeshis were to be liberated from their Hindu heritage in order to become conventional Muslims, according to the then-Pakistani government. Following British domination of the subcontinent, Pakistan (1947 Partition) was established as a result of this idea of religious divide (European Foundation for South Asian Studies). Unfortunately, as history demonstrates, Islam was the faith that, during the subcontinent's split, united Bangladesh and Pakistan as a unified state and eventually led to their separation.

### **22. Liberation war and Folklore nexus:**

Former Bangla Academy president and folklorist Shamsuzzaman Khan said that Bangladesh's folk culture has been reinforced by the heroic history of the liberation war. He said that a region's folk culture is influenced by the way its people live and work. The liberation war "correlates with every aspect of our folk culture." Our folk culture is so rich", he also said, "folk literature, folk art, or folk music... it has also affected the liberation war." During the fight for independence, folk rhymes, Puthi, and orally written songs by the people opened a beautiful chapter in folk culture, according to Professor Khan, a pioneer in the study of Bangali folklore. Folklore has been strengthened by the folk songs, rhymes, novels, and tales that have been written about the many movements and battles of the great leader, and the Father of the Bengali Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman,

During WWII, a lot of folk cultural components were created. Both the folk culture and the individuals who value freedom have been impacted by these factors. Shahida Khatun, a former director of the Bangla Academy, said: "Folk music made a significant contribution to Bangladesh's liberation war. The lyrics and melodies of the songs written by our folk poets have infused the folk society with individuals who value freedom." She thinks that many songs in many genres, including Jari, Sari, Bhawaiya, Bhatiali, Dhua, Bichargan, Kabigan, etc., have been written by folk music composers. Their writings

covered a variety of subjects, including Bangabandhu's instigation of the liberation war, the Pakistani ruling class' plot, Bangabandhu's detention, the oppression of the Razakars and Al-Badars, and the genocide committed by the Pakistani army. Shahida referred to the folk songs created in the Rajshahi and Chapainawabganj regions during the great war of 1971 as a national treasure. These songs told the stories of numerous liberation-war events and Bangabandhu. The triumphant chapter of the Bengali liberation fight quickly became the main topic of Gambhira songs after the country's independence in 1972. A unique source of folk literature, the liberation war and political career of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the great liberation hero, are represented in the poetry of the time. Saymon Zakaria, a folklore scholar, authored a work titled "ShadhakKobiderRachonayBangabandhurJibon O Rajnetee" that included reflections on Bangabandhu. The stance of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, in relation to the history of the War of Independence was portrayed in the book songs of Sadhak Poet Shah Abdul Karim. "We may find references to Bangabandhu's momentous speech on March 7, 1971, which officially launched the liberation struggle, throughout a variety of literature from both the time of the conflict and beyond. Folklore is no exception; this pattern persisted in the works of the generation of folk poets who emerged after World War II "Zakaria stated. According to folklorist Shahida Khatun, "Folklore components will surely be regarded an essential record in creating a truthful and comprehensive history of the Liberation War, particularly in the production of regional history of the Liberation War." Different liberation war-related images affected folk artists and their work in varied ways. In their sculptures made of clay, wood, stone, cement, and terracotta, folk artists, notably potters and carpenters, have portrayed Bangabandhu, the great hero of the liberation fight, in a variety of stances. The Nakshi Katha is a distinctive folk art pattern that also has patterns based on the narrative of the independence fight. The literature and other works produced during the liberation war reflect Bangladesh's common people. These components have the stamp of Bangladeshi folk heritage, whether they are written or spoken. As a result, both the events of the liberation struggle and popular culture preserve the memory of those key moments, said Shahida.

In the first nine months of 1971, new stories, proverbs, and folk rhymes were developed. Along with traditional proverbs, numerous new ones have been introduced since then. For instance, "Ostader Mair SeshRatey, Amra Marbo Hate arVatey" (The best show itself in the long, we will kill with our hands and famine) and "Nodi MatheJongole, Amra marboKousholey" (we will murder strategically, in the river, field, and forest) are local proverbs. Folk rhymes are often written by rural women. Folk songs composed during the conflict, such as "RajakararAlbadar, jekhane pas shekhanedhor" (wherever you find, take Rajakar and Albadar), and "Ora mare manush, Amra mariposhu," well captured the socioeconomic climate of the period (They execute people, we kill demons).

### **23. Conclusion:**

The war of independence in 1971 was the cornerstone of the emergence of Bangladesh as a nation-state. This war made it possible for a country to get its own flag and a sovereign territory, and it gave the people of the country freedom from the cruel rule and oppression of the Pakistani Junta at the time. So far, various aspects of Bangladesh's liberation war have been studied. However, the '71 Liberation War is rarely looked at from a folkloric point of view in literature, both in and out of the classroom. Thus, this endeavor might be original. This research may also take the knowledge of Bangladesh's war of liberation to a different level for its citizens and researchers. If this research succeeds, the evaluation,

findings, and recommendations will be of good use to all readers, learners, and authorities at home and abroad.

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