PREFACE

This work attempts to analyze social, political and economic development in Iraq after the arrival of the Ba'th party in 1968. This study is not meant to be an exhaustive and chronological history of modern Iraq; rather the aim has been to present a more analytical picture.

The main objective of this thesis is to provide an analytical description of Iraq's political, economic and social development especially after 1968. How the Ba'th Party succeeded in achieving political stability? What is the nature of economic development and how far the traditional society had transformed into a modern one? These and other related questions demand detailed answers and this has been the purpose of the present study.

After the Second World War most of the Arab states had undergone a number of socio-political and economic upheavels. These included the replacement of the socially and politically dominant classes by middle and lower middle classes; the dismantling of the European (mainly the British or French) political systems and the subsequent takeover by different monarchies that brought about bureaucratic-
authoritarianism which relied heavily on military. In addition to this, the State's power increased tremendously due to concentration of economic activity within the circle of the central power.

On the basis of nationalization of the main source of revenue (oil in the case of Iraq) the States generally become economically powerful and consequently commit themselves to the task of 'development'. This phenomenon is true in the case of Iraq too. Another prominent tendency which can be observed in many Middle Eastern states including Iraq is that not only do these states play an important role in the formation of social classes but also chalk out policies in favour of these classes. On the other hand state policies also influence development strategies; and simultaneously these strategies get affected by social classes. In other words, state policies are framed to protect and promote certain interest and pressure groups.

The economic factors go side by side with political considerations in the formulation of development strategies throughout the Third World including the Middle East. It has been accepted that economy and politics of a country cannot be separated and confined in water-tight compartments in the present times. Both have become inseparable entities. Hence,
the present work would be based on the political economy approach.

As we know, a scholar on post-1968 Iraq has to work with the poor state of existing socio-economic data on Iraq. This thesis suffers from this short-coming as well as from the fact that my fieldwork could not materialize due to prevailing turbulent conditions in Iraq. Consequently, I had to rely on the secondary material available in the prominent libraries. Nevertheless, I have benefited from the discussions with some eminent scholars who had been in Iraq, and also a few Iraqis whom I came across. I also got opportunities to exchange the ideas with the writers whose area of specialization is Iraq.

This thesis is organized into five major chapters. These are: (i) Introduction; (ii) the Problem and Conceptual Framework; (iii) State and Political Development; (iv) Economic Development; and (v) Emerging Social Order. These chapters are followed by a brief conclusion.

The first chapter traces briefly the historical background of Iraq starting from the First World War. Britain's occupation of Iraq had officially come to end in 1932 but her involvement in the Iraqi affairs continued till the year 1958 when the historical Revolution of 1958 took
place and the monarchy was overthrown. Iraq became a republic and General Abdul Karim Qasim came to power. However, he failed to provide political stability to the country. The ten years which followed can be characterized as a decade of instability which witnessed several short-lived regimes. However, in 1968 yet another Revolution occurred which brought the Ba'th Party into power. With the Ba'th Party the era of instability came to an end. After seizing power the Ba'th regime tried to establish Iraq as a welfare state and hence several development programmes were initiated. The regime successfully implemented these development programmes which ultimately benefited Iraqi people to a considerable extent. However, the prolonged war with Iran (1980-88) and later the Gulf crisis crippled the economy of Iraq and thus hampered its socio-economic development.

The second chapter examines the nature of development taking place in the Third World followed by development in the Arab region. Oil has played a pivotal role in boosting the economy of most of the Middle Eastern countries. So far these countries have not succeeded in finding additional sources - agriculture or manufacturing - in order to enhance their income. On the other hand these countries are plagued
by various kinds of social and political problems. Many problems are common in nature. In this chapter an attempt has been made to identify these problems. Development theories, namely, modernization, dependency, and neo-Marxism have also been reviewed. While reviewing different theories, various flaws which these theories contain have been pointed out.

The third chapter assesses the changes which had occurred in the political structure of Iraq after Ba'th Party's arrival. The Ba'th Party sought the support of other parties, particularly the Communist Party of Iraq and the Kurdish Democratic Party, and formed the National Progressive Front. The Ba'th, however, gradually achieved its single-handed control in Iraq. The machinery of the Government was composed of four principal branches: the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC); the National Assembly; the Presidency; and the Judiciary. However, the regime, since 1980, has been controlled to an overwhelming degree by one individual, Saddam Husain who has led Iraq to two disastrous military adventures — the Iran-Iraq War and the Gulf War. The chapter also focusses on continuing problems like the Kurdish issue and Shi'a-Sunni rivalry.
The fourth chapter presents an account of the economic development during the Ba'ath regime. Although, the Ba'ath rule has succeeded in nationalizing the oil-based economy, it is yet to work out a system which would lessen the country's dependence on oil. The industry sector has moved towards the betterment. At the same time the condition of peasantry has also improved due implementation of land reforms laws from time to time. The Ba'ath regime has also taken steps towards human resource development. This chapter seeks to explain how all the standing issues have been dealt with in Iraq with the help of various National Development Plans during the Ba'ath rule.

The fifth chapter analyses Ba'ath government's social reforms programmes for the benefit of poorer classes, and the extent to which the Ba'ath government had been able to bridge the gap between rich and poor. It also presents the emerging form of social structure in Iraq. Reasons for and outcome of the process of urbanization and other demographic changes have also been dealt with. Ba'ath party's endeavours in the emancipation of women are also discussed along with the cultural changes that have been taking place in Iraq after 1968.