

“Religion, Politics and Political Empowerment in Bangladesh”

A Research paper submitted to the Department of World Religions and Culture for the fulfillment of M. Phil Programme

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Dated: 23 February 2020

Chameli Samad

Declaration

The thesis entitled “Religion, Politics and Political Empowerment in Bangladesh” submitted by me for the award of the degree Master of Philosophy at the University of Dhaka is based upon my own work carried out under the supervision of Dr. kazi Nurul Islam, Professor, Department of World Religions and Culture, University of Dhaka.

I would like to declare that neither of this thesis or any part of it has been submitted earlier to any university or institution for the award of degree or diploma.

Dated: 23 February 2020

Chameli Samad

Approval of the Supervisor

I am pleased to certify that Chameli Samad bearing the registration no- 78 for the academic year 2013-2014 with the Department of World Religions and Culture, University of Dhaka has prepared her M. Phil thesis entitled “ Religion, Politics and Political Empowerment in Bangladesh” under my supervision.

This is her original work. This thesis or any of its part was not submitted earlier for any degree or publication.

.....

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Abstract

The title of this thesis is Religion, Politics and Political Empowerment in Bangladesh. In this thesis, we will examine the position of Religion, Politics and Political Empowerment in Bangladesh. This thesis also covers about the real meaning of Religion, Politics and Political Empowerment, historical background of Politics and Empowerment, the mixing situation of religion and politics, different systems and activities by political parties to achieve political power.

The Political history of Bangladesh is a short one, even when one includes the pre-liberation period or what can also be called the Pakistan era. But short history is full of problems and tragedies associated with political experimentation. Since the end of British colonial rule in 1947, the people of the country have experienced an uncountable number of political parties, numerous political movements and uprisings.

There are five major political forces in the country. The Awami League (AL), the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), the Bangladesh Communist party, the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal and the Jatiyo Party (JP).

There is a singular lack of tolerance in the political party system who's the major opposition parties are often at violent loggerheads. Trade-Union and student wings mirror the political inclinations of the present parties. Activities are more confrontational than positive. The party in power usually takes advantages of state resources to suppress opposition activities. Opposition to ruling government policies are often portrayed as anti-state treasonable

activities and the state police machinery is used to make politically motivated arrests and repression of opposition members.

Different political parties use religion in politics to achieve political power. But politics is always a field of the politicians. Religion is an important part of the society. The use of religion in politics adversely affects the life of the people and the governing system of a country. It brings destruction not only to the religious and ethnic minorities but also to the mainstream people of a country by imposing adverse norms by the misinterpretation of religion. So, Politics is the art of compromise and religion is the faith to an uncertain matter. They should have separate roots in their own way to the life of the people. Politics cannot run smoothly if there are religions in it. Politics and religion should run in different track. The history of the middle age as well as of the Bangladesh shows the negative consequences of religious influence in politics. It showed that the misinterpretations of religion by the parties are gaining power bringing damage and destruction for the nation. It creates the discrimination to the minorities. Birth of Pakistan in 1947 is the result of Religion and Politics. The split of Sudan to north and south can be a recent example of religious influence in politics. The religious influence in the politics had brought a massacre and destruction of the people and its cultural values during 1971. In 1972 Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the father of the nation declared Bangladesh as a secular state banning religious politics.

But in order to keep consistency with the religious values of 89.5 percent of the people he took some steps which made secret root to the religion to influence in the politics. The influence was not too much. But as a colonial state we go back to the military government after the tragic assassination of Bangabandhu, the root for religion to influence the politics had been widely opened. General Ziaur Rahman institutionalized the influence of religion in politics by amending the

constitution and by openly allowing religion based parties in politics. Later, General Ershad made the root easy by institutionalizing this influence. Until 2001, although there were a few number of religion based political parties in Bangladesh, they did not have much influence in the politics. But in 2001, Begum Khaleda Zia's BNP made a coalition government with Jamat-e-Islam. By this way, the religion based political party directly came in state power and consequently the democratic values became distorted. The religious minorities were in a difficult position. They were beaten up, tortured and their houses were burnt and destroyed. Even some other Islam based political party followers were assaulted tortured and killed by the government party especially in the southern part of the country. Sheikh Hasina's government is also strict to establish the democratic norms and values by aborting the religious influences in the political life of the people. The student organization of Jamat namely, 'Chatra Shibir' and their violence has been banned. The government also has taken strong steps to those parties or groups which want to increase terrorism in the country in the name of religion.

On the other hand, half of the total population of our country is women whose socio-economic condition is very low. Struggle for modernity, tradition, men-women equality, social dignity, security and for multilateral pressure the position of women in the family is very complex. Though women work in educational institution, medical, factories, police, even in the uneven areas, women are neglected, tortured and persecuted. In the society of gender disparity it is difficult for women to stay parallel and enjoy the right of equal participant. But no socio-economic, political and cultural development is possible without the empowerment of women. It is a cruel reality; women are deprived in family and society, in decision making process, in administrative process of governance and most importantly in economic activities. Even the women

contribute in the process of social development, which has also financial value, are being ignored by the society.

The elected women member's participation in local government bodies remains generally insignificant, as they are not given any specific duties. The absence of operational guidelines and terms of reference for female elected representatives, the limited capacity of the female elected representatives to operate in public institutions of this nature, the lack of awareness over their roles and responsibilities. Education is the strongest factor influencing women's control of their own fate. In Bangladesh women are furthermore handicapped because of lower educational achievements and the prevalence of social norms that severely restrict their freedom of movement in the public place. And so they do not show interest in participating in local government activities. The male-biased environment within political institutions can deter women. The fact that there are few women on decision-making bodies means that these women have to work within styles and modes acceptable to men. As a result women cannot give attention to their issues. Sometime they are treated by their colleagues and society harshly. Many, if not all, male elected members harbor negative attitude towards elected women members. They believe women should not run for general seats. They denigrate the value of the reserved seats. Lack of cooperation by men in the local government is a significant barrier to women's effectiveness in decision-making. The introduction of direct election to the reserved seats is undoubtedly a breakthrough for women in Bangladesh. In no other way could these women have moved in to these institutions and participated in them. Still there is in a gender imbalance in the ration of men and women in the local government bodies. As a result the elected women members have very limited scope to influence decisions.

So, in order to give Bangladeshi women a place in the decision-making process, there is a need to increase the number of women holding political office at both the local and national levels. They need to be empowered mentally, economically and politically. That is why modern social science turned women development as the empowerment of women. However, any substantial increase in women's representation in public life depends on the mainstream changes within the major political parties; the strong support and campaigning by women's groups, NGOs, and the media; the removal of structural impediments, traditional mindsets, biases and attitudes based on gender roles, and access to financial resources. Roles and responsibilities of the women members should be clearly defined in the manuals and orders of local government. Work should be fairly distributed among the male and female members in such a way so that women member can meaningfully participate in all type of functions. To create greater awareness among women about their low status in society and the need to improve it, motivational programs along with programs for expanding opportunities for education, health care and employment should be launched. Specific programs should be undertaken by the government and non-government organizations in order to create an awareness among the women in the grass roots levels that political participation would give them an access to the political decision making process relating to the allocation of resources. Mass media should be used to educate and mobilize public opinion in such a way that the realization about the benefits of women's full participation in the national development efforts is created among people. Priority must be given to monitoring the status, conditions and rights of women. There must be a sustained campaign for women mobilization, regular reporting of monitoring, public information and advocacy in this realm. Women should be given various opportunities for leadership training, training regarding the activities of local level and education in order to encourage them to take up political and leadership position. Supportive services should be provided to allow women

participate in these training courses. A former member of the parliament from the AL, Sajeda Chowdhury, observed that, ‘Women must be encouraged to be more independent and self-reliant and that social norms and cultural values to be re-oriented’. There is an urgent need to undertake research on women’s participation in politics, their voting behavior, consciousness and participation in the political parties.

However, the religion-based parties are opposed to women in public office. It is likely that in the national parliament of Bangladesh as well as in the local level politics, women’s representation will remain insignificant in the near future despite their enthusiasm to provide political leadership. Empowerment is a useful concept because it emphasizes the idea of women as active agents in, rather than passively recipients of development strategies. Therefore, participation is considered as an essentially first step in order to empower women.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background of This Study

The title of this thesis is Religion, Politics and Political Empowerment in Bangladesh. In this thesis, we will examine the position of Religion, Politics and Political Empowerment in Bangladesh.⁴⁸

The Political history of Bangladesh is a short one, even when one includes the pre-liberation period or what can also be called the Pakistan era. But short history is full of problems and tragedies associated with political experimentation. Since the end of British colonial rule in 1947, the people of the country have experienced an uncountable number of political parties, numerous political movements and uprisings.

There are five major political forces in the country. The Awami League (AL), the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), the Bangladesh communist party, the Jatiya Samajtantrick Dal and the Jatiyo Party (JP).

There is a singular lack of tolerance in the political party system who's the major opposition parties are often at violent loggerheads. Trade-Union and student wings mirror the political inclinations of the present parties. Activities are more confrontational than positive. The party in power usually takes advantages of state resources to suppress opposition activities. Opposition to ruling government policies are often portrayed as anti-state treasonable activities and the state police machinery is used to make politically motivated arrests and repression of

opposition members.

A truly democratic and representative government cannot be established without women's participation in the political process. In a democracy women should enjoy equal rights of political participation and exercise their rights fully. Historically men have dominated the world of government and politics everywhere. But it can be seen that participation of women in politics is low for different causes. In this context it is pleasing to see that two chief party leaders are women in Bangladesh: Begum Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina. The party leader of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) is Begum Khaleda Zia the BNP was founded as a center right liberal Democratic Party. It was established in 1978 during regime of general Zia. The party combines nationalist, liberal and left wing elements opposed to the Awami League. The BNP has ruled BD for 14 years and three terms since its birth (1978-1982), (1991-1996), (2001-2006) since 2001, it has been part of the controversial Four party Alliance with two hard-line Islamist parties, including the Jammat-e-Islam and Islami Oikya Jote.

Sheikh Hasina has been Prime Minister of Bangladesh since 2009; she also served it that from 1996 to 2001. Hasina has led the Bangladesh Awami League since 1981. She is the eldest daughter of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the founding father and first President of Bangladesh, and widow of M.A. Wazed Mian, a nuclear scientist. Sheikh Hasina's party defeated the BNP led Four-Party Alliance in the 2008 parliamentary election. Sheikh Hasina's Political career has spanned more than four decades during which she has been both Prime Minister and opposition leader. She returned as Prime Minister after a landslide victory for the Awami League-led Grand Alliance in 2008, when they took two-thirds of the seats in parliament.

1.2 Objectives of the Study:

The Paper is particularly deliberated for those who are working or projected to

work in the field of Politics and Political empowerment in Bangladesh. This work will be a guide for them. The specific objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To know the real meaning of Religion, Politics and Political Empowerment.
2. To discuss the Position of politics in Bangladesh as a Muslim majority Democratic Country.
3. To provide information about the Political Empowerment in Bangladesh.

1.3 Scope of the Study:

The present paper is an important study and it can be an academic study of the understanding of Religion, Politics and Political Empowerment in Bangladesh. The present paper is a humble attempt to present a clear picture about the real position of Religion, Politics and Political Empowerment in Bangladesh. There are many books on Politics, but there is no available book about the mixing position of Religion and Politics in Bangladesh perspective. In this study, have tried to clarify Religion, Politics and Political Empowerment with their definition, origin, history and Position. Therefore, the present study itself of a scope to study which covers the following aspects:

1. General Concept of Religion, Politics and Political Empowerment in Bangladesh.
2. Historical background of Religion, Politics and Empowerment.
3. The Position or mixing situation of Religion and politics in Bangladesh.
4. Different systems and activities by political parties and the real situation of Empowerment in Bangladesh.

1.4 Methodology:

The methodology of research varies according to its research goal and objective.

This research will be completed by following descriptive methods.

This present paper will be based on a widespread survey of the existing relevant political condition in our country. The mandatory portions of information had collected from secondary sources like books, journals and interviews. I had cross checked my collected information with some books and also talked with different persons and finally it had proved that all information status are relevant. In many books, same information has already found out to the best of our knowledge so serious works on this issue have yet been done. The present study, therefore, will be a humble effort to make up the gap of previous works.

1.5 Limitations of the Study:

Every study has some limitations. The limitations of the present study will be as follows:

1. Because of my own limitation it was not possible to go through each and every corner of religion and politics.
2. It was not possible to go through all the historical documents related to these topics.
3. All the necessary activities of religion, politics and political empowerment in Bangladesh might be estimated here.
4. There are no enough scholarly writings on religion in politics. That's why in our country; I had to inanslate many things from Bengali to English.

1.6 Plan of Subsequent Chapters:

The present paper will be divided into six chapters of which the chapter One is introduction. In the chapter Two, I have discussed the basic concepts of Religion, Politics and Empowerment. The chapter Three presents the position of politics in Bangladesh as a Muslim majority democratic country. The chapter Four presents

different systems and activities by political parties to achieve political power. The chapter Five presents political empowerment in Bangladesh as a Muslim majority democratic country. The chapter Six deals with conclusion containing some remarks on the influence or relation of religion, politics and political empowerment in Bangladesh.

CHAPTER TWO

RELIGION, POLITICS AND EMPOWERMENT

2.1 Meaning of Religion

Religion is a set of beliefs, feelings, dogmas and practices that define the relations between human being and sacred or diversity. It is a collection of belief systems cultural systems and world views that related to spirituality and sometimes to moral values. The meaning of religion is a discipline which enables a person to uphold and respect one's own beliefs without in any way being disrespectful or discourteous towards other religions.

Religion comes from French 'religion' means religious community, from 'Latin religion' means respect for what is sacred, reverence for the gods, obligation, the bond between man and the gods"¹ is derived from the Latin 'religion' the ultimate origins of which are obscure.

The origin of 'religion' is debated since antiquity. Cicero said it comes from "relegate" (to read again, to re-examine carefully to gather) in the meaning "to carefully consider the things related to the worship of gods. Later, Lucretius, Latencies and Tertullian us see its origin refer "the bond of piety that binds to god"² 'Re' and 'Legate' these two terms are combined to form the word Religion: 'Re' means again or a new and 'Legate' means to bind together. So, the literal meaning of religion is binding together a new. The word religion is sometimes used interchangeably with faith or belief system; however, in the words of Emile Durkheim, religion differs from private belief in that it is "something eminently social."³

¹ Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/religion>

² Harper, Doglas. " Religion Online Etymology Dictionary, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/religion>."

³ Durkheim, E. *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, London: George Allen and Unwin, p.10. 1915.

According to the philologist Max Muller, the root of the English word "religion", the Latin 'religion', was originally used to mean only "reverence for god or the gods, careful pondering of divine things, piety"⁴ Max Muller characterized many other cultures around the world, including Egypt, Persia, and India, as having a similar power structure at this point in history. What is called ancient religion today' they would have only called "law".

There are numerous definitions of religion which refers to a "belief in, or the worship of, a god or gods," or the "service and worship of god or the supernatural". Edward Burnett Tylor defined religion as simply "The belief in spiritual beings."⁵

The sociologist Durkheim defined religion as a "unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things".⁶ The psychologist William James defined religion as "the feelings, acts and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine".⁷

Sigmund Freud states. "Religion is an illusion and it derives its strength from the fact that it falls in with our instinctual desires".⁸

⁴ Max Muller, *Introduction to the Science of Religion*, London. p. 28.
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/religion>.

⁵ Tylor, E.B. *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy Religion Art, and Custom*, Vol-1. London. John Murray; p. 383.1871.

⁶ Durkheim, E. op. cit. p.11

⁷ James, W. *the Varieties of Religious Experience, A Study in Human Nature*,

Languages, Green, and Co, London, 1902. p.31.

⁸ The Chambers Dictionary, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/religion>.

Immanuel Kant says, "Religion is the recognition of all our duties as divine commands." E.B. Tylor refers "Belief in spiritual things" when Swindler recognizes "an explanation of the meaning of life and how to live accordingly."

Fredrick Schleiermacher defined religion as: "Feeling of absolute dependence, absolute as contrasted other relative feeling of dependence."

2.2 Characteristics of Religion:

Religion is a part of all cultures. It consists of beliefs and behavior patterns by which people try to control areas of the universe. It involves of various rituals, prayers, songs, narrative, symbols, traditions, dances, offerings, sacrifices and sacred histories to the supernatural world for aid. They tend to derive morality, ethics and religious laws. Thus as a way of life religion has some characteristics which guides the people to lead a perfect life.⁹

1. Most religions include belief in the supernatural (spirits, gods) or belief in some other Ultimate reality beyond, yet connected to, human experience and existence.
 - A. Hindus acknowledge Ultimate Reality, the Brahman, which is beyond all names and forms.
 - B. Christians consider themselves Monotheists, but Muslims reject the doctrine of the trinity as a dangerous possible form of polytheism.

⁹Tiwari, Kedar Nath. *Comparative Religion (reprint)*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1997. p. 153.

2. Religions distinguish between the sacred and profane (or ordinary) in terms of time, space, objects, and people.
 - A. Mecca is different from Milwaukee for Muslims.
 - B. Christmas and Easter are the most sacred days in the Christian calendar.

3. Religions strongly encourage or require prescribed ritual activities for individuals and communities of faith.
 - A. Rituals connected to birth and death frames the lifecycle in all religions.
 - B. Most religions celebrate and reenact sacred stories through annual rituals.

4. Religions commonly promote a moral code or ethical principles to guide individuals and communities.¹⁰
 - A. The Ten Commandments anchor legal and moral requirements in the biblical tradition, while shariah ("Islamic law") should ideally govern Muslims in an Islamic state.
 - B. Following the path of the Buddha includes vows of poverty and chastity, as well as dietary restrictions, for monks.

¹⁰ Swidler, Leonard and Mojzes Paul. *The study of Religion in an Age of Global Dialogue*. Temple University Press, Philadelphia.

- A. Religious life engages and incorporates common emotional and intuitive human feelings.
 - B. These feelings and mystery of existence, joy, guild, and the bond experienced in the community.
 - C. Religious worship often appeals to feelings of guilt and remorse, as well as joy and thanksgiving.
5. Religions both encourage communication and provide ways to communicate or connect with the divine.
- A. Individual and corporate prayers are visible among Christians, Muslims and Jews.
 - B. Hindus and Buddhists refine meditative techniques in order to discover the truth that is accessible within.¹¹
6. Through sacred a coherent worldview.
- A. The meaning of creation has to somehow into a logical pattern that explains how we get from where we are to where we hope to be.
 - B. Stories about the lives and teachings of the great religious leaders underscore the nature of the human predicament and offer guidance on how to realize the fullness of a hopeful future.¹²

¹¹ Immanuel Kant, *Religion Within the Limits of Reason*, 2nd ed., trans. TM. Greene and H.H. Hudson (Lasalle, III: Open Court Publishing, 1960),p. 142-143.

¹² J. Milton, Yinger. *Religion, Society, and the Individual* (New York: Macmillan, 1957),p. 9.

7. Religions organize life for individuals-including dress codes, personal sacrifices and appropriate occupations in the context of their respective worldviews.

A. A Buddhist monk wears a saffron robe and has a shaved head.

B. A Muslim woman wears the hijab, a tradition, loose-fitting covering that many include a veil.¹³

8. Religions require and promote social organization and institutional forms to carry out the necessary functions of worship and leadership, preserving orthodox teachings and practices.

A. Protestant Christians don't have a pope, and Sunni Muslim don't have ayatollahs (Supreme religious leaders) as Shite Muslims do.

B. All communities, however, have religious functionaries and institutional structures.

9. Religions promise an inner peace and harmony despite the vicissitudes of life.

A. Discovering meaning that transcends physical existence enables people of faith to overcome the challenges posed by disease, evil, and injustice that permeate life and society.

B. The religions that have stood the test of time have offered hope and meaning that move beyond mere physical survival.

C. _____

¹³ Bosnjak, Branko. (*Philosophy and Christianity* (Zagreb, Yugoslavia: Naprijed, 1966), p.574.)

10. Religions typically offer a future hope through the coming of a new age or a better existence in the afterlife.

A. Most religions gifted person (For example, the Jewish messiah, the Second Coming of Jesus, one final incarnation of the Hindu deity Vishnu, or one last manifestation of the Buddha) who will help usher in a new age of peace and tranquility.

B. The future hope may be realized in a new heaven or new Earth or a blissful existence beyond this physical life.¹⁴

11. Religions must propagate themselves through the recruitment of new members and procreation within the community of faith.

A. Buddhism, Christianity and Islam are the primary "missionary" religions in the world.

B. Most religions require marriage and procreation within the community as the primary source of new adherents.

2.3 Meaning of Politics

Politics is the way that people living in groups make decision. Politics is about making agreements between people so that they can live together in groups such as tribes, cities, or countries. Government is the regulation of public affairs and politics is the means by which people determine whose views of government will prevail.

¹⁴ Tillich, Paul. *Theology of Culture*, ed. Robert C. Kimball (: Oxford University Press, 1964)p.25

“Politics aim’s bean gong” said the American humorist Finley peter Dunne. pretty much summarizing Niccole Machiavelli’s advice to Lorenzo die pier de Medici in the prince (1513). Politics itself is a mixture of the high and the low. Politics is the recant in which we attempt to make real some of our highest aspirations: our desire for political freedom, our longing for justice, our hope for peace and security.¹⁵

The word politics comes from the Greek word Politico, modeled on Aristotle’s “affairs of the cites” the name of his book on governing and governments, which was rendered in English in the mid-15th century as Latinized “Polettiques”¹⁶ Thus it became “politics” in Middle English C. 15025. The singular politic first attested in English 1430 and comes from Middle comes from middle French Politique, in turn from Latin Politicus,¹⁷ which is the latinisation of the Greek Politicos, meaning amongst others of for or relating to citizens civil civic belonging to the state, in turn from “Polities” “Citizen” and that from “Polis”, city.

There are numerous definitions of politics which refers to the way that countries are governed and to the ways that governments make rules and laws.

Sir Winston Churchill defined politics as “politics are almost as exciting as war and quite as dangerous” Churchill followed up the simile with, “In war you can only be killed once, but in politics many times’.

William E. Gladstone refers, “politics are like a labyrinth, from the inner intricacies of which it is even more difficult to find the way of escape than it was to find the way into them”¹⁸

¹⁵ Politics Online Etymology Dictionary.

¹⁶ Charlton T. Lewis, Charles Short, A Latin Dictionary.

¹⁷ Henry George Liddel, Robert Scott, A Greek – English Lexicon.

¹⁸ www.politicsofsoul.org/2008/09/21/characteristics-of-politics

Eugene Mc Cathy says “Politics is like being a football coach. You have to be smart enough to understand the game and dumb enough to think it’s important”
Nikita S. Khrushchev says, “Politics is like a circus wrestling match”

Eduard Herriot says, “Politics is like a race horse. A good Jockey must know how to fall with the least possible damage”. Thomas Jefferson says, “Politics like religion, hold up the torches of martyrdom to the reformers of error”¹⁹

2.4 Characteristics of Politics:

Henry Kissinger said that ninety percent of politicians give the other ten percent a bad name of course Kissinger is one of the genuinely bad ones, implicated in violence against humanity such as the carpet bombing of Cambodia. The invasion of East Timor by Suharto’s Indonesia, and the overthrow of the democratically elected Allendale government in Chile by the brutal dictatorship of Pinochet.

Nevertheless, it is worth distinguishing between good and bad politics. Bad politics is factionalism, manipulation, Machiavellianism. It is power-based, using power to get our way, exercising power to legitimate interests of others without due process or debate. It is the politics we are used to the politics that has given politics a bad reputation.

Good politics is more fundamental to human nature. It is about appreciating people’s talents and welding them into a whole. It is about collectively discerning the good, finding the right direction for our societies, and discovering ways to harmoniously deploy our combined attributes and resources to reach our goals.

¹⁹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/politics>.

Yes, it involves prioritization and economics, because there are hard decisions to make, but it is based on respect for the weak and the desire for wholeness.

In this article I will explore some of the characteristics of good politics under the following headings:

- (1) Discerning the Good: Aristotle famously said that “man is a political animal”, and he distinguished mankind from other creatures such as bees who are merely social. What makes mankind political is our ability to discern the good and to collectively strive for it. Bees are not political because although they are social they cannot reflect on their purpose nor adjust their behaviors.²⁰ In the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle writes:

“If, then, there is some and of the things we do, which we desire for its own sake (everything else being desired for the sake of this), and if we do not choose everything for the sake of something else (for at that rate the process would go on infinity, so that our desire would be empty and vain), clearly this must be the Good and the chief good. Will not the knowledge of it, then, have a great influence on life? Shall we not, like archers who have a mark to aim at, be more likely to hit upon what is right? If so, we must try, in outline at least, to determine what it is, and of which of the sciences or capacities it is the object. It would seem to belong to the most authoritative art and that which is most truly the master art. And politics appears to be of this nature.”²¹
- (2) “The Master Art”: politics is ‘the master art’ because it takes all other skills and arts within a society and welds them into a coherent whole, tending towards the chief good:

²⁰ www.meriam-webster.com/dictionary/politics

²¹ Carnerio, Robert L, (21) “*A Theory of the Origin of the State*”, Newyork, 1985. p-169

“It is (politics) that ordains which of the science should be studied in a state, and which each class of citizens should learn and up to what point they should learn them; and we see even the most highly esteemed of capacities to fall under this, e.g. Strategy, economics, rhetoric; now, since politics uses the rest of the sciences, and since, again, it legislates as to what we are to do and what we are abstain from, the end of this science must include those of the others, so that this end must be the Good for man.²²

(3) Diversity: What is the smallest political unit? The modern state is political, the city or town is political, even the family can be thought of as political, because they are all composite social organizations made up of multiple individual human members. What about individuals ourselves? Are we political units? Is there occurring within each of us individually?

In many ways the process of individual psychological development is similar to politics. Is it too much of a leap to say that the process of individual self-development is truly ‘political’ rather than just a similitude of politics? Surely in order for an entity to be political it must be composed of discrete, diverse units, each with some sort of autonomy. Is it correct to say that our thoughts, emotions, dreams, unconscious tendencies and so forth have enough autonomy, diversity and discretion to make each individual a political unit?

²² Jenks Edward, *A History of Politics-London*, p. 124-139.

It is a political entity does not need to fulfill the strong criteria of being composed of discrete, diverse, fully autonomous units; it does at least need to fulfill the weaker criterion of being heterogeneous-composed of distinguishable parts. A completely bland and homogenous entity cannot be political. Under this weaker criterion the individual could be political.

Diversity, at least in the sense of heterogeneity (i.e. distinguishable difference within an entity) is a necessary pre-condition for politics, along with dialectic: the possibility for resolving tension arising from difference by using individual or collective discernment of the good.

- (4) Pluralism: A concept which further illuminates diversity is pluralism. Pluralism is diversity plus! Diversity is difference and Pluralism is recognizing strength in difference. Pluralism does not merely tolerate diversity, it rejoices in it.

Pluralism should not be confused with liberalism (Parikh, 2006). Liberalism espouses a particular set of values such as the importance of individual freedom and autonomy. Pluralism on the other hand espouses no values other than the appreciation of good qualities in diversity. Liberalism can be intolerant of those who do not espouse liberal values, such as members of traditional religions and pre-enlighten cultures. Therefore either liberals or conservatives can be pluralistic.²³

The point about pluralism is that it requires flexibility. It requires the ability to step outside our own skins and inhabit others space. Seeing the World through others eyes we come to appreciate their good qualities. This enables the resolution of tensions or conflicts between groups,

²³ Blattberg, Charles, *Political Philosophies and Political Ideologies.* July-2001.

the dialectic that makes politics work.

- (5) Dialectic: Dialectic is the resolution of difference. It takes two positions which are in tension (thesis and antithesis) and finds a third position (synthesis) which resolve the tension.

Politics is the governing elements of society because it is capable of resolving tensions between different groups and moving the whole society in a particular direction. When politics is working well a society enjoys a high degree of unity. When politics is not working then the difference within a society widen into deep and painful rifts.

The unity enjoyed by a society in which politics is working should not be mistaken for uniformity. Unity is possible whether a society is culturally uniform or heterogeneous (i.e. multicultural). The most dynamic harmonious societies are pluralistic.

- (6) Awareness: Good politics involves awareness of the larger, ‘macro’ dimension of our activities. It is lifting up our heads from the particular tasks we are engaged into see the bigger picture. It means investing our activities with a broader awareness, thereby improving their quality. Political awareness is an uplifting experience and also poignant activities are links in a chain of suffering. For example, if we understand where our food comes from we may become aware of the poverty of many of the farmers who produce it, the pollution caused by transporting it, the difficulties of retailing it, and the compromises made it cooking it.

Political awareness is a form of spirituality because it invests our activities with a sense of connectedness to a bigger whole. Political awareness means that we are deeply immersed in our activities and at the same time we transcend them. The opposite of the feeling of connect ness that comes from political awareness is alienation. Activity performed in a state of alienation is devoid of any spiritual quality. It is exhausted and exhausting. It is truly unproductive.

(7)Pragmatism: An important truth about the pragmatic nature of politics is captured in the saying ‘politics is the art of the possible’ politics is ultimately practical: it is about implementing solutions. People can dream of many things, but if they want their dreams to become real they must get involved in the practical sphere of politics. Politics is grounded in the world. Being idealistic on its own is not enough, but this not means that people should not be idealistic. Simply being pragmatic may result in policy being implemented, but it will not result in society moving forward. The good politician needs a balance between idealism and pragmatism, between heaven and earth.²⁴

2.5 History of Politics:

The political history of the world in the history of the various political entities created by the human race throughout their existence and the way these states define their borders. Throughout history political entities have expanded from basic systems of self governance and monarchy to the complex democratic and communist systems that exist today,

²⁴ Farr, James. Seidetman, Remond Discipline and History.1993.

in parallel, political systems have expanded from vaguely defined frontier type boundaries to the definite boundaries, to the definite boundaries existing today.

2.5.1 Ancient History:

In ancient history, civilizations did not have definite boundaries as states have today, and their borders could be more accurately described as frontiers. Early dynastic summer and early dynastic Egypt were the first civilizations to define their boarder.

The first states of sorts were those of early dynastic Egypt, which arose from the Kruk period and pre-dynastic Egypt respectively 3000 BCE.²⁵ Early dynastic Egypt was base around the Nile River in the north east of Africa, the Kingdom's boundaries being based around the Nile and stretching to areas where oases existed.²⁶ Early dynastic summer was located in southern Mesopotamia with its borders extending from the Persian Gulf to parts of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers.

By 2500 BCE the Indus Valley civilization, located in modern day Pakistan had formed.

²⁵ Daneel, Glyn (2003) [1968]. *The First Civilization: The Archaeology of their Origins*. New York: Phonix Press, 2003(1968). p. xiii.

²⁶ Daniel. Glyn (2003) [1968]. *The First Civilizations: The Archaeology of their Origins*. New York: Phoniex Press: 2003(1968)p. 9-11.

The civilization boundaries extended 600 km inland from the Arabian Sea.²⁷

336 BCE saw the rise of Alexander the Great, who forged an empire from various vassal states stretching from modern Greece to the subcontinent, bringing Mediterranean nations into contact to those of central and southern Asia, much as the Persian Empire had before him. The boundary of this empire extended hundreds of kilometers.²⁸

The Roman Empire (27 BCE-476 AD) was the first Western Civilization known to accurately described as frontiers,²⁹ instead of the Empire defining its borders with precision, the borders were allowed to trail off and were, in many cases, part of territory indirectly ruled by others.

2.5.2 Middle Ages:

When China entered the Sui Dynasty, the government changed and expanded in its borders as the many separate bureaucracies unified less than one banner. This evolved into the Tang Dynasty when Li Yuan took control of China in 626. By now the Chinese borders had expanded from eastern Chinas up north into the Tang Empire.³⁰

The Tang Empire fell apart in 907 and split into ten regional Kingdoms and five dynasties with vague borders.

²⁷ Daniels, Patrica S; Stephen G Hyslop, Douglas Brinkley, Esther Ferington, Lee Hassing, Dale-Maric Hering (2003). Toni Eugene, ed. *Almanac of World History*. National Geographic Society. 2003. p.56.

²⁸ Blois, Lukas; Robartus van der Spek . *Introduction to the Ancient World*. New York, US: Routledge, 1997. p.131.

²⁹ *A World defined By Boundaries: Interest*. Syracuse University. 2001. Retrieved 2008-11-21.

³⁰ Herruan, Albert). *Historicl and Commerical Atlas of China*. Cheng-wen Publishing House. Retrived 2008-12-7.1970.

Fifty-three years after the separation of the Tang Empire, China entered the Long Dynasty under the rule of Chao K'uang, although the borders of this country expanded, they were never as large as those of the Tang Dynasty and was constantly being redefined due to attacks from the neighboring Tartar (Mongol) people known as the Kitten tribes.³¹

After the death of the Islamic prophet Muhammad (Sm.) in 632, the Islamic Caliphate extended from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to central Asia in the east. The subsequent Muslim empire of the Umayyad, Abbasids, Fatimid's, Ghaznavids, Seljuqs, Safaris and Ottomans were among the most influence and distinguished powers in the world during middle ages.

Over most of the continent, the peoples were emerging around ethnic, linguistic and geographical groups, but this was not reflected in political entities. In particular, France, Italy and Germany, though recognized by other nations as countries for centuries and struggles to form them and define borders as states were a major cause of wars in Europe until the 20th century. In the course of this process. Some countries, such as Poland under the partitions and France in the High Middle Ages, almost ceased to exist as states for periods.

In 1299 CE the Aztec empire arose in lower Mexico, this empire lasted over 300 years and at their prime, held over 5,000 square kilometers of land.³²

200 years after the Aztec and Toltec empires began; northern and central Asia saw the rise of the Mongol Empire. By the late 13th century,

³¹ Daniels, Patricia S; Stephen G Hyslop, Douglas Brinkley, Esther Feringti\on, Lee Hassing, Dale-Narie Herring . Toni Eugene, Ed. *Almanac of World History*. National Geographic Society.2003. p. 134-35.

³² Isouras, Peter Montezuma: *Warlord of the Aztecs*. Brassey's, 2005. p. xv.

the Empire extended across Europe and Asia, briefly creating a state capable of ruling in administrating immensely diverse cultures.³³ In 1299, the Ottoman entered the scene. These Turkish nomads took control of Asia Minor along with much of central Europe over a period of 370 years, providing what may be considered a long lasting Islamic counter weight to Christendom.³⁴

2.5.3 Early Modern:

In the 15th and 16th centuries three major Muslim empires formed: the Ottoman empire in the Middle East, the Balkans and Northern Africa; the Safari Empire in Greater Iran; the Mughul Empire in South Asia.

By the end of the 19th century, all three had declined, and by early 20th century, with the Ottomans defeat in World War-I, the last Muslim empire collapsed.

In 1700, Charles-II of Spain died, naming Phillip of Anjou, Louis XIV's grandson, his heir. Charles decision was not well met by the British, who believed that Louis would use the opportunity to ally France and Spain and attempt to take over Europe; Britain formed the Grand Alliance with Holland, Austria and a majority of the German states and declared war against Spain in 1702. The war of the Spanish succession last 11 years, and ended when the Treaty of Utrecht was signed in 1714.³⁵

³³ Berdan, Frances F; Richard E. Blanton, Elezabeth H. Boone, Mary G. Hodge, Michael E. Smith, Emily Umberger. *Aztec Imperial Strateigics*. Washington, DC: Dumberton Oaks.1996.

³⁴ Jacob, Samuel, *History of the Ottoman Empire: Including a Survey of the Greek Empire and the rusades*. R. Griffin,1854. p.456. Retrieved 2008-01-14.

³⁵ Frey, Marsha, Linda Frey. *The Treaties of the War of the Spanish Succession*.Green Wood Publishing Group. London.1995.

Interest in the geography of the Southern Hemisphere began to in the 18th century. In 1642, Dutch navigator Abel Tasman was commissioned to explore the Southern Hemisphere; during his voyages settlements in Australia began in 1788 when Britain began to utilize the country for the depuration of convicts, with the first free settlers arriving in 1793 likewise New Zealand become a home for hunters seeking whales and seals in the 1790s with later non-commercial settlements by the Scottish in the 1820s and 30s.

By the late 1780s, France was falling into debt, with higher taxes introduced and famines ensuing.³⁶ As a measure of last resort, King Louis XVI called together the Estates General in 1788 and reluctantly agreed to turn the third estate into a national Assembly. This Assembly grew very popular in the public eye and on July 14, 1789 following evidence that the King planned to disband the Assembly.

In August of the same year, members of the national Assembly wrote the revolutionary document Declaration of the rights of man and of the citizen which proclaimed freedom of speech, press and religion.

By 1792, other European states were attempting to quell the revolution. In the same year Austrian and German armies attempted to March on Paris but French repelled them.

A new constitution was adopted in 1795 with some clam returning although the century was still at War. In 1799, a group of politicians led by Napoleon Bonaparte unseated leaders of the Directory

³⁶ Daniels, Patricia S; Stephen G Hyslop, Douglas Brinkley, Esther Ferington. Lee Hassing Dale-Marie Herring Tokni Engene, ed. *Atmanac of World History, National Geographic Social, Oxford University Press, 2003. p. 22-25.*

2.5.4 Modern History:

Modern history, also referred to modern period or the modern era, is the historical time line after the middle Ages. Modern history can be further broken down into the early modern period and the late modern period after the France revolution and the industrial Revolution Contemporary history is the Span of historic events that are immediately relevant to the present time. The modern era began approximately in the 16th century. ³⁷

2.5.5 Pre-Modern:

In the pre-modern era, Western Civilization made a gradual transition from premodernity to modernity when scientific methods were developed which led many to believe that the use of science would lead to all knowledge, thus throwing back the shroud of myth under which pre-modern peoples lived.

2.5.6 Post modern and contemporary:

‘Post Modernism’ coined in 1949, on the other hand, would describe rather a movement in art than a period of history and is usually applied to arts, but not to any events of the very recent history. This changed when post modernity was coined to refer to the major changes in the 1850s and 1960s in economy, society,

³⁷ Dunan, Marcel, *Larousse Encyclopedia of Modern History, from 1500 to the present Day*, New York: Harper & Row, 1964.

culture and philosophy. Sometimes distinct from the modern periods themselves the terms ‘modernity’ and ‘modernism’ refer to a new way to thinking, distinct from medieval thinking.

2.5.7 Modern Era:

The modern period has been a period of significant development in the fields of science, politics, warfare and technology. It has also been an age of discovery and globalization. During the time, the European powers and later their colonies began a political economic and cultural colonization of the rest of the World.

2.5.8 Early Modern Period:

Historians consider the early modern period to be approximately between 1500 and 1800. It follows the late Middle Ages period and is marked by the first European colonies, the rise of strong centralized governments, and the beginning or recognizable nation's states that are the direct antecedents of today's states.

In Africa and Ottoman Empire, the Muslim expansion took place in North and East Africa. In West Africa, various native nations existed. The Indian Empire and civilizations of South East Asia were a vital link in the spice trade. On the Indian subcontinent, the Great Mughul Empire existed. The archipelagic empires, the Sultanate of Malacca and later the Sultanate of Johor, controlled the southern areas.

Concerning the Asia varies Chinese dynasties and Japanese Cognates controlled the Asia sphere. In Japan, the Edo period from 1600 to 1868 is also sometimes referred to as the early modern period. And in Korea from the rising of Joseon Dynasty to the enthronement of King Gongs is referred to as the early modern period. In the American, Native Americans had built a large and varied civilization

including the Aztec Empire and alliance. The Inca civilization, the Mayan Empire and cities and the Chibcha confederation. In the west, the European Kingdoms and movements were in a movement of reformation and expansion. Russia reached the pacific coast in 1647 and consolidated its control over the Russian Far East in the 19th century.

Later religious trends of the period saw the end of expansion Christians and Christendom saw the end of the Crusades and end of religious unity under the Roman Catholic Church. It was during this time that the Inquisitions and Protestant reformations took place.

During the early modern period, an age of discovery and trade was under taken by the western European nations. The United Kingdom, France, Spain, Portugal and Netherlands went on colonial expansion and took possession of lands and set up colonies in North and South America. Turkey colonized South Western Europe, and parts of the Middle East and North Africa. Russia took possession in Eastern Europe, Asia and North America.

2.5.9 Late Modern Period:

Industrial Revolutions

The date of Industrial Revolution is not exact. Eric Hobsbawm held that it 'broke out' in the 1780s and was not fully felt until the 1830s or 1840s.³⁸

The first industrial revolution merged into the second industrial revolution around 1850, when technological and economic progress gained momentum with the development of steam powered ships and railways, and later in the 19th century with the internal combustion engine and electric power generation Industrialization is

³⁸ Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Relution: Empire 1789-1848 Weidenfeldand Nicholson Ltd.*

the process of social and economic change whereby a human group is transformed from a pre-industrial society into a industrial one. An economy based on manual labor was replaced by one dominated by industry and the manufacture of machinery. It began with the mechanization of the textile industries and the development of iron making techniques and trade expansion was enabled by the introduction of canals, improved roads, and then railways.

Engineering achievements of the revolution ranged from electrification to developments in materials science. The advancement made a great contribution to the quality of life. In the first revolution Lewis Paul was the original inventor of roller spinning, the basis of the water frame for Spinning and James Watt's improvements to the steam engine were fundamental to the changes brought by the Industrial Revolution in both the Kingdom of Great Britain and the World.

The Industrial Revolutions were major technological, socio economic and cultural changes in late 18th and early 19th centuries that began in Britain and spread throughout the world. The effects spread throughout Western Europe and North America during the 19th century eventually affecting the majority of the world.

The European Revolution of 1848, known in some countries as the Spring of Nations or the year of Revolution was, a series of political upheavals throughout the European continent. Described as a Revolutionary wave, the period of unrest began in France and then, further propelled by the French Revolution of 1848, soon spread to the rest of Europe³⁹

³⁹ Cayley, E.S. *The European Revolutions of 1848*-London: Smith, Elder & Co. Vol. 1 and II.1856.

2.5.10 European Hegemony and the 19th Century:

Historians sometimes define the 19th century historical era stretching from 1815 to 1914. Eric Hobsbawm defined the 'Long Nineteenth Century' as spanning the years 1789 to 1914. During this time, the fall of the Spanish Armada enabled the rise of the British Empire.

In the 1800s and early 1900s, once great and powerful Empires such as Spain, Ottoman Turkey, the Mughal Empire and the Kingdom of Portugal began to break apart. Spain, which at one time unrivaled in Europe, had been declining for a long time when it was crippled by Napoleon Bonaparte's invasion, sensing the time was right, Spain's vast colonies in South America began a series of rebellions that ended with almost all the Spanish territories gaining their independence.

The Victorian era of the United Kingdom was the period of Queen Victoria's reign from June, 1837 to January 1901. This was a long period of prosperity for the British people as profits gained from the overseas British Empire, as well as from the industrial improvements at home, allowed a large educated middle class to develop. Some scholars would extend the beginning of the period as defined by a variety of sensibilities and political games that have come to be associated with the Victorians back five years to the passage of the reform Act, 1832.

The Franco-Prussian War was a conflict between France and Prussia backed up by the North German confederation, of which it was a member and South German states of Baden, Wurttemberg and Bavaria. The complete Prussian and German Victory brought about the final unification of Germany under King Wilhelm-I of Prussia. It also marked the downfall of Napoleon-III and the end of the Second French Empire, which was replaced by Third Republic.

Slavery was greatly reduced around the World in the 19th century. Following a successful slave revolt in Haiti, Britain forced the Barbary parties to halt their practice of kidnapping and enslaving Europeans, banned slavery throughout its

domain, and charged its navy with ending the global slave trade. Slavery was then abolished in Russia, America and Brazil.

Following the abolition of the slave trade, and propelled by economic exploitation, the Scramble for Africa was initiated formally at the Berlin West Africa conference in 1884-1885. All the major European powers laid claim to the areas of Africa where they could exhibit a sphere of influence over the area. Around the end of the 19th century and into the 20th century, the Meiji era was a market by the reign of the Meiji Emperor. After the death of Meiji emperor, the Taisho Emperor took the throne, thus beginning the Tasso period. A key foreign observer of the remarkable and rapid changes in Japanese society in this period was Ernest Mason Swatow.

2.5.11 United States:

The Antebellum age was the period of increasing sectionalism that led up to the American Civil War. The Antebellum Age was a time of great transition because of the industrial revolution in America. It was also a time of growth in slavery in the American South.

‘Manifest Destiny’ was the territorial expansion of the United States from to 1848. During this time, the United States expanded to the Pacific Ocean-‘from sea to shining sea’-largely defining the borders of the contiguous United States as they are today.

The American Civil War comes when seven Southern Slave States declared their secession from the U.S. and formed a confederation State of America. Led by Jefferson Davis, they fought against the U.S. federal government under President Abraham Lincoln, which was supported by all the free states and the five border slave states in the south.

During the Gilded age, there was Substantial growth in population in the United States and extravagant displays of wealth and excess of American's upper-class during the post civil-war and post re-construction era, in the late 19th century. The wealth polarization derived primarily from industrial and population expansion.

2.5.12 Transition and Enlighten Negation:

Around the start of 20th century, Enlighten philosophy was challenged varies quarters. After the use of classical physics since the end of scientific revolution, modern physics arose with the advent of quantum physics, substituting mathematics studies of experimental studies and exclaiming equations to built a theoretical structure. The old quantum theory was collection of results which predate modern quantum mechanics, but were never complete or self-consistent. The collection of heuristic prescriptions for quantum mechanics was the first corrections to classical mechanics.³ In addition, the various number of other theories in classical physics which supposed a 'fifth clement' such as the aluminiferous act her.⁴ In biology, Darwinism gained acceptance and expose adaptation in the theory of natural selection. The fields of geology, astronomy and psychology also made strides and gained new insights. In medicine, there were advances of medical theory and treatments.⁴⁰

Sigmund Freud is renowned for this redefinition of sexual desire as the primary motivational energy of human life, as well as his therapeutic techniques, including the use of free association, his theory of transference in the therapeutic relationship, and the interpretation of dreams as sources of insight into unconscious desires.

Albert Einstein is known for his theories of special relatively and general relativity.

⁴⁰ F.K Richtmyer, E.H Kennard, T. Lauristen. *Introduction to Modern Physics (5th edition)*. New York: Mc Grow-Hill Book Company. P.1. LCCN 55-6862 .1955.

He also made important contribution to statistical mechanics, especially his mathematical treatment of Brownian motion, his resolution of the paradox of specific heats and his connection of fluctuations and dissipation.

At the end of 19th century, Social Darwinism was promoted and included the various ideologies based on a concept that competition among all individuals, groups, nations, or ideas was a natural framework for social evolution in human societies.

Karl Marx summarized his approach to history and politics in the opening line of the first chapter of the communist manifesto (1848). He wrote ‘The history of all hitherto existing society in the history of class struggles’.⁴¹

2.5.13 European Decline and 20th Century:

Major political developments saw the former British Empire lost most of its remaining political power over common wealth countries. The Grains-Siberian Railway crossing Asia by train was complete by 1916. Other events include the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, two world wars and the cold war.

In 1901, the Federation of Australia was process by which the six separate British self government colonies of New South Wales. Queens land, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia formed one nation. When the constitution of Australia came into force, the colonies collectivity became states of the common wealth of Australia.

2.5.14 World War-I

The First World War began in 1914 and lasted to find Armistice in 1918. The allied powers, led by the British Empire, France, Russia until March 1918. Japan and the United States after 1917, defeated the central powers, led by the German

⁴¹ Collins Concise Dictionary. Harper Collins. 1999.

Empire, Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Ottoman Empire. The War caused the disintegration of four Empires the Austro-Hungarian, German, Ottoman and Russian ones-as well as the radical change in the European and Middle Eastern maps. The allied powers before 1917 are sometimes referred to as the triple entente and the central powers are sometimes referred to as the Triple Entente and the central powers are sometimes referred to as the Triple Alliance.

Ultimately, World War-I created a decisive break with the old world order that had emerged after the Napoleonic wars, which was modified by the mid 19th century's nationalistic revolutions. The results of World War-I would be important factors in the development World War-II approximately 20 years later. More emendate to the time, the partitioning of the Ottoman Empire was a political event that redrew the political boundaries of the Middle East. The partitioning broad the creation of the modern Arab World and the Republic of Turkey. The League of Nations granted France mandates over Syria and Lebanon and granted the United Kingdom mandates over Mesopotamia ad Palestine. Parts of the Ottomans Empire on the Arabian Peninsula become parts of what are today Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

The inter war period was the period between the end of the First World War. This period was marked by turmoil in much of the world, as Europe struggled to recover from the devastation of the First World War.

2.5.15 World War-II

The Second World War was a global military conflict that took place in 1939-1945. It was the largest and deadliest war in history, culminating in the Holocaust and ending with the dropping of the atom bomb.

Even though Japan had been fighting in China since 1937 the conventional view is that the war began on September 1, 1939, when Nazi Germany invaded Poland, the

Drang nach Osten. Within two days the United Kingdom and France declared war on Germany, even though the fighting was confined to Poland Pursuant to a then secret provision of its non-aggression. Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, the Soviet Union joined with Germany on September 17, 1939 to conquer Poland and to divide Eastern Europe.

The Allies were initially made up of Poland, the United Kingdom, France, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa as well as British Commonwealth countries which were controlled directly by the UK, such as the Indian Empire. All of those countries declared war on Germany in September, 1939.

Following the full of fighting, known as the phony war, Germany invaded Western Europe in May 1940. Six weeks later, France, in the meantime attracted by Italy as well, Surrounded to Germany, which then tried unsuccessfully to conquer Britain. On September 27 Germany Italy and Japan signed a mutual defense agreement, the 'Tripartite pact', and were known as the Kais powers.

2.5.16 Contemporary Era:

In the contemporary era, there were various socio-technology trends. Regarding the 21st century and the late modern world, the information age and computers were forefront in use, not completely ubiquitous but often present in daily life. The development of Eastern powers was of not, with China and India becoming more powerful. In the Eurasian theater, the European Union and Russian Federation were two forces recently developed. A concern for Western World, if not the whole world, was the late modern from the terrorism and the warfare that has resulted from the contemporary terrorist act.

2.6 Meaning of Empowerment

The term empowerment refers to measures designed to increase the degree of autonomy and self-determination in people and in communities in order to enable them to represent their interests in a responsible and self-determined way, acting on their own authority. It is the process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling one's life and claiming one's rights. Empowerment as action refers both to the process of self-empowerment and to professional support of people, which enables them to overcome their sense of powerlessness and lack of influence, and to recognize and use their resources to do work with power.⁴²

The term empowerment originates from American community psychology and is associated with the social scientist Julian Rappaport (1981.)⁴² However; the roots of empowerment theory extend further into history and are linked to Marxist sociological theory. These sociological ideas have continued to be developed and refined through Neo-Marxist Theory (also known as Critical Theory).⁴³

In, social work empowerment forms a practical approach of resource-oriented intervention. In the field of citizenship education and democratic education, empowerment is seen as a tool to increase the responsibility of the citizen. Empowerment is a key concept in the discourse on promoting civic engagement.

Empowerment as a concept, which is characterized by a move away from a deficit-oriented towards a more strength-oriented perception, can increasingly be found in management concepts, as well as in the areas of continuing education and self-help.

⁴²Rappaport, Julian. *In Praise of paradox. A Social policy of Empowerment over Prevention in :American Journal of Community psychology*, Vol.9[1],1981p.1-25[13].

⁴³Burton and Kagan (1996). *"Rethinking Empowerment: Shared action against powerlessness"*. Compsy .org.uk. Retrieved 1 November 2017.

Robert Adams points to the limitations of any single definition of 'empowerment', and the danger that academic or specialist definitions might take away the word and the connected practices from the very people they are supposed to belong to. Still, he offers a minimal definition of the term: 'Empowerment: the capacity of individuals, groups and/or communities to take control of their circumstances, exercise power and achieve their own goals, and the process by which, individually and collectively, they are able to help themselves and others to maximize the quality of their lives.

One definition for the term is "an intentional, ongoing process centered in the local community, involving mutual respect, critical reflection, caring, and group participation, through which people lacking an equal share of resources gain greater access to and control over those resources".⁴⁴

Rappaport's (1984) definition includes: "Empowerment is viewed as a process: the mechanism by which people, organizations, and communities gain mastery over their lives."⁴⁵

Sociological empowerment often addresses members of groups that social discrimination processes have excluded from decision-making processes through – for example – discrimination based on disability, race, ethnicity, religion, or gender. Empowerment as a methodology is also associated with feminism.

⁴⁴Adams, Robert. *Empowerment, Participation and Social work*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan,2008,p.6.

⁴⁵Adams, Robert. *Empowerment, Participation and Social work*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan,2008,p.Xvi

2.7 Characteristics of Empowerment

Empowerment means to give power to. As a leader, authority is delegated to team members who empower them to make the decisions needed for the success of the organization in their respective areas. However, as the head of the organization, the leader is at the place where the buck stops. In that case the leader has to employ self-empowerment, which comes from knowing the truth about one's self and not allowing the perceptions of others to hinder him or her from taking the appropriate actions needed for the success of the organization.

1. Empowerment is based on the belief that employees have the ability – and want to take on more responsibility.
2. Empowerment is a way to give employees greater authority and responsibility to take care of the needs of the customer and to provide employees with the means for making influential decisions.
3. *Empowerment is conferring the right to make decisions and take action.*
4. Empowerment that may include well defined boundaries and management training on how to coach empowered employees. *Empowerment is the giving or delegation of power or authority; authorization; the giving of ability; enablement or permission.*
5. **Empowered employees** understand their role in supporting the vision by taking care of the needs of the customers.
6. Empowered employees are given access to information and data that can be used in their decision making process. This information might include feedback from customer satisfaction surveys or customer comment cards that can help make informed customer-focused decisions.
7. Empowerments possess three inconceivably profound characteristics: Purify, Perfect and Mature. They purify us of attachments to the three worlds of desire, form and formlessness, perfect the qualities of the three kayas in us

and mature in us the wisdom of clear light.

8. *Empowerment is the best executive is the one who has sense enough to pick good men to do what he wants done, and self-restraint enough to keep from meddling with them while they do it.*

9. Empowerment is seen as a tool to increase the responsibility of the citizen.

11. Empowerment is a key concept in the discourse on promoting civic engagement.

12. Empowerment as a concept, which is characterized by a move away from a deficit-oriented towards a more strength-oriented perception, can increasingly be found in management concepts, as well as in the areas of continuing education and self-help.

13. Empowerment as action refers both to the process of self-empowerment and to professional support of people, which enables them to overcome their sense of powerlessness and lack of influence, and to recognize and use their resources to do work with power.^{46 47}

2.8 History of Empowerment

In 1981 David Gershon and Gail Straub founded Empowerment Institute to explore the question: how do you empower people to grow and realize their full potential? They wanted to shift the focus from fixing problems and healing the past, to focusing on what we want for our lives, our organizations, our communities, and our world – and how to achieve it. Enabling people to envision and realize their dreams was the approach they called “empowerment.” The term “empowerment” was new in the vernacular of transformation, as was their approach.

⁴⁶ Zimmerman, M.A. *Empowerment Theory: Psychological, Organizational and Community Levels of Analysis*. “Handbook of Community Psychology,” 2000. p.43-63.

⁴⁷ Potterfield, Thomas. *“The Business of Employee Empowerment: Democracy and Ideology in the workplace.”* Quorum Books, 1999, p.6.

This transformative social innovation soon began attracting attention. People came to learn about empowerment for themselves, their organizations, their communities, and their causes. They came from all over North America, Europe and Latin America, but also from Afghanistan, Darfur, Rwanda, South Africa, China, Russia, and India.

They included social entrepreneurs, community organizers and environmentalists; Fortune 500 corporate leaders, organizational change consultants and business school professors; life coaches, health-care professionals, therapists, educators, and personal development trainers; non-profit managers, government executives and politicians; young and old, male and female, and embodying every race and ethnicity.

Over the years what evolved was an extraordinary learning community – a global empowerment laboratory to help refine their methodology and explore its breadth of application in society.

David and Gail wrote their bestselling book, *Empowerment: the Art of Creating Your Life as You Want It* to help popularize their research. The writing process brought further refinement to their model and the book's success attracted yet more people to their trainings. Along the way, Gail and David became master practitioners of empowerment⁴⁸

David and Gail continued to evolve their empowerment work by adapting the model and methodology to other initiatives. Included amongst these was a global transformative event created at the height of the Cold War, the First Earth Run. In partnership with the United Nation's Children's Fund (UNICEF) and ABC

48 Solomon, Barbara Bryant. 1976, *Black Empowerment Social work in Oppressed Communities*. New York: Columbia University Press

Television, they organized the historic passing of a torch of peace around the world. This simple and profound act of global unity offered at a moment of great fear in our world was able to engage the participation of 25 million people in 62 countries, the world's political leadership and, through the media, an estimated 20% of the population on the planet. It was an extraordinary confirmation of the efficacy of the empowerment methodology.

Building on this growing body of knowledge and experience, David began applying his empowerment expertise to large organizations and cities. The versatility of the empowerment methodology enabled it to achieve behavior change, talent development and cultural transformation in organizations and sustainable lifestyles, livable neighborhoods and disaster-resilient communities in cities. Based on this behavior change research, David has written eleven books including his award-winning *Social Change 2.0: A Blueprint for Reinventing Our World*, and best-selling *Low Carbon Diet: A 30 Day Program to Lose 5,000 pounds*.

Gail applied her behavior change acumen to issues of women's empowerment through a global initiative for the empowerment of women called IMAGINE. This initiative trains empowerment facilitators to deliver the Empowerment Workshop to disenfranchised women in developing world countries. IMAGINE is being implemented in Afghanistan, Brazil, India, Jordan, Kenya, Nigeria South Africa, and Sudan. Another of Gail's contributions to women's empowerment is her award-winning memoir, *Returning to My Mother's House: Taking Back the Wisdom of the Feminine*. She has also written the critically acclaimed *The Rhythm of Compassion: Caring for Self, Connecting With Society*⁴⁹

And the results from this research and application ... a robust and rigorously tested transformational model that has stood the test of time. If you choose to participate

49 <http://www.opendemocracy.net/article/putting-power-back-into-empowerment-o>.

in one of Empowerment Institute's training programs know that you are also participating in a global empowerment movement – a movement that aspires to nothing less than changing the world ... one person and one dream at a time.

CHAPTER THREE

THE POSITION OF POLITICS IN BANGLADESH AS A MUSLIM MAJORITY DEMOCRATIC COUNTRY

3.1 Political History: From Pakistan to Bangladesh:

The political history of united Pakistan was one of turmoil and instability. Jinnah, the charismatic leader who appears to have embodied Pakistan, died in 1948. His successor, Liaquat Ali Khan, was killed in 1951 before he could solve any of the crucial problems of the country. After their death the Pakistan Muslim League failed to provide convincing policy or inspiring leadership. The party held no convention for nine years. The politicians of the party merely showed a remarkable talent to stay on the winning side. No constitution was framed during more than seven years the independence of the country.⁵⁰

After Liaquat Ali Khan's assassination. Khwaja Najimuddin stepped down from the office of the presidency to become the Prime Minister of Pakistan but suffered the humiliation of being dismissed within one and half year.¹¹² When the constituent assembly was about to meet, the Governor General declared a state of Emergency and dissolved the constituent assembly on 24 October 1954. Legal battles followed. There led to a verdict of the federal court which had serious implications. The verdict made invalid 46 Acts in the statute book. A second constituent Assembly, like the first, was indirectly. It framed a constitution for Pakistan in 1956. But it was abrogated on 1 October 1958, so that the president Iskandar Mirza at that time, who had no chance of re-election, could establish

⁵⁰ Khan, Shamsul I. Islam, S. Aminul and Haque, M. Aminul. *Political Culture, Political Parties and the Democratic Transition in Bangladesh.* University Press Limited, 2008. P. 20

“a lifelong dictatorship.” Mirza scheduled national election in February 1959. When the civil military bureaucracy saw that regional elites would capture political power through the election, the armed forces drove out Mirza and took over on October 27, 1958.

In the first decade after independence, the civil service of Pakistan an oligarchy of 500 top functionaries of the state, had exercised political domination in Pakistan. Both Ghulam Mohammad and Iskandar Mirza came from the ranks and manipulated the parliament and thereby discredited it and paved the way for military intervention. The Ayub regime then ruled Pakistan until it too collapsed in 1969 through a mass upsurge. It was followed by the second Marshal Law of March, 1969. General Yahya Khan pledged to transfer power through general election which was held in October, 1970. It was the first quarter century of the history of Pakistan. The Awami League won out of 300 seats and achieved won absolute majority in National Assembly. However, because the results of elections were unacceptable to the power block in West Pakistan, Yahya Khan opted for a ferocious military crackdown in the eastern wing of the country thereby signing and sealing the death warrant of Pakistan as a state, and forcing Bengalis to struggle for an independent Bangladesh.

3.2 The Historical Roots of Political Culture of Bangladesh:

The political culture of Bangladesh is an area which has hardly explored the cultural bedrock of Bangladesh has been formed by several religious traditions. There is very little information about the prehistory of Bengal. The earliest religion appears to have been the worship of the deed and the groves which still survives among the santal tribe of the country.

During the first millennium B.C the worship of mother goddess was established with Puja as a ritual. The Urbanization of Bengal probably took place between fourth century B.C and fourth century A.D. which led to the diffusion of high

culture from Northern Asia. Following Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism had also spread to Bengal by the second century B.C.⁵¹

Thus in Bengal we find an intermixed of Brahmanical Hinduism, Vajrayana Buddhism, Jainism from North India and Theravada Buddhism from Barman along with the peasant reverence for the ghosts of the deed and bamboo groves.

The deltaic ecology of the frontier society and its syncretistic traditional did not allow for the establishment of vendee Hinduism in the pristine form when the century came under the of Guptas during 320-426 AD. It did not develop a rigid estate structure of four fold Varna model as Kshatryas and Vaihvas were missing in Bengal. Vaisnavism become the dominant Hindu cult before the of Islam in Bengal.¹¹⁷ Buddhism become gradually marginalized. It also created a significant social cleavage between the Brahmanic theodicy and the great tradition of Hinduism on the one hand, and the folk religion of the peasantry on the other.

The Gupta period was followed by a century of a century of political anarchy that led to the election of Gopal as a king and four centuries of Buddhist rule by the Pala dynasty. It was a period of religious tolerance and harmony. But this social liberalism was destroyed by the Sena dynasty coming from the conservative Deccan imposed orthodox Hindu Hegemony upon Bengal with emphasis upon rigid caste hierarchy and greater bureaucratic control. Buddhism declined along with its patrons-merchants. It turned inward and assumed a number of cultic forms of which Shahajia become the most popular.

The rise of orthodox Hinduism led to its resistance in the form of mysticism. Within both Hinduism and Hinduism in the twelfth century that stressed individualism and egalitarian humanism.

⁵¹ Mojumder. R.C. 1974. *History of Ancient Bengal*. Calcutta: F.K.L. Mukherjee.

Its expression can be found both in literary works as well as in the folk culture of the period. Bengal came under Muslim rule probably in 1204 AD with the triumph of Muhammad Bakhtyar Khilji over Laksam Sena with the sword came the Saints; devotees of the Sufi order who came from different parts of Muslim Western and Central Asia to settle in Bengal and preach Islam.

These Sufis were able to attract a large following and spread Islam among the peasantry and the process eventually led to the establishment of Islam as the dominant religion of Bengal.

Sufism is radically different from the Sunni trend of Islam. Its focus is on the individual and his love for God and it values purity of soul more than the ritually correct behavior. The mystic techniques of Sufism in its search for a soul's unity with God can be imparted only by a Pir or Murshid. Thus Sufism fits easily into the cultural milieu of Bengal. It resembles in many ways the mystic religious cults of Hinduism and Buddhism and contributed to growth of a pervasive cultural syncretism in Bengal at the heart of which lay the extraordinary power of the saint, his residence or shrine, and pir-murid relationship.⁵²

The orthodox Islamic revivalism represented by ulemas who emerged as an intellectual stature in North India at the end of Mughal rule influenced a number religious movements during the colonial period such as Faridi and Wahabi movements. Although these protest movements failed, they left behind traces of millenarian aspirations among the exploited peasantry.

⁵² Morrison, B.M., *Political Centres and Cultural Regions in Early Bengal*. New Delhi: Rawat Publications.1980. p.59

Thus the political ideologies in Bangladesh have mainly assumed populist form. Populism refers to any utopia espoused by some oppressed groups to transform a given condition of society into a natural and homogenous community. It is generally opposed to big business. It tends to give rise to charismatic leadership and mass political parties. It emerged mostly in social landscapes dominated by petty bourgeoisie and the peasants.

The Pakistan movement was populist in the above sense. It singled out Hindu zamindar, Hindu businessman and Hindu money lender as oppressors and demanded an independent political space for discursively constituted homogenous community of Muslims to reestablish the glories of Islam in the future. The Muslim League becomes a mass political party headed by charismatic leaders like M.A. Jinnah and A.K. Fazlul Huq. Bengali nationalism was also interwoven with populism. The mass mobilization was undertaken by the Awami League under the charismatic leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (along with Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani) translated into action inchoate yearnings, nostalgic aspiration, symbols of the peasant revolt and the small man's struggle. They borrowed from nationalism a strategy that can give direction to populist aspirations and a vehicle for translating that strategy into organized action. From nationalism they gleaned exploitation and identified it with the exploited classes, made it broader by incorporating the toiling masses.

The historical development of political culture suggests an important aspect which underlines its fragmentation in present time. The war of independence with celebrated linguistic identity, secularism and liberalism lost much of its fervor with the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.⁵³

⁵³ Khan, Shamsul I. Islam, S. Aminul and Haque, M. Aminul. op.cit, p.32

The political corruption, the economic crisis of a war-ravaged economy, the famine of 1974, and the threat of India led to a re-invigoration of the process of Islamization, on the one hand, and militant radicalism on the other. Although radicalism as a political force has dissipated itself, revival of orthodox Islam has become an increasingly potent factor in the political of the country.

In spite of a long tradition of activism and convulsion of the war of independence awareness about national politics is not high. One survey conducted in 1985-86 in four villages of Savar and Dhamrai near metropolitan Dhaka found that 43% of the respondents had party preferences. But most of the respondents knew only of two party leaders from the Awami League and the Bangladesh Nationalists party. They knew very little about party programmes or ideologies. Only 13% of the respondents had preference for party government against 20% who favoured military rule and another 32% who opted for civil military rule. About 28% had no option.

It is worth noting that the country constituted, in turn, a hinterland of Kolkata and Karachi. The vast mass of depressed peasantry was cut off from the process of modernization. There was very little impact of the Bengal Renaissance upon Muslims. In 1947-48 there were only 885 Muslim students in the University of Dhaka. In spite of the expansion of higher education since then, only about one-third of the population is literate. As a result of endemic campus violence in the post independent period, the quality of education has sharply deteriorated. A restless campus, a bureaucracy which is largely subservient and a sluggish economy has slowed down the process of rationalization of the life-world.

3.3 Political Parties in Bangladesh:

The idea of a competitive party system inexorably linked with modern democracy. Democracy cannot survive without a responsible and responsive party system. The failure of democracy in both Pakistan and Bangladesh has been attributed to the shortcomings of political parties as institutions as grounded in historically emergent cultural patterns and social structure. The way political parties behave is greatly

influenced by cultural and social factors.

3.3 Political Parties in Bangladesh

There are around 200 political parties in Bangladesh.⁵⁴ However, a good number of these parties have no existence except in signboards and have no perceptible influence among the masses.

Naturally, their activities are entirely confined to issuing occasional press release containing statements of their stands about political issues. At best, they are capable of recognizing small processions and gatherings. Inadequately, some of these parties do not even have printed letterheads of their own.

However, any attempt to describe and analyze the emergence and developments of these political parties in Bangladesh should, we believe, be made in the context of two distinct historical and political phases. We would like to identify these historical phases as:

- (1) Pre-liberation period.
- (2) Post-liberation period.

3.3.1 Defining Political Party:

In Latin there are two competing terms-*pars* and a *faction* *par* was used in the sense of parties in a law suit, while *faction* was used in a pejorative sense.

⁵⁴ Khan, Shamsul I. Islam, S. Aminul and Haque, M. Aminul. op.cit, p.52

As late as the nineteenth century, the two words which came from these Latin terms, party and faction, were often used interchangeably and viewed unfavorably. Political parties in the modern sense are less than two hundred years old. According to Weber, parties emerged with the spread of suffrage that called for large association or parties for the organization of representation.

It was Edmund Burke who provided the first modern definition of political party. According to him, it meant ‘a body of men united for promulgating by their joint endeavors the national interest, upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed. Joseph Schumpeter on the other hand, saw the party as a group whose members propose to act in concert in the competitive struggle for power.

3.3.2 Political parties from the pre-Liberation period:

There were various political parties of pre-liberation Bangladesh. We start with the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) which - as the protagonist of the causes of Indian Muslims in pre-1947 India-emerged as the hegemonic party in Pakistan.

3.3.2.1 The Pakistan Muslim League (PML)

The All India Muslim League (AIML) was born on December 30, 1906 in Dhaka under the leadership of Aga Khan and Sir Salimullah, the Nawab of Dhaka, as a consequence of the growing communalism of Indian politics aided and encouraged by the British Government as part of their divide and rule strategy. Initially it was an institution of the Muslim elite-zamindars, lawyers and the rising Muslim business class of the Punjab, the United Province, Bombay and Gujrat. In the election of 1937 the League secured only 103 seats from 11 provinces of India.

After the partition of India the All India Muslim League was renamed the Pakistan Muslim League (PML). But the party had already split provincial Muslim League of Bangla between Suhrawardy – Hashim group and the Ahsan Manzil group led to the formation of the Gana Azadi League in Dhaka by the supporters of the former

group in July 1947. Besides, a number of progressive young Muslim League leaders established the Ganatantrik Juba League on September 1, 1947. In June 1949 the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League leaders and workers under the leadership of Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani. In order to offer a viable opposition to the authoritarian Pakistan Muslim League. Hussein Shahid Suhrawardy also formed another All Pakistan Awami Muslim League in Lahore in February 1950. The merger of these two separate parties under the latter name occurred in 1951. Thus the decline of the Muslim League had begun with the birth of Pakistan.

The Pakistan Muslim League (Convention) led by Ayub Khan held power till 1969, when mass uprisings (for different reasons) in both former East Pakistan and West Pakistan swept it from power.

There were three major reasons for the decline of the Pakistan Muslim League. Firstly, the party centered around and was dominated to an extraordinary degree by a single personality – Ayub Khan. Secondly, Ayub Khan did not give attention to institutional build-up of the party. Thirdly, it lost whatever vigor it had as a result of factional conflicts. Finally, with the spread of the autonomy movement it became an anachronism in former East Pakistan.

On 28 July, 1976, Bengali leaders of both factions of the erstwhile All Pakistan Muslim League revived their political activities in Bangladesh as the Bangladesh Muslim League.

In 1986, the Bangladesh Muslim League, led by Badruddin Ahmed Siddiki, Ershad, who at the time was desperately trying to bestow his praetorian regime with some kind of political legitimacy.

In early 1991, various individuals and groups from the remaining factions of the Muslim League started making fresh attempts to bring all the factions under the

umbrella of unified Bangladesh Muslim League. The efforts finally bore fruit in late 1992 when as many as five factions of the Bangladesh Muslim League merged together to form a single Bangladesh Muslim League.

3.3.2.2 Jamaat-e-Islam, Bangladesh:

The Jammaat-e-Islami is one of the oldest political parties of the Indian Sub-continent. Jamaat's parent organization – Jamaat-e-Islami Hind – was established in 1941 in India. Its founder was Maulana Abul Ala Moudadi, a very controversial figure, controversial both for his religious and political beliefs and actions. Thus, he was opposed to both the Indian National Congress and the All India Muslim League. Not only did he oppose the independency of India, he also opposed the creation of Pakistan.

However, by doing so, he earned the displeasure of both Hindus and Muslims of India. He remained in political obscurity for quite sometime even after he migrated to Pakistan and reorganized the Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan. At one point, his communal brand of politics created so much furor in Pakistan that in 1953 he was sentenced to death by a special tribunal for his alleged role in the communal riot in which hundreds of Kadianis (a religious sect of Islam) were killed. He was, however, pardoned by the Pakistan and thereafter, soon released from the prison. After his release, the Jamaat-e-Islami under released from the prison. After his release, the Jamaat-e-Islami under this leadership started building up its political organizations again.

In 1957 one of the party's thirteen administrative divisions was allotted to former East Pakistan and Golam Azam was the lone Bangali representative in the top party hierarchy.

In the 1960s, the Jamaat, helped by an annual budget of Rs. 450,000.00 for former East Pakistan alone.

Yet in the election of 1970, all the Islamic parties together got one seat from East Bengal in the National Assembly of Pakistan.

During the War of Liberation, the Jamaat played an extremely anti Bangladesh role by actively supporting the Pakistani Occupation forces. It saw the liberation struggles as disturbances created by some miscreants and abated by Indian agents aimed at dismembering Pakistan. It help organized 'Peace Committees' whose duty was to help the Pakistan Army with all possible means to root out the Bengali freedom fighters. But, for most Bengalis, the most nefarious act the Jamaat committed was in helping the Pakistan government to raise such auxiliary paramilitary forces as Razakars, Al-Badars and Al-Shams. The Jamaat was "indirectly" rehabilitated in Bangladesh in 1975 when the Chief Martial. ⁵⁵

On 11 July, 1978 Golam Azam returned to Bangladesh with a Pakistani passport and a three months visa to see his ailing mother. In May 1979, under the guidance of Golam Azam, the Jamaat formally resurfaced as a political party with, as usual, Abbas Ali Khan as the acting Ameer. On 10 February, 1980 the Jamaat arranged its first public meeting in Dhaka. During the Ershad regime's so-called 'pro-Islamic' politics in the early 1980s, the Jamaat expanded its organizational network. Then, in the late 1980s, the Jamaat expanded its organizational network. Then, in the late 1980s, the Jamaat expanded its organizational network. Then, in the late 19870s, Golam Azam once again emerged as the 'de factor' Ameer of the jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh and helped the Jamaat acquire political acceptability.

⁵⁵ Maloney. C.K.M. Asraful Aziz and P.C. Sarleer.. *Beliefs and Fertility in Bangladesh. Dhaka: International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh. 1981.*

3.3.2.3 The Bangladesh Awami League (AL):

As we have seen, the disenchanted Bengali intelligentsia and political leaders formed a new political party in 1949, and called it the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League. In February 1950, the All Pakistan Awami League was formed in Lahore with Hussein Shahid Suhrawardy as its President. In 1955, the party dropped the word “Muslim” and renamed itself as the Awami League. It soon became the most important and biggest partner of the Jukta Front which eliminated the Muslim League as a political party in former East Pakistan in the general elections of 1954. The Jukta Front ministry was formed in former East Pakistan after the general elections of 1954 and was headed by A.K. Fazlul Huq of the Krishak Sramik Party (Peasants’ Workers Party [KSP]), another important partner of the Jukta Front.⁵⁶

Since its inception, the Awami League contained within itself two opposing groups. One group, led by Hussein Shahid Suhrawardy and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, was composed of ‘pro-Western’ liberal democrats. The other group was composed of ‘anti-imperialist’ and ‘leftist’ elements, and their leader was Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani.

Eventually, the conflict could no longer be contained and the ‘leftist forces’ under the leadership of Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani broke away from the leadership of Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani and established the National Awami Party (NAP) in Dhaka in 1957.

In 1958, Ayub Khan staged a military coup and captured state power. In 1962, in his bid for ‘civilianizing’ his regime, he allowed open politics in Pakistan. By this time, however,

⁵⁶ Morrison, B.M., *Political Centres and Cultural Regions in Early Bengal*. New Delhi: Rawat Publications.1980. p.35

the Awami League had directed all its attention towards the problems of former East Pakistan.

In 1969, a mass upsurge toppled the Ayub regime. In the general elections of 1970, the Awami League, under the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, won a landslide victory. But the Pakistani power wielders most blatantly denied the Awami League its legitimate claim to form the central government in Pakistan. Instead, they began what amounted to genocide against the Bengalis on March 25, 1971. During the liberation struggle, the Awami League, naturally, was at the forefront and formed the Provisional Government in Mujibnagar on April 17, 1971. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was in prison in West Pakistan.

When Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was freed by the Pakistan government a few weeks later he made a triumphant return to Bangladesh on January 10, 1972. At first, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman became the President of the country; then, he decided to become Prime Minister. The first general elections of independent Bangladesh was held in 1973. Once again, the Awami League won triumphant victory. Politically, the Awami League was firmly lodged in power.

Nevertheless, the Awami League, in the bumpy journey along the rough terrain of Bangladesh politics, has not been free from splits and defections. The first split occurred in 1957, when Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani, in protest against what he called the 'pro-Western' policies of the Awami League high command, left the Awami League and established the national Awami Party (NAP). In 1970, Aaur Rahman Khan, also one of the founders of the Awami League, broke away from the Awami League in protest against the Awami League's alleged backtracking on various major policy issues.

3.3.2.4 Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League (BKSAL):

Abdur Razzaque (who was the General Secretary of the mainstream Awami League) and Mohiuddin Ahmed (a member of the Awami League Presidium) led a group of Awami League workers who had become staunch supporters of the so-called 'BAKSAL-thesis'. But by 1982, a majority of the Awami League leaders – including Sheikh Hasina, who, in order to avoid further break-up within the party, had to return from her exile in India and accept the presidential position of the party in early 1981 - had changed their political attitude and were in favour of discarding the BKSAL line. The breaking point came in 1983 when the pro and anti-BKSAL groups skirmished. As an aftermath, Abdur Razzaque and Mohiuddin Ahmed left the Awami League and took the pro-BKSAL wing under their leadership. They declared that the Awami League had dissociated itself from the ideals of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman which only they would honour and uphold. BKSAL survived for about eight years. In 1991, it again merged with the Awami League.

At this point, it might be interesting to focus on the salient features of the constitution of the erstwhile BKSAL. Its structural setup comprised a National Council, Central Committee, Executive Committee, Parliamentary Board, Parliamentary Party, Zila (District) Council, Zila Committee, Upazila (sub-district) Council, Upazila Committee, Union Council, Union Committee, Ward Council and Ward Committee.⁵⁷

In 1992 the Awami League faced another crisis over the expulsion of its Youth Front Chief Mustafa Mohsin Montu. The Dhaka District. Thereafter the Awami League held two separate Council sessions. The latest National Council meeting

⁵⁷ Khan, Shamsul I. Islam, S. Aminul and Haque, M. Aminul. op.cit, p.52

took place in the first week of October 1992, but was unable to decide the fate of Tafa Mohsin Montu who sided with Dr. Kamal Hossain and his projected Democratic Forum.

It is obvious from the above that too much power has been concentrated in the hands of the President in terms of organizational matters and policy options, which, in one way or the other, is most likely to prevent the working of the democratic process and practice within the party. As if this is not enough, in its Council meeting held in October 1992 further changes were made in the party constitution giving the President even more authority. In the above-mentioned Council meeting, instead of allowing a new leadership to emerge through the democratic process, the party President Sheikh Hasina took it upon herself to nominate the leaders of the Awami League Council.

A critical assessment of the constitution and the party manifesto of the Bangladesh Awami League should help us to understand why the Bangladesh, with a grass root organizational network, has not been free from factionalism and groupings. For example, we have noted that despite a clear-cut constitutional provision, elections to the Awami League Council are not regularly held. When they are held, there are allegations that office-bearers are not elected by democratic methods since the party chief or party bosses mostly nominate candidates. Such a policy cannot obviously reflect the true wish of the majority of party workers.

The much publicized rift between Sheikh Hasina and Dr. Kamal Hossain has been a case in point. Another point of weakness for the Awami League is that a sizable majority of people of Bangladesh think that the Awami League is a 'pro-Indian' party.

3.3.2.5 The National Awami Party (BHASANI) [NAP (B)]:

In the general election of 1954 the Jukta Front won a massive election victory in former East Pakistan. The Awami League was an important partner of that coalition. But soon after the 'leftist' elements within the Awami League began to protest the Awami League's alleged backtracking on such 'fundamental' issues as: (1) Autonomy of former East Pakistan; (2) neutral foreign policy; (3) anti-imperialist stand in the context of global politics etc. Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani led this opposing group.

But with a view to fortifying the on-going anti-government movement, the Awami Muslim League working committee which met on 17 April 1953, approved Suhrawardy's proposal to merge the two parties, and decided to appoint him the convener of a high powered committee which was to devise the mechanisms for amalgamation. After the historic election victory of the Jukta Front in 1954, difference of opinion between Hussein Shahid Suhrawardy and A.K. Fazalul Haque caused the latter to form his Jukta Front Ministry without the members of the Awami Muslim League. After the dismissal of the Jukta Front Ministry on 29 May 1954, the Awami Muslim League found itself in a precarious situation politically. Section 98/A was imposed all over former East Pakistan. All political activities were banned. Thousands of Awami Muslim League workers were either arrested or forced into hiding. The Governor of former East Pakistan at that time was Major General Iskander Mirza who threatened Maulana Bhasani – then touring Europe – that he would have to face the firing squad on his return to the country.

The Awami Muslim League was humiliated further, when the motion was defeated on the floor of the Provincial Assembly. Naturally, all these incidents led to the break-up of the Jukta Front. But the erratic political behaviour which some of the

influential leaders of the Awami Muslim League, including Suhrawardy, displayed, created a near revolt in the party. As many as thirty-nine members of the Provincial Assembly left the Awami Muslim League in protest, reducing the strength of the Awami Muslim League in the Provincial Assembly to as low as one hundred and four.

Due mainly to Maulana Bhasani's hard labour, the Awami League grew strong enough to form a Ministry at the centre led by Suhrawardy, in coalition with the Republican Party on 12 September, 1956. A year before, the Awami Muslim League dropped the word 'Muslim' from its name, the Awami Muslim League dropped the word 'Muslim' from its nomenclature and became known as the Awami League. But the old conflict between the two groups surfaced once again.

In October 1956, Britain and France, with Israeli collaboration, invaded Egypt to wrest control of the Suez Canal from the Egyptian government. All Islamic and Third World countries condemned this aggression. Maulana Bhasani called and organized hartal all over East Pakistan to protest the invasion of Egypt. The protest gradually spread to West Pakistan also.

He decided to post of General Secretary. A few days later, while visiting East Pakistan, he publicly (in a press conference) denounced Maulana Bhasani as a paid 'Indian Agent, and put forward his controversial' zero sum equation. Once again, to resolve the crisis, Maulana Bhasani convened the Awami League Council Session at Kagmari in Tangail, which later became widely known as the Kagmari Conference.

Finally after a conference of the All Pakistan Democratic Workers on 25-27 July 1957, initiatives were taken to form a new political party. That in how the National Awami Party (NAP) was born. All left leaning leaders and workers of the Awami League joined the newly formed National Awami Party.

Maulana Bhasani was unanimously elected its first President. Others who were with

Maulana Bhasani at that time included leaders such as Haji Mohammad Danesh, Mohammad Toaha, Professor Muzaffar Ahmed and Mohiuddin Ahmed.

For ten years, the National Awami Party under Maulana Bhasani was single most important left leaning political party, avocation anti-imperialism and a progressive secular ideology. The first split that the National Awami Party suffered was during the period 1966-67; this was caused by the split in the international communist movement into ‘pro-Moscow’ and ‘pro-Peking’ lines.

3.3.2.6 National Awami Party (Muzaffar) [NAP (M)]:

To ‘pro-Moscow’ NAP (Muzaffar) has also undergone a few splits. The first split occurred in 1978, when Syed Altaf Hossain and others broke away from the NAP (Muzaffar) and formed Ekota Party (the Unity Party). In 1979, Chowdhury Harun-or-Rashid also broke away from the NAP (Muzaffar) and formed his own NAP (Harun). In 1986, the Ekota Party and NAP (Harun) merged together to form the NAP (United). In 1987, NAP (Muzaffar) and NAP (United) merged together to form a single National Awami Party. Professor Muzaffar Ahmed became the President of this united Party. But this unity lasted for only about two years. In 1989, Syed Altaf Hossain, Chowdhury Harun-or-Rashid and Suranjit Sengupta brought allegations of misappropriation of funds against Professor Muzaffar Ahmed – who denied any wrongdoing – and left the NAP to establish a new party, namely ganatantrik Dal (Democratic Party) as shown in figure 4.4.

As NAP (Muzaffar) is one of our sample parties. Its aims and objectives include the establishment of a prosperous, socialistic social order by elimination of all indigenous and foreign exploitation and oppression and the launching of revolution aimed at establishing socialism. About industrial policy, the NAP (M) manifesto declares that it strongly opposes an open and unrestricted policy or setting up industries, bank and insurance companies in the private sector and is against capitalism and neo-colonial infiltration in public sector industries. It also demands

abolition of all, and what it terms, anti-labor laws. About administrative policy, it states that it wants what it calls a people oriented administrative system which would lessen the grip of the bureaucrats over policy issues and led to a democratization of the administration.

4.3.2.7 Bangladesh Communist Party:

After the partition of India in 1947, the leadership of the Communist Party of India felt necessity of constituting a new political organ comprising party leaders/cadres who could take up positions in the new state called Pakistan. Consequently, the Communist Party of Pakistan the predecessor of the Purba Pakistani communist Party (the congress of the Communist party of East Pakistan) was formed in 1948 in the second congress of the communist Party of India. Its first General Secretary was Sajjad Zahir. In 1951, the Pakistan government framed the so called Rawalpindi Conspiracy charge against the leaders of the Pakistan Communist Party and arrested almost all of them.

The Purba Pakistani Communist Party, particularly the Juba League, played a significant role in the historic Language Movement of 1952.

Although the Purba Pakistani Communist Party had been working closely with the Awami League, it felt the need for what it called a secular, progressive and anti-imperialist political party. This party, named as the Republican Party, came into being in 1953. Haji Mohammad Danesh became its president and Mahmud Ali its General Secretary.

In July 1954, the Pakistan government officially handed the Communist Party of Pakistan along with the Purba Pakistani Communist Party. However, by 1957, the Awami League under the leadership of Hussein Shahid Suhrawardy had become too pro-Western for the leaders and cadres of the Purba Pakistani Communist Party.

The Purba Pakistani Communist Party, although acting clandestinely, carried on its

political activities quite successfully until 1966. Following the division of the international communist movement on ideological ground into so-called pro-Moscow and pro-Peking lines the Purba Pakistani Communist Party split into pro-Soviet and pro-Chinese factions.

Shortly after a major split in 1966, a section of the Party leaders and cadres of the Purba Pakistani Communist Party brought out a mimeographed journal, named *Hatiyar* (Weapon). Its editor was Nasim Ali. In 1970, the *Hatiyar* group finally separated itself from the Purba Pakistaner Communist Party. In 1971, it merged with the Purba Bangler Communist Party (M-L) [the Communist Party of East Bengal (M-L)] of Amal Sen and Communist Biplobider Bangladesh Samannay Committee (Bangladesh Coordination Committee of the Communist Revolutionaries) of Kazi Zafar Ahmed, Haider Akbar Khan Rono and Rashed Khan Menon. Afterwards, in 1972, like mot of the pro-Chinese Communists of Bangladesh, they formed a new political party,. namely Bangladesh Communist Party (M-L) [The communist Party of Bangladesh (M-L)].

It also renamed itself as the Bangladesh Communist Party [the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB)]. In the parliamentary elections of 1973, however, the Bangladesh Communist Party nominated four of its candidates to participate in elections. These candidates – from Sylhet, Chittagong, Rangpur and Dinajpur then contested the elections.

Accordingly, in its Second Congress in December 1973, Bangladesh Communist Party stressed the need for unity amongst progressive political parties such as the Awami League. The Bangladesh Communist Party held its Third Congress in 1980. The Forth Congress was held in April, 1897. The fifth Congress of the Bangladesh Communist Party was held in October 1991.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Von Begme, Klaus.. *Political Parties. In Marxism, Communism and Western Society: A Comparative Encyclopedia*, Vol. 6, ed., C.D. Kerning. New York: Herder and Herder.1973.

3.3.2.8 Bangladesh Jatiya League:

The Jatiya League was founded by Ataur Rahman Khan when he left the Awami League in 1970 on differences of opinion, mainly over the Six-Point Programme of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. After few months, Amena Begum, another veteran Awami League leader also left the Awami League and joined the Jatiya League.¹⁵³ After the liberation of Bangladesh, the Jatiya League was renamed as the Bangladesh Jatiya League. In August, 1975, Ataur Rahman Khan led a faction of the Bangladesh Jatiya League to join BKSAL. Amena Begum opposed the move and continued her own faction of the Bangladesh Jatiya League, which was later remained as the Bangladesh Jatiya Dal (the Bangladesh National Party).⁵⁹

After the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Ataur Rahman Khan revived his Bangladesh Jatiya League in 1976 under the political Party Regulation Order. In 1983 where Hossain Mohammad Ershad floated his Janadal, Ataur Rahman Khan promptly joined it. But one of the party stalwarts, Giasuddin Ahmed, opposed this decision of Ataur Rahman Khan and formed his own Bangladesh Jatiya League. It is still functioning (see Figure 4.12).

3.3.3 Political Parties from the Post- Liberation Period:

The parties of the post-liberation period emerged either as protest against the old parties or political regime or in support for the existing regime. Although we find a huge proliferation of parties numbering about 170 during this period, most of these parties are parties in name and have very little popularity. Again most of these parties emerged through the breakup of the old parties. This chapter details the history of 7 parties which dates from the post liberation period.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Weber. Max. . *Economy and Society, eds., Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich*, 2 Vols. Berkeley: University of California Press.1978.

⁶⁰ Bichitra. 1987. 30 January.

3.3.3.1 Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal(JSD):

Within a year after independence, some left leaning young turks in the Awami League became unhappy with the style of governance of their leader whom they called Bangladeshi (the friend of Bengal) and the Prime Minister of the country. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, as well as with the alleged pro Western policy of his government and left the Awami League (Holiday, 14 May 1972). Sirajul Alam Khan, A.S. M Abdur Rob, Shahjahan Siraj, Hasanul Haq Inu, Mahbubul Haq and Khaliquzzaman Bhuiyan, who basically engineered the split, formed a new political party, the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal. in 1972 as shown in Figures 5.1. (Hossain 1989)

Since its inception the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal has been one of the largest non-communist cadre-bases political parties in Bangladesh But unfortunately it could not remain united for long. In 1980. Khaliquzzaman Bhuiyan and some of his close associates broke away from the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal and formed a new party the Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (The Bangladesh Socialist Party) as described in Figure 5.2.

Two years later, the Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal again split into two factions one led by Khaliquzzaman Bhuiyan himself and the other led by A.F.M Mahbubul Haq.

In 1985, the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal disintegrated into three factions on the question of participating in the Upazila elections which were held in 1984.

The aims and objectives of the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (Inu), as enumerated in its manifesto, includes state control of production and distribution systems, replacement of the bureaucratic administering system of bureaucracy by people elected representatives, emphasis on people's army and the right to have unions in the defense services.

At present there are two factions of the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal: one led by A.S.M Abdur Rab and the other by Hasanul Haq.

3.3.3.2 Jatiya Janata Party (JJP)

As mentioned earlier, in protest against the introduction of BKSAL General (Rtd). Ataul Ghani Osmany left the Awami League in 1975 Under the Political Party Regulation order 1976, when Ziaur Rahman allowed open politics, Osmany floated a political party of his own, namely, the Jatiya Janatea Party. From the very beginning Ferdous Ahmed Quereshi supported his endeavour in Launching a new political platform and Jonned Osmany as soon as he could. Rear Admiral (Rtd.) Mosharraf Hossain Khan also joined the Jatiya Janata Party. Nevertheless, within a few months of the death of Osmany, the Jatiya Janata Party splintered into at least four factions: One faction was led by Abdul wadud, The other by Sujat Chowdhury, another by Rear Admiral (Rtd.) Mosharraf Hossain Khan, and the fourth one by Sheikh.

3.3.3.3 Bangladesh Democratic League (BDL):

When Khandker Mustaque Ahmed formed the Bangladesh Democratic League in 1976, She Moazem Hossain and Oli Ahad Joined him. In 1988, Shah Moazem broke away and joined Erashads Janadal, Oli Ahad also formed his own Democratic League in 198. The latest split in the Bangladesh Democratic League took place in 1986 when Abdur Rouf broke away.

3.3.3.4 Bangladesh Khilafat Majlis (BKM):

The Bangladesh Khailafat Majlis is a member of the Islamic Oikya Jote IOJ (the united Islamic Alliance). As one of our sample parties we would like to critically analyze here the ideas and objectives of the Bangladesh Khilafat Majlis, which started functioning as a political entity in the late 1980s. It is in fact a conglomerate of different orthodox Islamic groups. The Khilafat Majlis aims to establish Khilafat

(the rule of the representatives of Allah) and looks forwarded to divine blessings from Allah, the Almighty, and hopes for salivating for its leaders and workers both in this world and the next. It aims to uproot the present social, political and economic situation prevailing in the country, which according to it is non-Islamic in nature and intends to replace it with an Islamic system by following the footsteps of Hazrat Mohammad (SM) the Prophet and the Khalifa-e-Rashedin. As far as they are concerned, the activist's supporters of the Khaliifat Majlis are workings.

The Khilafat Majlis also urges the Muslims of theism country to resist the infiltration of what it calls, and all kinds of corrupt alien culture as far as its social, economic and political programmers are concerned it states that it wants to continue the struggle to uproot the autocratic and corrupt government and replace it with an honest and representative government, which consists of the Hakkani Ulema (religious intellectuals) and the politicians. It also pledged to remove, what it calls an oppressive capitalism, which accepts profits or bribes in business as common practices, and in its place it wants to establish and Islamic economic system the would ensure fair distribution of wealth and Justice for the people.

3.3.3.5 Bangladesh Jatiyotabadi Dal:

As we have already mentioned in chapter two, Ziaur Rahman Came to the state power through a soldiers uprising. Colonel (Rtd.) Abu Taher organized this soldiers uprising. However it was Ziaur Rahman, who emerged from the event as the acclaimed hero of the revolution. He Unitil 1977, he ruled the country in this capacity thereafter, he appointed himself the President of the country.

After receiving the mandate required to legitimizing the civilian rule, Ziaur Rahman soon felt the need of a political organization which would provide him with institutional support.⁶¹

Accordingly, a 16 member convening committee of the new political party, the Jatiya Ganatantrik Dal (the Nationalist Democratic Party), was formed on February 27, 1978. The convening committee was soon expanded. From different political parties, representing different sometimes even exactly opposite ideologies. Ziaur Rahman then enticed disgruntled politicians from different political parties such as Mashiur Rahman (Jadu Mian) of the NAP (Bhasani), Shah Azizur Rahman of the Bangladesh Muslim League, and Kazi Zafar Ahmed of the United Peoples party of from a Jatiyotabadi front (Nationalist Front). Ziaur Rahman contested the presidential election as a candidate of the Front against a candidate of the Awami League led opposition, Genral (Rtd.) Ataul Ghani Osmany, and duly won the election.

This time, Ziaur Rahman himself became the Chairman of the Party and, in order to run the party, constituted a National Standing Committee.

After Ziaur Rahman was assassinated in an abortive military putsch on May 30, 1981, Abdus Sattar succeeded him as the Acting President of the Republic, and took over the chairmanship of Bangladesh Jatiyotabadi Dal. But a few days after Sattar assumed the party chairmanship, a power play began inside the party on the issue of the nomination of the party's candidate for the upcoming presidential election. This created a furor in the party.

Proposed the name of Abdus Sattar as the BNP candidate for the presidential election. This caused dissension within the party. The party stalwarts like Barrister Anisul Islam Mahmud, Nazim Kamran Chowdhury, Dewan Sirajul Huq, Colonel (Rtd) Oli Ahmed and Colonel (Rtd) Akbar Hossain vehemently opposed

⁶¹ Bichitra. 1987. 30 January.

Sattar's candidatures. At one point one of the Young Turks of the Party, Ali Tareq, even proposed the name of Khaleda Zia as a compromise candidate.

Within less than three months of overcoming that serious intraparty conflict, Sattar again faced internal political strife, this time over the reconstitution of the party hierarchy. In the backdrop of the decline of Dr. Badruddoza Chowdhury's power and status as the General Secretary – supposedly, one of the leading figures of the so-called right-wing top notches minted pressure on Sattar to once again reconstitute the party. As part of their reconstitution bid, they proposed the name of Khaleda Zia as the Party Chairperson. After ruling the country as the Chief Martial Law Administrator for almost a year, on January 30, 1983 Ershad presented his so-called 3 point formula for restoring democracy in the country.

After this, BNP became virtually divided into two factions. The faction led by the Party Chairman Abdus Sattar, General Secretary Secretary Dr. Badruddoza Chowdhury, Vice Chairperson Khaleda Zia, Joint Secretary Ferdous Ahmed Quereshi and prominent leaders like Tariqul Islam, barrister Rafiqul Islam Mai, Saifur Rahman and Dr. Khandker Mosharraf Hossain strongly reprimanded the other faction for their allegedly anti-party activities. By late 1983, BNP splintered into three factions when Shamsuzzaman Duda and Shawkat Hossain Nilu formed their own faction. These factions became known popularly as the BNP (Sattar), the BNP (Huda) and the BNP (Duda-Nilu). Within a few months of Khaleda Zia's take over, BNP for all practical purposes, was divided again into two groups. one group led by her, and the other, this time, by Shah Azizur Rahman.

Regarding ideology, the manifesto of BNP underscores Bangladeshi nationalism and not Bengali nationalism. The nation, as a whole, is divided over this issue in Bangladesh. Even within BNP there are sections that seem to prefer Bengali nationalism. The issue will always remain a sensitive matter for the party.

3.3.3.6 Jatiya Party (JP)

Hussein Mohammad Ershad, it would seem, followed the techniques and style of the civilianization process of Ziaur Rahman rather closely and tried to replicate it as perfectly as possible. He, of course did not possess a charismatic personality like Ziaur Rahman. However to a large extent, he was able to overcome that deficiency by mastering the art of political brokerage. This helped him create a political clientele of his own both in and out of the uniform even when he was pursuing politics unofficially as the Chief Martial Law Administrator.

We have already motioned that Ershad overthrew the somewhat fragile government of a relatively powerless President Abdus Sattar on March, 23, 1983. Earlier, when Ziaur Rahman was killed under mysterious circumstances during a tour of Chittagong Hill Tracts area on May 30, 1981, he played no mean role while fulfilling his constitutional obligation as the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces in the tense and strained situation prevailing at that time in the country.

At any rate, after ruling the country as a Martial Law Administrator for little more than a year, on March, 17 1983, Ershad slowly initiated a civilianization process with the announcement of a 18 point programme for economic emancipation, which very much resembled the 19 point after this announcement. Ershad, all on a sudden, made it known that he was going to all indoor politics in the country from April 1, 1983. In the mean time, he started inciting some over ambitious but seemingly frustrated politicians from different political parties to join hands with him with the promise that, in his civilian rule, he would appoint them in place – both in his government and in his party hierarchy – appropriate to their status. Within a few weeks, he arranged undisclosed meetings with different leaders from various political parties.

Then, on November 27, 1983, he launched a new party named the Bangladesh Jatiyotabadi Janata Dal (the Bangladesh Nationalist Peoples Party). Because of the similarity between his new parties name and BNP he decided to call it Janadal (The People's Party). Following once again Ziaur Rahman's footsteps he made parties a former President of the Republic, Ahsanuddin Chowdhury, the Chairman of the Party. His appointed Prime Minister Ataur Rahman Khan was very much an aspirant for the post of the party chairmanship But Ershad could not trust such an experienced politician in such a crucial position.

Keeping in mind the forthcoming election and campaign issues, Ershad, in August 1986, decided to adopt the strategies used by Ziaur Rahman and to follow the same track. Like him, Ershad formed a Jatiya Front. Like the Jatiyotabadi Ganatantrik Dal of Ziur Rahman, too. Ershad's janadal also became the leading partner of the Front. Then, once again, consistent with his policy of slip-sliding away, on January, 1, 1986, Ershad announced the formation of the Jatiya Party (national Party) and dissolved the Jatiya Front. This time, he retained the position of the party chairmanship for himself and after maintaining certain ambivalence about it for some time; he finally declared it to be his officially on September 1, 1986.⁶²

Within a few months of Ershad's downfall and subsequent imprisonment, Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury became the Acting President. Thereafter, a former Deputy Minister A.B.M Shahjahan, replaced Shah Moazzem Hossain as acting General Secretary. In early 1992, under instruction from imprisoned Drshad, the Jatiya party hierarchy again replaced the General Secretary of the Party. The present General Secretary, another nominee of Hossain Mohammad Ershad, is Khaledur Rahman Tito.

⁶² Begum, Amena. *Amar Jibon O Rajniti*. Agami, Eid Issue (28 April-5 May): 19- 23. 1989.

CHAPTER FOUR

DIFFERENT SYSTEMS AND ACTIVITIES BY POLITICAL PARTIES TO ACHIEVE POLITICAL POWER

4.1 Different Causes and Activities of Political Parties in Bangladesh:

There are different political parties in Bangladesh. They perform various activities but most of the time their performing activities and different causes to achieve political power is not satisfactory. The party leadership have a tendency to practice dictatorship in running party affairs. In Bangladesh we found an under developed political culture. She lacks democratic political organizations, institutions and practices in true sense. As a result democracy in Bangladesh have almost failed. Apparently there exist some indicators for democracy. Such as parliamentary system of government, parliamentary committee system, multi party system, a fair democratic constitution in a Bangladesh. All these indicators have been almost failed to institutionalize democracy in Bangladesh. Different political parties play different roles to achieve political power.⁶³ Among them most important point is use of religion in politics. Causes of the negative roles of political parties are in the following:

4.1.1 Eagerness of Power:

It is very unfortunate that our political parties are far away from the ideologies. Our politicians are always hankering after for power. They do compromise forgetting the political ideologies for the power. The people of Bangladesh are religious by nature. Politicians use this sentiment of the people very cleverly for votes. More than 80 percent people are Muslims. So the Islam gets the priority in

63 Rounaq Jahan,(2015) '*Political Parties in Bangladesh Challenges of Democratization*': Dhaka:Prothoma Prokashon.

our politics. We saw many times that secular party also made alliance with the religious parties for winning the election.

4.1.2 Wrong Interpretations of the Religion:

There is no scope to mix the religion with politics. No religion is against the humanity or the rights of any human being. Every religion speaks for the equal rights of all. Misinterpretation of religion created the scope to use of religion in politics.

4.1.3 Lack of Education:

About 60 percent of our total populations are illiterate. Most of them have no clear conception about their own religion. They believe the explanation of the religion of interest seekers. Most of the time, the illiterate people mix up the religion with politics for their ignorance. It is also one of the significant causes of growth of the use of religion in politics.

4.1.4 Poverty:

Those who use religion in politics they usually target the poor people to make them their fellow. It is easy to convince them by giving some monetary helps. Sometimes poor people join with them in spite of their wish for financial benefits.

4.1.5 Erosion of Religious Ideology:

Religion is a belief of a human being. Many people lost their religious ideology. Erosion of religious ideology is a course of our country. It leads many people to use the religion in politics.

4.1.6 Lack of Strong Foundation of the Democracy:

The status of our democracy is still fragile. We could not ensure the benefits of our democracy for the citizens. It has given the scope to make understand the people

that it is the failure of democratic system.⁶⁴

4.2 How to Stop the Negative Activities of Political Parties in Our Politics:

Politics cannot run smoothly if the real meaning of democracy can't follow. Political parties should stop the negative activities and follow the right way. However the following:

4.2.1 Establishing the Political Values:

Every political party has its own ideology. There should be no compromise regarding the ideology. But we have lost our political values. Our parties forget their ideology for winning the election. We see the use of religion for attract the voters by the secular parties. Sometimes we see the unexpected alliance. If we want to stop the negative roles in politics we must follow the ideologies of the parties.

4.2.2 Establishing the Religious Values:

Most of the people of our country have been split from their religious values. It created the scope for the opportunity's groups to use the religion in politics. We should establish the religious values if we want to stop the use of religious in politics.

4.2.3 To Increase the Literacy Rate:

Education makes a man sensible and rational. It opens the door of thinking of a man. It is easy to misguide the illiterates.

64 Mahfujul H.Chowdhury, '*Democracy in Bangladesh*'; Dhaka: A.H. Development Publishing House.

4.2.4 To Increase the Awareness of the People:

People should be aware about all the ill effects of the use of religion in politics. Public awareness gives good results against this sort of problem. Government may use the media for this purpose.

4.2.5 Right Interpretation of Religion by Intellectuals:

All the Imams of all mosques of the country can play a vital role against the use of religion in politics. They can give the right interpretations in front of the people which will help to clear the confusion among the people.

4.2.6 Eradication of Poverty:

Poverty gives the birth of many crimes. Opportunity's groups will not get the scope to misguide the poor people if we can eradicate the poverty from our country.

4.2.7 Implementing the Laws:

According to our constitution Bangladesh is a secular country and the use of religion in politics is prohibited. So strong implementation of the laws against the use of religion in politics can bring the effective result.

CHAPTER FIVE

POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT IN BANGLADESH AS A MUSLIM MAJORITY DEMOCRATIC COUNTRY

5.1 Different Religions in Bangladesh:

Islam is the largest religion of Bangladesh. Muslims constitute 89.5% of the population followed by Hindus, who constitute 9.6%. Buddhists, Christians, and Bahai's constitute the rest. Religion has always been a strong part of identity, but this has varied at different times. A survey in late 2003 confirmed that religion is the first choice by a citizen for self-identification. According to a government published articles atheism is extremely rare.

5.1.1 Islam:

Muslims constitute almost 90 percent of the population.⁶⁵ Most Muslims in Bangladesh are Sunni's but there is a small Shia community and an even smaller Ahmadiyy Muslim Community. Most of those who are Shia reside in Urban areas. Although these Shias are few in number, Shia observance commemorating the martyrdom of Ali's sons, Hasan and Husayn is widely observed by the nation's Sunnis.⁶⁶

The Muslim community in the Bengal region developed independent of the dominant Islamic trends in India. The preservation of pre-Islamic cultural elements from Buddhist and Hindu periods made the commitment to Islam uniquely Bangladeshi.

⁶⁵ 2001 Bangladesh Census.

⁶⁶ ourbangla.com

Features of Bangladeshi Hinduism, which differed in some respects from Hinduism in other parts of South Asia, influenced both the practices and the social structure of the Bangladeshi Muslim community.

In spite of the general personal commitment to Islam by the Muslims of Bangladesh, observance of Islamic rituals and tenets varies according to social position, local, and personal considerations. In rural regions, some beliefs and practices tend to incorporate elements that differ from and often conflict with orthodox Islam.

5.1.2 Hinduism:

Hinduism is the second largest religious affiliation in Bangladesh covering approximately 10 % of the population as of the 2001 census.⁶⁷ In terms of population, Bangladesh is the third largest Hindu state of the world, after India and Nepal.

In nature, Bangladeshi Hinduism closely resembles the forms and customs of Hinduism practiced in the neighboring Indian state of West Bengal, with which Bangladesh (at one time known as East Bengal) was united until the partition of India in 1947.

5.1.3 Buddhism:

About 0.7% (or just over 1,000,000 people) of Bangladesh population adheres to the Theravada school of Buddhism.

In antiquity, the region of present day Bangladesh was a center of Buddhism in Asia, and Buddhist civilization, including philosophies and architecture, travelled to Tibet, Southeast Asia and Indonesia from Bengal. The Buddhist architecture of Cambodia, Indonesia and Thailand

⁶⁷US Department of State: Census Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs.

including the Angkor Wat temple and the Borobudar Vihra, are believed to have been inspired by the ancient monasteries of Bangladesh such as the Somapura Mahavihara.

Most of the followers of Buddhism in Bangladesh live in the South Eastern region, especially in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Chittagong and Cumilla district. Most of the Buddhists of Chittagong Hill Tracts belong to the Chakma, Chak, Marma, Tanchungya and the Khyang, who since time immemorial have practiced Buddhism. Other tribals, notably those who practice animism, have come under some Buddhist influence, and this is true in the case of the Khumi and the Mru, and to a lesser extent in the case of the other tribes. Buddhism is also practiced by the Bengali-speaking Baruas, who are almost exclusively Buddhist and are concentrated heavily in the Chittagongarea.

5.1.4 Christianity:

Christianity arrived in what is now Bangladesh during the late sixteenth to early seventeenth centuries AD, through the Portuguese traders and missionaries. Christians account for approximately 0.3% of the total population. Roman Catholicism is dominant; the remaining Christians are predominantly protestant.

5.1.5 Baha'i Faith:

The Baha'i faith in Bangladesh began before its independence, when it was part of India. The roots of the Baha'i faith in the region go back to the first days of the Bibi religion in 1844.⁶⁸ During Baha'u'llah's lifetime as founder of the religion,

⁶⁸“The Baha' Faith-Bries History.Official Website of the National Assembly of India.National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'i of India, 2003.Retrieved 2009-04-04.

he encouraged some of his followers to move to India.⁶⁹ And it may have been Jamal Effendi who was first sent and stopped in Dhaka more than once. The first Baha'is in the area that would later become Bangladesh were a Bengali group from Chittagong that accepted the religion while in Burma. By 1950 there were enough members of the religion to elect Baha'i Local Spiritual Assemblies in Chittagong and Dhaka. The community has contributed to the progress of the nation of Bangladesh individually family laws concerning marriage, divorce and adoption differ depending on the religion of the person involved. There are no legal restrictions on marriage between members of different faiths.

5.1.6Percentage:

Religious Group	Population % 1975	Population % 1990	Population % 2010
Muslim	84%	87%	89.5%
Hindu	15.6%	12.4%	9.5%
Christian	0.1%	0.1%	0.3%
Buddhist	0.3%	0.5%	0.7%

⁶⁹Momen, Moojan; Smith, Peter. *"Baha'i History"*. Drott A Short Encyclopedia of the Baha'i Faith. Baha'i Library Online. Retrieved 2009-04-04.

5.2 Political Empowerment:

Political empowerment refers to the process of transferring various elements of power (resources, capabilities and positions) to those who do not have it. Political empowerment requires inclusion in democratic decision-making processes.

A common understanding of political empowerment (the transfer of power to those who do not have it) embraces the definition of power in distributive terms. Following this understanding, political empowerment must include giving access to various political offices, including positions in the government, to the members of disadvantaged populations. The literature on political empowerment attempts to assess the impact of access to political offices on the overall well-being of minorities. A different understanding of political empowerment refers to the transformation of various relations between the “haves” and “have-nots”.⁷⁰

We can see some examples of political empowerment in the world. For example:

The politics of Indonesia take place in the framework of a presidential representative democratic republic whereby the president of Indonesia is both head of state and head of government and of a multi-party system. Executive power is exercised by the government legislative power is vested in both the government and the two People's Representative Councils. The judiciary is independent of the executive and the legislature.

⁷⁰ Allen, A.(2008).*Power and The Politics of Difference: Oppression, empowerment and traditional justice.Hypatia*, 23, p.156-172.

The recent general election in Indonesia had a touch of *déjà vu*. In both 2014 and 2019, it was Joko Widodo taking on Prabowo Subianto, in both the elections, Widodo, also known as Jokowi, was declared the winner by the Indonesian General Elections Commission (KPU) ; in both the elections, hardliner former general Subianto rejected the election results and declared himself the winner ; and in both the elections, he challenged the results at the constitutional court of Indonesia.

Despite all these parallels, there is a critical difference between these two elections: the bloody riots that broke out on the bustling streets of Jakarta and some other cities, in the wake of Subianto rejecting the election results beginning May 21.

Till the recent bloodshed, Indonesia's young democracy- which came into existence after the resignation of Indonesia's President Suharto in 1998 after a three –decade rule had seen little election – related violence. One might wonder what had happened this time around that led to the recent violent protests in Indonesia.

In 2008 Indonesia passed legislation regulating women's political participation with a 30 percent quota for women legislative candidates and a 30 percent quota for women in party leadership (Law No.10/2008). Following this legislation, the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR-Majelis Per-musyawaratan Rakyat) inaugurated its most gender balanced parliament in 2009, with 18 percent of its representatives being women (The Jakarta post 2010). Despite these efforts and successes at the nation level , Indonesian women's political participation in legislative bodies in the provinces and districts (kabupaten) has generally remained low.

The history of the representation of women in the Indonesian parliament is a long process in terms of the struggle of women in the public sphere. The under-representation of women in parliament is due to a range of obstacles limiting their

progress. It is often extremely difficult to recruit women with political capabilities that allow them to compete with men. The women who have adequate political capabilities tend to engage in advocacy or choose non-partisan roles.

Women with families often experience certain obstacles, particularly opposition from their spouses. Many husbands tend to resist their views, and extra activities outside the household. With a large number of political parties contesting elections and winning seats in parliament, the level of representation of women is affected, as each party can expect to gain a limited number of seats in parliament.

But it can be seen that, a record number of MPs competed in Indonesia's legislative election last month, but they continue to face a battle to make their voices heard. From uncommitted political parties to lack of female party leadership, there exist several barriers for women MPs to make it to the top, sometimes even to secure their seats in parliament.

In the latest elections in Indonesia, 9 out of the 10 largest political parties saw an increase of 2-3% in the numbers of officially listed women parliamentation candidates. Even the most reductionist party, such as the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), listed female candidates up to 39%.

Does this mean that the 30% quota for women in parliament has been achieved? Numbers can often obscure social realities. Based on the vote-count, the number of women MPs in parliament was predicted to increase by 3% from 17.32% in 2014. Not only in this 3% increase far from meeting the quota law but it also does not reflect the quality of the elected female MPs.

It can also see that, politics of Sri Lanka takes place in a framework of a semi-presidential representative democratic republic, whereby the president of Sri Lanka is both head of state and head of government, and of a multi-party system. Executive power is exercised by the government. Legislative power is vested in both the government and parliament. For decades, the party system has been dominated by the socialist Sri Lanka Freedom Party and the conservative United National Party. The judiciary is independent of the executive and the legislature.

2018 was a very dramatic year for Sri Lankan politics and it left the possibility of more surprises in 2019. The political and constitutional crisis that created so much uncertainty in Sri Lanka now seems to have settled temporarily, with the ousted prime minister being reappointed while most of his cabinet ministers were reinstated.

The crisis lasted for almost two months after President Maithripala Sirisena dismissed Ranil Wickremesinghe as the prime minister October 26, 2018 before also attempting to dismiss parliament itself. Although Wickremesinghe has been sworn in as the prime minister once more, the fissure between the president and the prime minister's United National Party (UNP) is very much still evident. Sirisena's speech after the swearing in ceremony included a number of verbal attacks against Wickremesinghe and his cabinet.

The political instability of late 2018 affected the Sri Lankan economy badly. For one thing, the political crisis postponed the government budget for 2019, which was to be presented to the parliament in November. Subsequent to the reinstatement of Wickremesinghe, Finance Minister Mangala Samaraweera presented a vote of accounts to the parliament to obtain approval for government expenditure for the first four months. According, the budget for 2019 will be presented to the parliament early this year.

Women's participation in politics of Sri Lanka is low. According to the Sri Lanka National Human Development Report (NHDR) 2014 on Youth and Development, the percentage of women holding seats in parliament (as of 2013) was 5.8% which was comparatively a lot less than Nepal (33.2%), Bangladesh (19.7%) and India (10.9%). The NDHR cites "stereotypical notions about the 'right' place of women in society" as one of the reasons why women are often reluctant to play a major role in Sri Lankan politics.

Most political parties are reluctant to give nominations to females, as they feel it would be a 'waste' to nominate a candidate who may not win. In fact, the very same parties that talk about the empowerment of women hardly took steps during the 2015 General Elections to nominate females through the national list. Only two females were appointed through the national list following the general elections.

We can also see that, the politics of Pakistan takes place within the framework established by the constitution. The country is a federal parliamentary republic in which provincial governments enjoy a high degree of autonomy and residuary powers. Executive power is vested with the national cabinet which is headed by the prime minister, who works coherently along with the bicameral parliament and the judicature. Stipulation set by the constitution provide a delicate check and balance of sharing powers between executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the government.

Last general elections were held in Pakistan on Wednesday 25 July, 2018 after the completion of a five year term by the outgoing government. With the election of the country's 22nd prime minister, Imran Khan, 2018 proved to be a consequential year for Pakistan. It was the first national win for Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, marking a shift in a country that has traditionally alternated power between the

Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz (PML-N).

As a result of the elections, the Pakistan Tehreek-I-Insaf (PTI) became the second largest party at the national level both in terms of popular vote and seats. At the provincial level, the PTI remained the largest party in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP); the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) remained the largest party in Sindh and the newly formed Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) became the largest party in Balochistan. In Punjab, a hung parliament prevailed with Pakistan Muslim League (N) (PML-N) emerging as the largest party in terms of directly elected seats by a narrow margin. However, following the joinings of many independent MPAs into the PTI, it became the largest party and formed the government.

However, from an 11-point lead, the PML-N's lead began to diminish in the final weeks of the campaign, with some polls close to the election showing PTI with a lead. In the final result, the PTI made a net gain with 31.82% of the vote (its highest share of the vote since its foundation), whilst the PML-N made a net loss with 24.35%.

In March, 2019 thousands of anti-government protesters demanding Prime Minister Imran Khan resign over worsening economic conditions and alleged election rigging have gathered in the Pakistani capital awaiting the arrival of a right-wing religious political leader.

Fazl-Ur-Rehman, chief of the Jamiat Ulema Islam – Fazl (JUI-F) party, has led a five-day march from the southern city of Karachi and through the length of the country with the goal of reaching Islamabad. He said, "the government will have to hand over power back to the people".

The country's main opposition Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) have supported the JUI-F's protest against Khans

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), which won last years controversial general election. Pakistan continues to face multiple sources of internal and external conflict. While incidences of domestic terrorism have reduced, in part due to measures taken by the Pakistani state, extremism and intolerance of diversity has grown.

While peaceful political transitions occurred in both 2013 and 2018, the country is still facing mounting debt crisis and a perennial trade imbalance on the economic front. Furthermore, Pakistan's high- profile disputes with neighboring India and Afganistan have periodically resulted in violence and continue to pose a threat to regional and international security.

If politics is about empowerment, Pakistani women despite many barriers continue to create surprising history. Brave and bold women leaders, including Fatima Jinnah, Nusrat Bhutto, Benazir Bhutto became the first democratically-elected prime minister of Pakistan and the first to lead a country in the Islamic world.

While these iconic women had to author their own chapters of history in relentless struggle, the overall political landscape tells a tougher tale. If we make only the election 2018 a reference point for analysis it was pleasant to see a poster of Raza Rabbani Khar, MNA from NA 183, who proudly put a picture of his illustrious sister, Hina Rabbani Khar, on his election poster. This is a significant departure as many women candidates in Pakistani politics had to print the pictures of their father, brother and husband.

The election 2018 were unique in the sense that for the first time the election act, 2017 made it mandatory for the political parties to award five percent tickets to women candidates. Majority of the political parties adhered to it. The non-complying were

issued ‘show cause’ notices. Similarly, it was made clear that if the women vote in any constituency will be less than 10 percent of the overall polled votes, then the election in that constituency will be declared null and void.

5.3 Political Empowerment in Bangladesh :

Politics of Bangladesh takes place in a framework of a parliamentary representative democratic republic, whereby the Prime Minister of Bangladesh is the head of government. Legislative power is vested in both the government and parliament. The constitution of Bangladesh was written in 1972 and has undergone seventeen amendments.⁷¹

Bangladesh is ruled by a multi-party parliament system or parliamentary democracy form of government. There are about a hundred political parties in Bangladesh. The majority of these are minor parties. Five major political parties are active in Bangladesh.

The real picture of political empowerment in Bangladesh is not satisfactory. In Bangladesh specially two big political parties Bangladesh Awami League and Bangladesh Nationalist Party come to power by rotation. Political parties in Bangladesh have miserably failed to establish democratic system within their respective parties.

Bangladesh government often receives much criticism and sometimes violent opposition by other political parties. This has been the situation no matter which political party in Bangladesh has been in power.

⁷¹ “Nasim swipes at Khaleda”.bd news24.com. 18 July 2011.Archived from the original on 19 March 2012.Retrieved 4 August 2011.

In this way, the initial promise of Bangladesh emerging as a secular democracy soon gave way to the rise of Islamic influences. This should have been for seen in a Muslim majority state of over 80 percent Muslims. The fundamentalist surge is not a sudden phenomenon. It is the culmination of a process that was set in motion in December 1971 when Bangladesh emerged as an independent country. But fundamentalism got a big boost after the bloody coup of 1975.

Islamic fundamentalism religious intolerance, militant Muslim groups with link to international terrorists groups, a powerful military with ties to the militants, the mushrooming of Islamic schools corning our radical students, middle class apathy, poverty and lawlessness all re-combining to transform the nation.

5.2.1 Period of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman:

The constitution of Bangladesh carries the spirit of secularism Bangabondhu banned the religion based politics during his term. As the people of Bangladesh have achieved independence with the cooperation of all classes people without religious division and as they saw the massacre of Rajakar, Albodar and Al-sams, they were eager to the secularism. As a consequence Mujib banned religion based politics. But as 80 percent of the total population of Bangladesh was Muslim and as they are sentimental to Islam, the inherent influence of Islam remained in politics. In keeping consistency with the sentiment of the majority people Bangabondhu stated that secularism does not mean irreligious during the presentation of the constitution of Bangladesh in the parliament in 1972. He declared Bangladesh as the second largest Islamic country on 10th January 1972. To increase international support and co-operation Sheikh Mujib attended the meeting of OIC in 1974. He re-established the Islamic foundation in 1975. But,

during his period religion could not make a dominant influence in politics.

5.2.2 Period of General Zia:

General Zia took the state power and authority by a military coup after the tragic death of Bangabondhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and after soon short term military rules. During his tenure the use of religion in politics get new shape or dimension. The religion based political parties started their activities openly, Jamat-e-Islami got the scope to organize under the name of Islamic Democratic Party and participated in the national election in 1979. The rightist parties were against of the Bengali Nationalism, secularism and socialism. Muslim countries also put pressure for setting up the Islamic rules.

Zia tried to satisfy the Muslim world by replacing secularism from the constitution through the 5th amendment of the constitution. “Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim” was added at the beginning of the constitution. The element of Bangladeshi Nationalism of Zia was taken from Islam. He with draw the prohibition of religion based politics by the 5th amendment of the constitution which created the scope to rightist Islamic parties to initiate their activities. The religious influence in politics was institutionalized by Zia by the 5th amendment of the constitution which was adopted on 9 April 1979.⁷²

The major changes related to the religious influence in politics are as follows:

- (1) Religious word “Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim” was inserted in the beginning of the constitution i.e. above the preamble.

⁷² Enayatullah. “Khan Sheikh Mujiber Utthan O Patan.” Bichitra Eid Press. 1975.

- (2) One of four major fundamental principles of state policy ‘Secularism’ was omitted and in its place a new one the principle of absolute trust and faith in the Almighty Allah was inserted.⁷³
- (3) In the original constitution it was provided in Article 6 that the citizens of Bangladesh would be known as ‘Bengalese’. But this was changed and it was provided that citizens would be known as ‘Bangladeshi’. The element of the Bangladeshi nationalism of Zia was taken from Islam.⁷⁴ The insertion of religious word in constitution was done necessarily with a political end. It was a constitutional tricks played by Zia especially to get quick blind support from a large section of the people who are religious but politically unconscious. Likewise secularism was omitted with the same political end.

5.2.3 Period of Ershad:

Lieutenant General Ershad took the power in 1982 declaring the Marital Law. He tried to attract the people by using the religious sentiment. Islam was declared state religion by the 8th amendment of our constitution during his tenure Hindu, Christian and Buddhist welfare trust was established by the initiative of Ershad.⁷⁵ He waived the electricity bills of ^{the} mosque and temples. Baitul Mokarram mosque was declared the state mosque and many new mosques were built during his period. He made the Jakat Board. Ershad institutionalized religion in politics by the 8th amendment of the constitution that as adopted on 7 June 1988. The major changes related to the religious influence in politics are as follows:

⁷³Article 80. *Constitution of Bangladesh*.

⁷⁴ Abdul Halim, *Constitution, Constitutional Law and Politics*, p.158.

⁷⁵ Abdul Halim, *Constitution, Constitutional Law and Politics*, p.158.

(1)A new Article 2A was created where it was provided that the state religion of the Republic is Islam but other religions may be practiced in peace and harmony in the Republic.⁷⁶

This amendment was done not to face any real situation; a sinister looking political purpose of Ershad worked behind this amendment. Though Ershad legalized his seizure of power and along time actions as CKLA through an elected parliament, he was not treated as legitimate ruler. The opposition continued movement against his regime. On the way to subdue the continued movement, he first, as a religion ‘Islam’ as a handy weapon to use it as a poster of his activities so that he could gain the support of the largest section of the illiterate population who are religious but politically unconscious.⁷⁷

To that end in view he inserted ‘Islam’ as the state religion in the constitution through the 8th amendment. As a commentator says, frustrated by the failure to acquire legitimacy through electoral process, the regime restored to widen its support base by exploiting the religious sentiment of the country’s overwhelming majority of Muslim population. Almost all major opposition parties including the ones propagating Islamic dogmatism opposed the amendment bill. It was opposed on such ground as:

- (a) The bill was politically motivated.
- (b)The amendment would constitutionally divide the nation into majority and minority.
- (c) It would have bad impact on the communal harmony in the country.

⁷⁶ The Bangladesh Observer.1982,25 March.

⁷⁷ The Bangladesh Observer.1982,25 March.

5.2.4 Period of Begum Khaleda Zia:

Begum Khaleda Zia was the Prime Minister of Bangladesh for three terms. Her second term was for a very short time. So the first (1990-1996) and third term (2001-2006) are significant as the tenure of Begum Khaleda Zia. All the political parties used the religion little or more in the election of 1991. The Nationalist party religion little or more in the election of 1991. The Nationalist party BNP said during their election championing that Islam would be in danger if the Awami League comes to power. Jamat-e-Islami was not satisfied with Khaleda's government and started movement against BNP with Awami League and Jatiya party. The candidates of BNP highly used religious banner to achieve votes during the election. They claimed Awami League as a party of the Hindus and tried to attract the Muslim majority people. Consequently, terrorist and extremist activities were increased during that period. BNP made four parties alliance with Jamat for the election of 2001 and this alliance won the election. It created the scope to enhance the use of religion in politics by the fundamentalists. In 2001, Khaleda Zia's BNP made a coalition government with Jamat-E-Islam. By this way, religion based political party directly came in state power and consequently the democratic values became distorted. The religious minorities were in a constrict position. They were beaten up, tortured and their house were and destroyed. Even some other Islam based political parties followers were assaulted, tortured and killed by the government parties especially in the southern part of the country. The worst part of it was the increase of terrorist activities by the Islamic extremists. Bangladesh had been identified in international field as one of the most extremist countries. The torture, attacks on ethnic and religious minorities were common in that period. The grenade attack on 21st August in 61 districts throughout the country, attack on British high commissioner, bombing in judiciary made the country a region of extremism. At the end of her tenure she took some steps against them.

5.2.5 Period of Sheikh Hasina:

Sheikh Hasina became the Prime Minister for the first time in 1996. It is to be noted that in spite of being a wholehearted secular political party, Bangladesh Awami League also used religion in the campaigning of 1996 election. Although almost all the religious minorities supported the party, it failed to keep it self away from using the banner of religion to attract the majority Muslim. Actually it was the result of opposition parties' huge and strong religious banner. Sheikh Hasina is in the Chair of Prime Minister now for the term of 2008-2013. Her government has taken some strong steps against the use of religion in politics. The Supreme Court has given the judgment against the religion based polities by canceling the contradictory 5th and 8th amendment of the constitution. By keeping consistency with the court the government has taken strong steps to eradicate the motivated religion based political parties like Jamat-E-Islam who want to grab power by using the religious sentiment of the innocent people of Bangladesh. Hasina's government is also strict to establish the democratic norms and values by aborting the religious influences in the political life of the people. The student organization of Jamat 'ChatraShibir' which wants to increase terrorism and violence has been declared banned. The government also has taken strong steps to those parties or groups which want to increase terrorism in the country in the name or religion like 'Horkatul Zihad'. One of the strong steps of government is to arrange the trial of 'war criminals', which used Islam in destructing the Bengali nationalism by mass assault, torture and killing. The government strongly declared Bangladesh as a secular and liberal state and is eager to ensure democratic rights of the people and equality before law.

5.3 Women Empowerment and Digital Bangladesh:

This article is an attempt to discuss some of the major dimensions of women empowerment in the perspective of digital Bangladesh. This article has been a long

overdue in view of changes that took place in the body of polity in Bangladesh. I tried my best to discuss some important topics effectively such as gender discrimination, good governance, the role of women for digital Bangladesh, Employment, self-employment and entrepreneurship for women empowerment etc . This article is written primarily by taking help of the secondary sources such as news, features, reports published in different national and local daily newspapers. Additionally, available published research reports and articles are taken into consideration while developing arguments and analysis of different dimensions of women empowerment in Bangladesh .Our national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam wrote- the Good done by the civilization, half created by man and rests by the women. This is an eternal statement about the development of human civilization. From the dawn of the civilization women and men worked together to make the future brighter. In a certain point of the social development process a few socially determined factors created a cultural hemisphere, which pushed the civilization not to think women as equal to the men. This cultural phenomenon changed the thought process of society and the society started discrimination between women and men and ultimately women become a deprived part of society. Modern social science looked into the social disorder and termed it as gender discrimination. This discrimination is sharply visible in our social and state level activities and attitude. To address this issue there are many initiatives taken by the state, society, UN system, PVDOs and NGOs over the world. Now women development is a common issue of all UN member nations. In view of eliminating gender discrimination, Bangladesh also has many initiatives in rural and urban areas both. Considering all those social phenomena, present government included Women development in priorities and it was also one of the election commitments that given to the people by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. It was told that Digital Bangladesh is a dream of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina that expressed the willingness to use IT in the field of management, administration and governance to ensure transparency, accountability and answerability at all levels of society and state. By depriving half

of the population, that is the women of the nation, the dream of a Digital Bangladesh will remain only a dream. To transform the dream in to reality women development is the most essential part of national development planning; especially it is the pat of National human resource planning.

It is a cruel reality; women are deprived in family and society, in decision making process, in administrative process of governance and most importantly in economic activities. Even the women contribute in the process of social development, which has also financial value, are being ignored by the society. To ensure the participation of women in the said process they need to be empowered mentally, economically and politically. That is why modern social science termed women development as the Empowerment of Women. Empowerment of women is linked to the total human emancipation. As government activities are concern, the Ministry of women and children affairs is the key organ to look after the development and interest of the women flock of the country. This government organ is working through the department of women affairs and Jatio Mohila Parishad directly for the betterment of women. As Bangladesh is a part of Beijing platform for action, several ministries including women affairs, education, agriculture, environment and forest, fisheries, health and family welfare, home, industry, labor, law, local government, rural development, social welfare and Planning are working in an integrated manner for empowering the women. As political empowerment is concern, it has started form the year 1996 when Sheik Hasina was leading the government as prime minister. At that period, directly elected representatives from women was included in local government level. Presently this process gets extra momentum as one vice-chairman at Upazilla level already been included and deputy mayor at municipality level is going to be included. Moreover substantial number of women was nominated in last parliamentary election from Awami League led coalition, which obtained mandate form the people. One thing must be mentioned that number of women

parliamentarian is the record in 9th parliament that indicates the political development among women. Social empowerment of women is deep rooted in the mind set of a society, which contents in women and men both. Some time both of the section of society contents similar idea on an issue that could be against women empowerment. To overcome social barriers, it needs a movement, which already been started in our society. Once conservatives are now not that much of against to the women role, which is enriching the society and state. In true sense social empowerment of women depends on the progressiveness of state, society and individuals. Present government is secular in nature, stronger to create progressive social mobilization and that is the ray of hope to build a society with openness, where women will be socially empowered. Economical empowerment of women remains with the involvement of women in economic activities. This initiative is also already been started in the frame of our state and society. As an election commitment, this government is also more attentive to the women participation in economic activities.⁷⁸

⁷⁸*Women in Politics and Decision-making in the Late Twentieth Century: A United Nation's Study*, op. cit. p. xi.

5.4 Women's participation in Local Level politics:

Article 9 of the Bangladesh constitution proclaims that, 'The state shall encourage local government institutions composed of representatives of the areas concerned and in such institutions special representation shall be given, as far as possible, to peasants, workers, and women. The lowest level of local government in Bangladesh is known as the Union Parishad. At the local level, women's representation is still insignificant, but is gradually growing. In the 1973 local Government elections, for the first time, only one woman was elected as chairperson. In the 1977 and 1984 local government elections, four women won as chairpersons respectively. In the 2001 Union Parishad (UP) elections, as many as 102 women candidates contested for 4,443 UP chairmanship positions countrywide where only 20 women were elected. However, in the 2003 Union Parishad elections, the number of women candidates who contested for the position of UP chairmanships increased to 232 from 102 in 1997.⁷⁹ But this does not mean that the major parties and the media are encouraging women leaders who enter into politics at the local level. At present, there is not a single woman city mayor in Bangladesh. No women received a nomination from the major parties to contest for the mayoral position to the six-city corporation's elections. For the first time in 1994, as many as 19 women ward commissioners were elected to the reserved seats of the Dhaka City Corporations. Table-3 provides the data of the elected female chairpersons to the Union Parishad of Bangladesh during 1973-2003.

⁷⁹ Naz, Farzana, *Pathway of Women's Empowerment in Bangladesh*, A H D Publishing House, Dhaka, 2006, P-17.

Table 3: Elected Women Chairpersons to the Union Parishad of Bangladesh (1973-2003). Year Total Union Parishad Female Candidates Elected Female Candidates

1973 4,352 Not available¹

1977 4,352 Not available⁴

1984 4,440 Not available⁴

Source: Election Commission of Bangladesh, Women in Bangladesh, Bangladesh National Report, 1995.p. 9

In 1997, the Bangladesh government took a positive step to ensure women's participation in elected bodies at the local level. The government enacted a law introducing of a direct election of women for three reserved ward member seats to each Union Parishad – the lower rural administrative tier of the local government. This step was taken in conformity with Article nine of the Bangladesh constitution. Apart from the exclusive reserved seats, women can also contest for any of the general seats. Welcomed by concerned women's organizations and groups, the quota system provided women the effective right to be elected in local level politics. For example, 43,969 female candidates contested in the 1997 Union Parishad direct elections for 12,723 ward member seats reserved for females. Women members consider their participation in local level politics as less disruptive to family life. They are found to be regularly attending the meetings of the Union Parishad. In an overwhelmingly male dominated political environment, the quota system has enhanced the opportunity for women.^{5.5} Women's participation in Rural Local Government of Bangladesh:

ISSN : 2028-9324 Vol. 10 No. 2, Feb. 2015 590 participation in politics at the local level. Hossain, head of the Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC),

found that reserved seats for women have boosted women's confidence in their capability. But he points out that lack of opportunity to play an effective role from those seats has infused them with frustration. Although women members attend the Union Parishad meetings regularly, very few can influence the discussions and ultimate resolutions. In the male dominated Union Parishad, female ward members hold subordinate position and cannot express their views as forcefully as their male counterpart. The male colleagues have a propensity to ignore their development proposals on diverse socio-economic issues. In addition, Salma Ali alleges that many women elected through quotas were subjected to sexual harassment by their male counterparts and were looked down upon as 'second category' members.

It is noteworthy however, that the percentage of women willing to contest at the local level has been increasing in recent years, which indicates that women are eager to participate in both national and local level politics.

5.5 Role of Politics and Women Advancement in Politics:

Political parties everywhere control and choose who will represent the party in elections. Thus, they play an important role in shaping women's representation in politics. Strong party affiliation is one of the basic requirements to become selected as a candidate and eventually a position in national or local level politics. Before a woman could be assured of party support, she must be an active member and foster a relatively long relationship with a particular party. Studies on women and politics have often suggested that female quotas and affirmative action are instruments of women's successful entry into public office. Traditionally, the major political parties in Bangladesh have not encouraged or supported prospective women candidates who wish to enter into public office.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Chowdhury, Najma (1985) "Women in Politics in Bangladesh" in Ahmed Q.K. et. al (eds.) Situation of Women in Bangladesh, Ministry of Social Welfare & Women Affairs, Government of Bangladesh, Dhaka, , p. 268

However, major political parties such as the BNP and the AL have always been very keen on mobilizing women workers and supporters to launch political campaigns, anti-government protests, and rallies in the streets to ultimately seize political power.

Despite the creation of women's branches or committees by the parties in recent years, women still primarily hold weak and non-influential decision-making positions in the central executive committee of the different political parties in Bangladesh. A lot of prejudice though unconscious, still exists among male leaders of most political parties against women candidates in Bangladesh, as is the case in other Asian countries. The critical barriers against women's successful entry into politics are:

- (a) huge campaign costs, (b) Not receiving nomination in expected winnable seats to the parliament, (c) lack of strong party backing and financial assistance, and (d) lack of powerful support base in the constituency she wanted to represent. Male politicians always occupy the top positions of the party. Table 4 below provides women's position in the structures of major political parties of Bangladesh in 2002.

Table 4: Female Members in the Party Hierarchy of Major Parties in Bangladesh.

Party Structures of party	Total No. of Members	Female Members
Bangladesh Nationalist Party		
National Standing Committee	18	2
National Executive Committee	380	45
Awami League Presidium and Secretariat		
Working Committee	66	2
Jatiyo Party Presidium Member	41	4

Central Executive Committee 91 9

Jamat-e-Islam Majlis-e-Shura 141 0

Majlish-e-Amela 24 0

Source: Data obtained from the offices of the respective political parties of Bangladesh.

Table 4 clearly shows a very negligible participation of women politicians in the party hierarchy. The major parties have not really been enthusiastic about increasing women's representation in the party leadership. For example, among the eleven members of the Parliamentary Board of the Bangladesh AL, there are only two women members in the Board including the party chief Sheikh Hasina.

Similarly, out of 15 members of the BNP National Standing Committee (NSC), there is currently only one female member, the party chief Khaleda Zia. Acknowledging the issue of women's low participation in politics, the AL in its 2001 election manifesto declared that the number

of reserved seats for women in parliament would be increased to 60 and that direct elections for reserved seats for women would be introduced. On the other hand, the election manifesto of the BNP also promised to increase the number of reserved seats for women and provide direct elections. As of now, the pledges of the major parties still remain unfulfilled resulting in less representation of women in the national parliament.

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Of importance is how the Bangladesh Constitution initially guaranteed at one time 15 reserved seats for women in the national parliament for a period of ten years,

which expired in 1987. In order to redress the overall development of women's status, the reserved seats for women in parliament were increased to 30 by a 5th amendment to the constitution that was introduced in June 1990 and extended a period of ten years and then in 14th amendment it expires 45. The Parliament has not yet reached an agreement whether these reserve seats should expire in 2010. The reasons could be attributed to a lack of consensus, conflict, and imbroglio between the major political parties – the BNP and the AL. Hence, the major political parties are still reluctant to advance the cause of gender equality and women's participation in politics.

5.6 Obstacles to Women Empowerment in Local Government of Bangladesh:

The elected women member's participation in local government bodies remains generally insignificant, as they are not given any specific duties. The absence of operational guidelines and terms of reference for female elected representatives,

the limited capacity of the female elected representatives to operate in public institutions of this nature, the lack of awareness over their roles and responsibilities, the systematic discrimination and biases by male elected colleagues all these are seen as factors impeding women's meaningful participation in local government (ADB, 2001:14).

Some of the major problems to women's participation in local government include the following:

1. Albeit the constitution guaranteed the equal rights for women, the reality is that they are not seen as equal, their roles are closely tied to their reproductive and household activities only. At the same time women are considered as unfit to perform political and community affairs. This is due to lack of clarity in the constitution on the role of women in local government. A common complaint

regarding women's reserved seats is that the law does not specify what their roles and responsibilities are to be.

2. Patriarchy as a system, an ideology and practice impacts in different ways on the lives of women wherever they are. Patriarchal attitudes become so embedded that they are taken as natural. Even where there is supposed equality, these attitudes tend to prevail. Socio-cultural norms and religious misinterpretation are used frequently for challenging and reinterpreting women's rights and create insecurity for women. And although women have equal political rights to participate as voters and representatives, in reality they can be actively discouraged to do so. The patriarchal society enforces rules and laws in such way that affect the self-confidence of women, limit their access on resources and information and thus keep them in a lower status than men.⁸¹

3. Education is the strongest factor influencing women's control of their own fate. In Bangladesh women are furthermore handicapped because of lower educational achievements and the prevalence of social norms that severely restrict their freedom of movement in the public place. And so they do not show interest in participating in local government activities.

4. The male-biased environment within political institutions can deter women. The fact that there are few women on decision-making bodies means that these women have to work within styles and modes acceptable to men. As a result women cannot give attention to their issues. Sometime they are treated by their colleagues and society harshly. Many-if not all-male elected members harbor negative attitude towards elected women members.

⁸¹ GOBD, Memorandum for Bangladesh Development Forum 1999-2000, April 19-20, 1999, p. 49.

5. They believe women should not run for general seats. They denigrate the value of the reserved seats. Lack of cooperation by men in the local government is a significant barrier to women's effectiveness in decision-making.

6. The introduction of direct election to the reserved seats is undoubtedly a breakthrough for women in Bangladesh. In no other way could these women have moved in to these institutions and participated in them. Still there is a gender imbalance in the ration of men and women in the local government bodies. As a result the elected women members have very limited scope to influence decisions.

5.7 Arguments for Women's Representation in politics:

Bangladesh is a developing country half of the total population is women whose socio-economic condition is very low. Struggle for modernity, tradition, men-women equality, social dignity, security and for multilateral pressure the position of women in the family is very complex. Here men and women do not participate in social development is not equal. Many indoor and outdoor activities of women are not treated as work. The devaluation of women labor in labor market also hinders women right. But in market economy women of Bangladesh are always facing new challenges. No socio-economic, political and cultural development is possible without the empowerment of women.⁸²

⁸² Government of Bangladesh (GOB)[1993], The Constitution of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh (Amended till October,1991), Dhaka: Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

Politics is always a field of the politicians. Religion is an important part of the people. The use of religion in politics adversely affects the life of the people and the governing system of a country. It brings destruction not only to the religious and ethnic minorities but also to the mainstream people of a country by imposing adverse norms by the misinterpretation of religion. So, politics is the art of compromise and religion is the faith to an uncertain matter. They should have separate roots in their own way to the life of the people. Politics cannot run smoothly if there are religions in it. Politics and religion should run in different track. The histories of the middle age as well as of Bangladesh show the negative consequences of religious influence in politics. It showed that the misinterpretations of religion by the parties are gaining power bringing damage and destruction for the nation. It creates the discrimination to the minorities. Birth of Pakistan in 1947 is the result of religion and politics. The split of Sudan into north and south can be a recent example of religious influence in politics. The religious influence in the politics had brought a massacre and destruction of the people and its cultural values during 1971. In 1972 Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the father of the nation, declared Bangladesh as a secular state banning religious politics.

The people of Bangladesh participated in the war of independence in 1971 to ensure the democratic rights of the citizens. The main spirit of the liberation war was the form a secular independent nation. Nationalism, secularism, democracy and socialism are the four principles of our constitution. In course of time these principles were changed by the amendments and it created the scope for the Islamic fundamentalists to extent their activities. The present Bangladesh has been experiencing with that obnoxious influence of religion in politics from colonial period. The autonomous and independent Bangladesh has also been influenced with that unpleasant issue in the period of almost all rules. Politicians and rulers use religion to activate political power. Our politics has polluted due to the use of religion in it. It is increasing the worries of our national life. The dream of our secular state is in danger for the use of religion in politics. Religion should not be mixed up with politics.

But in order to keep consistency with the religious values of 89.5 percent of the people he took some steps which made secret root to the religion to influence in the politics. The influence was not too much. But as a colonial state we go back to the military government after the tragic assassination of Bangabandhu, the root for religion to influence the politics had been widely opened. General Ziaur Rahman institutionalized the influence of religion in politics by amending the constitution and by openly allowing religion based parties in politics. Later, General Ershad made the root easy by institutionalizing this influence. Until 2001, although there were a few number of religion based political parties in Bangladesh, they did not have much influence in the politics. But in 2001, Begum Khaleda Zia's BNP made

a coalition government with Jamat-e-Islam. By this way, the religion based political party directly came in state power and consequently the democratic values became distorted. The religious minorities were in a difficult position. They were beaten up, tortured and their houses were burnt and destroyed. Even some other Islam based political parties, followers were assaulted tortured and killed by the government party especially in the southern part of the country. Sheikh Hasina's government is also strict to establish the democratic norms and values by aborting the religious influences in the political life of the people. The student organization of Jamat namely, 'Chatra Shibir' and their violence has been banned. The government also has taken strong steps to those parties or groups which want to increase terrorism in the country in the name of religion.

On the other hand, half of the total population of our country is women whose socio-economic condition is very low. Struggle for modernity, tradition, men-women equality, social dignity, security and for multilateral pressure the position of women in the family is very complex. Though women work in educational institution, medical, factories, police, even in the uneven areas, women are neglected, tortured and persecuted. In the society of gender disparity it is difficult for women to stay parallel and enjoy the right of equal participant. But no socio-economic, political and cultural development is possible without the empowerment of women. It is a cruel reality; women are deprived in family and society, in decision making process, in administrative process of governance and most importantly in economic activities. Even the women contribute in the process of social development, which has also financial value, are being ignored by the society.

The elected women member's participation in local government bodies remains generally insignificant, as they are not given any specific duties. The absence of operational guidelines and terms of reference for female elected representatives, the limited capacity of the female elected representatives to operate in public institutions of this nature, the lack of awareness over their roles and responsibilities, the systematic discrimination and biases by male elected colleagues all these are seen as factors impeding women's meaningful participation in local government. Education is the strongest factor influencing women's control of their own fate. In Bangladesh women are furthermore handicapped because of lower educational achievements and the prevalence of social norms that severely restrict their freedom of movement in the public place. And so they do not show interest in participating in local government activities. The male-biased environment within political institutions can deter women. The fact that there are few women on decision-making bodies means that these women have to work within styles and modes acceptable to men. As a result Women cannot give attention to their issues. Sometime they are treated by their colleagues and society harshly. Many-if not all-male elected members harbor negative attitude towards elected women members. They believe women should not run for general seats. They denigrate the value of the reserved seats. Lack of cooperation by men in the local government is a significant barrier to women's effectiveness in decision-making. The introduction of direct election to the reserved seats is undoubtedly a breakthrough for women in Bangladesh. In no other way could these women have moved in to these institutions and participated in them. Still there is a gender imbalance in the ratio of men and women in the local government bodies. As a result the elected women members have very limited scope to influence decisions.

So, in order to give Bangladeshi women a place in the decision-making process, there is a need to increase the number of women holding political office at both the local and national levels. They need to be empowered mentally, economically and politically. That is why modern social science turned women development as the empowerment of women. However, any substantial increase in women's representation in public life depends on the mainstream changes within the major political parties; the strong support and campaigning by women's groups, NGOs, and the media; the removal of structural impediments, traditional mindsets, biases and attitudes based on gender roles, and access to financial resources. Roles and responsibilities of the women members should be clearly defined in the manuals and orders of local government. Work should be fairly distributed among the male and female members in such a way so that women member can meaningfully participate in all type of functions. To create greater awareness among women about their low status in society and the need to improve it, motivational programs along with programs for expanding opportunities for education, health care and employment should be launched. Specific programs should be undertaken by the government and non-government organizations in order to create an awareness among the women in the grass roots levels that political participation would give them an access to the political decision making process relating to the allocation of resources. Mass media should be used to educate and mobilize public opinion in such a way that the realization about the benefits of women's full participation in the national development efforts is created among people. Priority must be given to monitoring the status, conditions and rights of women. There must be a sustained campaign for women mobilization, regular reporting of monitoring, public information and advocacy in this realm. Women should be given various opportunities for leadership training, training regarding the activities of local level and education in order to encourage them to take up political and leadership

position. Supportive services should be provided to allow women participate in these training courses. A former member of the parliament from the AL, Sajeda Chowdhury, observed that, 'Women must be encouraged to be more independent and self-reliant and that social norms and cultural values to be re-oriented'. There is urgent need to undertake research on women's participation in politics, their voting behavior, consciousness and participation in the political parties.

However, the religion-based parties are opposed to women in public office. It is likely that in the national parliament of Bangladesh as well as in the local level politics, women's representation will remain insignificant in the near future despite their enthusiasm to provide political leadership. Empowerment is a useful concept because it emphasizes the idea of women as active agents in, rather than passively recipients of development strategies. Therefore, participation is considered as an essentially first step in order to empower women.

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