Conclusion
It has been observed that the foreign policy of Bangladesh has been an outcome of both continuity and change. Placing the two elements (continuity and change) into perspective, the latter seems to be more dominant. The consistent features, which emerged in Bangladesh's foreign policy are; its quest for national security and territorial integrity, balanced neighbourly relations conditioned by geopolitical reality and striving for stability and peace to promote international cooperation so that there is an uninterrupted external assistance, considered to be vital for its economic development.

The foreign policy components of Bangladesh encompassed principles of non-alignment, peaceful co-existence and opposition to colonialism, racialism and imperialism in any form. The post Mujib regime also contributed to the building of these keystones (as being a member of NAM, UN, OIC, Commonwealth of Nations and G-77, SAARC, NIEO), on which the main structure of Bangladesh's foreign policy rests.

The variables which determine the nature, objectives and principles of Bangladesh's foreign policy follow a general trend like other Third World countries. The tangible domestic factors of Bangladesh foreign policy have not been source of strength, rather has been posing constraints on Bangladesh's foreign policy pursuit. The geography, economy, population, natural resources, military capability makes Bangladesh's foreign policy vulnerable to external influence. Among the intangible variables, historical legacy, leadership and the ideology sans consensus, remained very sensitive. The issue of national ideology of Bangladesh is indirectly attached to the nature
of its relationship with India. External variables have been of equal importance in the foreign policy of Bangladesh. India factor, Islamic and Aid Dependency factors have been the epicentre of Bangladesh’s policy formulations. The post Mujib regimes have tried to minimise the influence of the India factor on Bangladesh and took divergent stands on various international issues which were disliked by India. Infact, it appears that the post 1975 regimes were more responsive to the likes and dislikes of the western donors and Islamic world in their outlook.

The foreign policy of Bangladesh towards its closest neighbour - India has been shaped by historical, geographical, political, economic and strategic factors. During the Mujibur Rahman period, constant efforts were made to utilize these factors for strengthening the synonymous nature of relationship based on principles of democracy, secularism, socialism and nationalism. A number of agreements were signed which were in consonance to political, economic cultural and strategic relations. The emphasis was laid on bilateral solutions of the existing disputes. The fact of shared culture was openly acknowledged. However, the changes were visible in overall relations with India in the post Mujib period. In the post 1975 period Bangladesh redefined its principles of secularism, socialism, nationalism and democracy. The major alterations were made in these basic fundamentals. Secularism was not only replaced by Islam but it was also declared as the state religion. It proved to be an impediment in normal development of Bangladesh’s relations with India. On the other hand, it became easy for Bangladesh to maintain its proximity to the Muslim world and secure its economic as well as ideological interests. The principle of socialism was redefined in terms of
"economic and social justice", which laid emphasis on liberalisation and privatisation of public resources. To an extent this change did effect its relations with India, who had adopted socialism as a path of development. At the same time, this shift took Bangladesh closer to the US, the Islamic world and to an extent to China and Japan. The new economic policy of Zia-ur Rahman, H.M. Ershad and Khaleda Zia opened new avenues for these countries to extend relations with Bangladesh in areas of economic interests.

The principle of nationalism which became an issue of controversy in post-Mujib period, left a negative impact on Bangladesh's relations with regard to India. It came under direct attack from the authoritarian regimes and efforts were made to minimise its proximity to Bengali nationalism by emphasising Bangladeshi nationalism. The principle of democracy ceased to exist after the country fell into the hands of authoritarian rulers. This became a limitation which gave a restricted outlook to Bangladesh manifesting internal and external actions.

During Mujibur-Rahman's regime Bangladesh maintained a cordial relations with the Soviet Union. Among the major powers, it was only the former Soviet Union (Russia) which came forward to support the liberation of Bangladesh by rendering it political, diplomatic and military help through India. The principles of non-alignment, anti-imperialism, anti-colonialism which formed the basis of Bangladesh's foreign policy were appreciated by the Soviet Union. A series of friendship societies and other organisations were formed to foster relations with Soviet Union. The ban on communist party of
Bangladesh was also lifted. However, the policy towards Soviet Union underwent a major reversal in the Post-Mujib regimes. They pursued strong anti-Soviet policies on major regional and international issues, which seriously affected Bangladesh's relations with the former Soviet Union. The disintegration of the USSR and the subsequent formation of Independent States created a more conducive environment for the improvement of Bangladesh's relations with regard to successor states of former Soviet Union. However, no significant progress has been achieved so far. Yet, the two countries appeared to be interested in maintaining normal economic and cultural interests.

Bangladesh's foreign policy towards United States of America was based on economic concerns. In initial years of independence Bangladesh's relations with US were affected, due to the latter's negative attitude towards Bangladesh's liberation movement. In the post 1975 period, the political changes, which emerged in domestic and foreign policies of Bangladesh provided a broader scope for significant improvements in Bangladesh-US relations. US remained a major partner in the economic development of Bangladesh. USAID have played a major role in providing developmental aid as well as disaster assistance to Bangladesh. It shared American strategic perception and participated in various UN sponsored MNP operations. To an extent the improvement in Bangladesh-US relations has been a response to Bangladesh's economic needs and security concerns. China emerged as one of the close partners of Bangladesh in its political, economic and security pursuits in the post-Mujib period. Bangladesh gained Chinese support in its bilateral dispute on Ganga water sharing issue with India. Bangladesh in return supported China's
position on International issues. The economic exchanges were widened and diversified into various sectors. In the military relations China remained major arm supplier to Bangladesh. In the post-cold war period, priority was given to strengthen economic relations with China at length. With Japan, Bangladesh's relations to a great extent have been aid and development oriented. In post Mujib period, particularly in 1990s, Japan emerged as the largest donor to Bangladesh. Bangladesh however shares similar outlook on various regional and international issues with Japan.

Bangladesh's foreign policy towards Islamic countries has also been influenced by numerous factors. In the Mujib period, the relation was not very smooth, due to the negative attitude of Islamic countries towards Bangladesh's emergence as an independent nation. In the post Mujib period, the relations remained very cordial, as a result of which Bangladesh benefited not only economically, but politically as well. The prime preoccupations in Bangladesh's foreign policy towards these countries remained focussed on how to ensure the inflow of more aid and to increase the remittances. In these years, the process of strengthening relations with these countries reached at its culmination. The Islamization of Bangladesh in itself proved to be an impetus in enhancing its relations with these countries. Bangladesh also laid emphasis on the strengthening of the OIC and enlarging its scope. In the initial years Bangladesh's relations with Pakistan had been effected by latter's indifferent attitude towards Bangladesh (East Pakistan before 1971) resulting in delayed recognition to Bangladesh as an independent nation. In the post Mujib period a new chapter was opened in Bangladesh-Pakistan relations and no need was felt to give
a retrospective glance. However, importance was laid to improve its relations with Pakistan in all spheres. Substantial progress could be achieved on the issues of dispute of assets and liabilities and repatriation of stranded Pakistani in Bangladesh. Inspite of attempts to further its relations with Pakistan, Bangladesh could not achieve substantial progress due to a deadlock on the issue of assets and liabilities and repatriation of stranded Pakistanis in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh's foreign policy towards the small South Asian countries remained focussed on mutual co-existence and helped Bangladesh achieve success in its political-economic interests in the region. Among the above mentioned South Asian countries. The relationship between Bangladesh and Nepal have been most fruitful and conducive. Bangladesh' relations with Bhutan spread in all spheres, bilateral, regional and global. Both the countries by and large have been able to identity common interests. In case of Bangladesh relations with Sri Lanka, interests remained converged on security, trade and aid issues.

The objective of discussing Bangladesh's relations with India, the Former Soviet Union, the US, China, Japan, Islamic and South Asian countries have been manifold. It however, goes to prove the hypothesis drawn through this study on two lines:

One, that during the post Mujib period Bangladesh accorded greater priority to its relations with US, China, Japan and the Islamic countries over India and the former Soviet Union. And that the post Cold War development gave impetus to economic and trade relations. The latter however, draws extensively from the former in that, it was
the economic relations (exchange, aid dependency etc.) which became
the guiding force in prioritising the proximity of the developed
countries to Bangladesh.

However, the hypothesis that the national interests demanded
continuity in foreign policy wherein the vested interest of post Mujib
regimes influenced a change in the policy stands partially proved. In
the Mujib period the question of nationalism took precedence over
Islamic ideology (as East Pakistan from 1947 to 1971) and the Bengali
outlook (proximity to India and a shared culture). It was in the post
Mujib period that the question of nationalism became a matter of
controversy. This change in foreign policy pursuit is reflected in how
the national interest was sidelined by the vested interests of the
authoritarian regimes. During this period Bangladesh's proximity to
Islam and Islamic ideology came to the forefront when Islam was
declared as the state religion of Bangladesh. As a result, Bangladesh
distanced itself to a greater degree from its immediate democratic
neighbour-India.

Bangladesh even in the post Mujib regime worked on
authoritarian or democratic consensus form people which speaks of
the importance given to national interest. National interest in case of
Bangladesh has provided the base for the formulation of its foreign
policy. Nationalism has been strong among the Bangladeshis.
Bangladesh being a small Third World nation however, has managed
to carve a niche for itself in the international order.