Influence of Religion on Political Participation among Public University Students in Bangladesh

A Research paper submitted to the Department of Political Science, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh for the degree of
Master of Philosophy

by

Lutfunnahar

Registration Number: 289/2017-2018

Department of Political Science
University of Dhaka, Dhaka, Bangladesh

<u>Dedicated to</u>

My

Parents

Declaration

The thesis entitled "Influence of Religion on Political Participation among Public University Students 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. Nurul Amin Bepari, Professor (Retired), Department of Political Science, University of Dhaka.

I would like to declare that neither of this thesis nor any part of it has been submitted earlier to any university or institution for the award of degree or diploma.

Lutfunnahar

M. Phil. Researcher

Registration No. 289, Session: 2017-2018

Department of Political Science

University of Dhaka

December, 2023.

Certification

This is to certify that the research paper "Influence of Religion on Political Participation among Public University Students in Bangladesh" which has been submitted to the department of Political Science at the University of Dhaka in Bangladesh, is the original research work of Lutfunnahar, which was conducted under my supervision. It is intended to fulfill a portion of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy in the Department of Political Science. For all I Know, neither the entire research nor a portion of this research has been submitted earlier to any other educational institution for the award of degree or for any other similar purpose. Moreover, I attest that the M. Phil. thesis submission was done after utilizing plagiarism detection software. Later conscientiously perusing the final draft, the submission has now been completed.

Dr. Nurul Amin Bepari

Supervisor

Professor (Rtd)

Department of Political Science

University of Dhaka

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Lutfunnahar

M. Phil. Researcher

Registration No. 289, Session: 2017-2018

Department of Political Science

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Abstract

Religion being a momentous fragment of individuals' life has direct and indirect impact on individuals' ideology and thus influences their activities. A considerable amount of study has been conducted across the world in different environment to explore the relationship between religion and political participation. The main purpose of the study is to investigate the influence of religion on political participation among the students of public university in Bangladesh. The theoretical framework has been borrowed from Emile Durkheim's functionalism theory, Herbert Blumer's theory of symbolic interactionism, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno's critical theory and Anthony Downs's rational choice theory to examine the connection between religion and political participation. Both quantitative and qualitative methods of research have been used to conduct the study more precisely. For this purpose, the researcher was very thoughtful about sampling and conducted the research based on primary data to understand the impact of religion on political participation on individual-level. Several types of political behaviors of participants have examined in the study including supporting secular constitution, choosing secular political party, influence of religion on political participation, desirable quality of a leader, voting, participating protests, joining in boycotts, singing petitions, taking part in unofficial strikes and hartal etc. The study found that religion has impact on political participation but this association works both in positive and negative manner. Both religious and non-religious factors play a significant role in shaping individual's political philosophy.

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Appendix 1. Research Instrument

List of Acronyms

AL - Bangladesh Awami League

BAKSAL - Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League

BCL - Bangladesh Chatra League

BHBCUC - Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council

BHL - Bangladesh Hindu League

BNHP - Bangladesh National Hindu Party

BNP - Bangladesh Nationalist Party

BTF - Bangladesh Tarikat Federation

CPB - Communist Party of Bangladesh

ICS - Islamic Chhatra Shibir

IJOF - Islami Jatiya Oikya Front

IOJ - Islami Oikya Jote

IPP - Islamic Political Party

ISA - Islami Shashontantra Andolan

JI - Jamaat-e-Ismali

JP- Jatiyo Party

MP - Member of Parliament

Chapter One

Introduction

Religion being one of the ancient social institutions has a great influence upon individuals' behavior. Religion being a significant institution was fostered by the human being from dawn of the society. By this way religion has become one of the pertinent issues in human's life and played a vital role in social interaction and thus religion has simultaneously become an important issue in state affairs. In the medieval period religion was an indispensible part of politics, by the passage of time in the modern period religion was separated from politics and made it individual's personal choice. In the last century, it was predicted that secularism would be the strongest ideology in political arena in days to come and religion would lost its importance in global issues. But at present many national and international issues are directly or indirectly related to religion. Religion has a procrastinating effect over a person's political belief. In our country, all of our political movement have historically arisen out or related to political participation of all spheres of life. This research paper mainly focuses on an analysis of the influence of religion on political participation in Bangladesh particularly among the students of public university of Bangladesh. Bangladesh became independent in 1971 from Pakistan; but she had to witness the atrocious destruction from the then West Pakistan government at the time of liberation war where religion was used as one of the tools of such dreadful violence. Bangladesh was founded in 1971 on the basis of secular principle. But in the last five decades, religion has emerged as a political ideology and drastic political force. This paper seeks to address the impact of religion on political participation of public university students in the new context of the country. This paper argues that religious factors are responsible for shaping the political ideology of the students of the public university in Bangladesh. One of the significant aims of the study is to show whether the political participation and decisions of a Bangladeshi youth is influenced by the religious ideology.

1.1 Background of the Study:

Now-a-days religion issues are started to hold more space than the last century in both national and global events. Sharing a very complicated relation over the time religion has never been irrelevant in politics. Historically it was evident that religion has always been a important issue in the field of politics. Religion has a power to create a sense of

national unity and a common bond among the citizens of a nation, which with the passage of time might give birth a separate nationalism. Pakistan was born in 1947 based on religion derived nationalism. Religion has a influencing force over state decision-making by establishing particular social standards and shaping individual personalities. More broadly, "religion becomes an important factor in nationalist sentiment and nation formation when it is able to lay some sort of differentiating role for the nation".[1] Ethical values of religion has always been pertinent to individuals decision making process either directly or indirectly, subconscious mind of human being may not identify it every time but these ethical values of religion has a life long impact on human behavior and decision making process. Individual's decision collectively forms some social norms. These social customs with the passage of time spread all over the country and set some guidelines to follow. Thus religion from a individual perspective becomes national perspective and influences national political issues. Bangladesh has a long religion based political history as a successor of the then East Pakistan. Historical influence of religion over the nationalism of Pakistan could be found in the politics of Bangladesh. Bangladesh being a Muslim majority country with 91.04% (Census 2022) Muslims has now started to face some new religious issues those have a deep connection to national political issues. Now these issues are getting more complicated as they are happening frequently and this issue has already been connected to international politics. Thus religion for one more time is appeared as a substantial issue in the political arena of Bangladesh.

1.2 Statement of the Problem:

For millennia religion was a significant issue in the political arena. The relation between religion and politics has never been easy to understand due to the dynamic nature of human being as well as society. How religion influences the political decisions was vary from periods to periods and from country to country. Historically Bangladesh was a land of mix culture and religion, where the people from different religion and culture lived together with harmony. This later on gave them a nationalism based on Bengali culture unlike Pakistan where the main pillar of nationalism was religion (Islam). At the same time a bitter historical truth is religion had repeatedly used in political arena in the whole Indian subcontinent, the birth of Pakistan in 1947 based on religion is one of the strongest evidence

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[1] Barker, P. (2009). Religious nationalism in modern Europe. New York, NY: Routledge, p.31.

of this unpleasant truth. In the present time Bangladesh is facing some new form of political challenges relating to religious issues.

Lots of research was done about this complex relation or interaction of politics and religion. Due to the changing nature of this complex relationship between religion and politics, it continuously demands new research and study. The researcher had also been curious about the influence of religion on political participation in Bangladesh. In the recent years the pattern of religious influence in politics of Bangladesh is changed and it is evident that many religious violence of Bangladesh is the reaction of global issues. Most of the people have mixed opinion about the reasoning of such religious conflicts, which makes the issues more relevant to have further research. The quest was to find out that whether there is any influence of religious belief on individual's political ideology and what role religious faith of youth's plays on their political participation.

1.3 Rationale:

Bangladesh achieved its freedom as a secular state in 1971 based on Bengali nationalism. The hostility of Pakistan occupation army towards the people of the then East Pakistan during the war of 1971 was atrocious. One of the chief justifications of such heinous genocide by the Pakistani government and Pakistan occupation army was religion, where they showed that they were trying to save a Islamic Republic of Pakistan from the conspiracy of Hindu majority India. Using religion as a shield to justify their heinous massacre to the people of Bangladesh they were successful in a larger extent and got supported by many Muslim majority countries. After a dreadful experience of religion based politics during the liberation war of 1971, Bangladesh started its journey as a secular state where secularism was one of the state policies along with nationalism, socialism and democracy. But after the assassination of the father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975 the secular constitution of Bangladesh was distorted and secularism was removed from the constitution. From then to till now religion in different form is used as a legitimacy tool by same political parties of Bangladesh. In the present time the condition of religion in the politics of Bangladesh is different from the past because of international politics. Now religion is being used indirectly by some political party, which makes the role of religion in politics more complex than ever before. This complex situation demand more precise study on this dynamic role of religion on the politics of Bangladesh. Regardless of the vast theoretical contributions of this literature, the researcher had a ways to go empirically. How religion, being one of the controlling forces on human's life,

influenced the educated young generation of the country on their political participation is required further analysis. This study needs a set of evidentiary standards for forming the empirical existence of the influence of religion on political participation of youth of Bangladesh that goes beyond the appeal of religious ideas and signs in politics. In the present time, public view polls that ask about the importance of religious ideology on political participation may be one source of evidence to prove the importance of religious ideology and identity in politics and how religion is still so much relevant to the politics of Bangladesh under the umbrella of secular constitution, particularly if these answers can be likened to other sources of relevant political issues. This study may also make better use of the historical pronouncements of political and religious authorities about a same issue from different perspective and how they are perceived by their target audiences. The research was to compare the salience and significance of religious ideology and symbols in political participation address to other images and representations, to measure the relative importance of religious ideology along with political ideology.

1.4 Objectives of the Study:

The core purpose of the present study is to add an additional exploration to an understanding of the present condition of religion in the political participation of Bangladesh and to discover the new dimension of the relationship between religion and politics. The study proceeds with the following objectives-

- To explore the new empirical sights into the relationship between religion and politics.
- To understand the historical impact of religion on the current political situation.
- To investigate the linkage between religious faith and political participation of youth particularly the students of the university of Bangladesh.

1.5 Research Questions:

To attend the above mentioned research objectives, the following research questions have been formulated in order to conduct the study:

- Is there any connection between religion and politics?
- Is there any influence of religion on shaping people's political ideology?
- Does religion influence individual's political participation?

1.6 Scope of the Study:

This study, based on its objectives, has been conducted rigorously. All the issues arising out religion in the country were not observed; rather the issues relating to the study have been identified. It addressed issues like secularism, how religious ideology influences political ideology and the influence of religious belief on political participation in Bangladesh. The dynamic nature of political behavior over the time was also considered while conducting the present study. The study focuses on the political behavior of the youth influenced by religious ideology. In a nutshell, the issues derived from the objectives and research questions were conveyed in this study.

1.7 Significance of the Study:

The relationship between religion and political participation of the young generation particularly the university students has not been rigorously investigated, typically employing only basic measures of religious group attendance or denomination. In this study, I utilize precise measures of various religious behaviors, traditions, and beliefs to examine their influence on political participation.

Religion is a major force in human experience. Religious traditions have laid the foundation for human rights, social justice, toleration, and international peace. But across the globe religious agendas have also fueled conflict and encouraged acts of terrorism and ethnic cleansing, dislocating populations and destroying economies. Religion related Studies is therefore by nature a complex, interdisciplinary field with direct relevance to the world we live in.

It is impossible to open a newspaper, listen to the radio, or watch television without being bombarded by debates about the religious and ethical dimensions of medical care, sexual behavior, interpersonal violence, large-scale war, capital punishment, and a host of other issues that fiercely divide the public both in Bangladesh and abroad. Investigating the use of religion as a political tool and the negative side of the using religion as a political tool many scholars throughout the world worked in the past and also now working on this critical issue from different angel find out the different dimensions of this issue. Because of being a relatively new, critical, dynamic and wide spread issue a small of research are done, which calls for a further investigation according to the present time.

1.8 Ethical Issues:

In the present time ethical issues of the study are getting more and more significant in the field of research. Considering this reality the researcher was very cautious about the ethical issues of the study. All sorts of ethics were tried to be followed while conducting this study. The more important issues are discussed below:

- The researcher was very truthful while conducting the research in terms of collecting and analysis of data. All primary data were collected by the researcher from first hand interviews in the field. After that, data were analyzed rationally and fairly. All forms of manipulation and fabrication were evaded strictly while entering and analyzing the data.

- All sorts of plagiarism and self-plagiarism were avoided while conducting the research. In this paper, a enormous amount of secondary data has been used but with proper reference both in-text and the reference section at the end of the paper. The sentences were tried to be paraphrased suitably in order to minimize the resemblance rate. With the aim of being frank and truthful with the respondents, the researcher introduced herself to them at the start of data collection.

- Confidentiality of the participants was secured. The researcher assured the respondents that, the name and recognition of them will be preserved in confidence and they will not be affected by any means because of this research. Voluntary participation was insured about all participants while conducting the study. They were free to attain and leave the study.

- Conducting this study all attempts were made to inform the potential participants about the purpose, risks, and expected benefits of the survey. It was difficult for the participants of this research to understand the aim, benefit and other aspects of the research. However, a great deal of efforts was given by the researcher to make them understand the objective and output of the study. The participants were also assured about the fact that the facts collected from them will only be used for academic purposes.

- All kinds of research misconducts such as falsifying data, manipulating data analyses, misrepresenting results in research were carefully avoided by the researcher to attain academic integrity and institutional credibility.

1.9 Limitations of the Study:

The linkage of religious faith and political ideology is a huge one and includes lots of different social aspects. Given the scope of the paper it was necessary to set a few limitations to narrow down the research and make it feasible.

First of all, one should bear in mind that the paper is based on questionnaire and interview and the results of this examination may not be applicable in other cases. However, the scope of this essay is that the results may serve as a foundation for further research of what impact religion has on shaping political ideology thus political participation of the youth. The main purpose of this research paper is to understand the interconnection of religious belief with political participation in Bangladesh. The data available on issues is gathered from different university students. The empirical data from the field is gathered to validate the information in the literature and not as a representation of whole nation. Therefore, the sample of respondents in this research paper is not a representative sample of common people.

1.10 Methods of the Study:

This research is mainly a social research to achieve facts. The study is interdisciplinary in its integral nature. The historical and analytical methods are used to complete the study. The historical method usually aims to focus on and investigate historical events, situations and phenomena that had been marked as political importance in the context of the understandings and validations provided by historians, authors, journalists, etc. The historical methods of analyzing several significant documents and official recodes had been used to conduct the study. The method of both qualitative and quantitative study were survey oriented. Sample survey has been used as a research method in quantitative approach while literature review has been used as research method in the qualitative approach. The university students of Bangladesh are the area of this study. This study is mainly based on survey. This method is also used in pronouncement creation procedure. To the experts the survey research is used: "to answer questions that have been raised to solve problems that have been posed or observed, to assess needs and set goals, to determine whether or not specific objectives have been met, to establish baselines against which future comparisons can be made, to analyze trends across time, and generally, to describe what exists, in what amount, and in what context."[2]

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[2] Isaac, S. & Michael. (1997). W.B, Handbook in Research and Evaluation, USA.

In survey research, independent and dependent variables are used to define the scope of study, but do not explicitly controlled by the researcher. Before conducting the survey, I predicate a model that identifies the expected relationships among these variables. The survey is then constructed to test this model against observations of the phenomena. The questionnaire consisted both open and close ended questions. Additionally, in order to accomplish the expected aims and objectives, the methodological framework is divided into three phases.

Pre-field study - For conducting the research in this stage primary and secondary data has been collected. Books, journals, publications, newspaper archives are collected from different sources. Such as: several general election results and list of political parties from the website of election commission of Bangladesh. In addition to these, some relevant books, academic journals, periodicals and newspaper have been collected for literature review of the study. The collected data were carefully reviewed before using in the study. A structured questionnaire was made to collect primary data.

In-field study - In this stage of the study, questionnaire survey was conducted through face to face conversation. The face to face conversation with the participants while collecting data through questionnaire was very helpful for the researcher to attain the objectives of the study.

Post-field study - In this final stage of the study, data analysis and findings of the study were taken place. All the collected data were analyzed with a view to attaining the objectives of the study.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

The main objective of this study is to examine the influence of religion on political participation among the public university students of Bangladesh. Religion being one of the ancient social institutions has always been an influential element on individual's personal and political life. Many scholars of political science have examined the correlation of religion and political participation in different regions of the world on the followers of different religions which show different results. The study is based on the review of literatures, for example, the historical background of religion based politics in Bangladesh as well as Indian subcontinent, the verdict of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh declaring the fifth amendment of the constitution void tantamount to the reinstatement of banning the religion based politics, different international reports on religious freedom , reports on challenges facing religious minorities. These literatures indicate that Bangladesh has the environment to generate religious susceptibility which reflects into political activities. With this message to conduct the present study manifold books, journals, articles, have been studied. Relevant research articles have been selected for literature review and few of them are summarized below:

Mariya Y. Omelicheva & Ranya Ahmed (2018) in their article **Religion and politics: examining the impact of faith on political participation** examined the relationship between religion and political activity. They considered seven types of political participation for analysis include signing petitions, joining in boycotts, participating in demonstrations, taking part in unofficial strikes, occupying buildings and factories, voting and membership in political parties. They found that religion does not always work as a mobilizing force rather serving as a deterrent. Their analysis of the impact of doctrinal differences on political participation exhibited clear dissimilarity where Muslims were less likely to take part in all types of political participation. They found same outcome across all other religious groups, except for Buddhists and Jews. The followers of Buddhism and Jews were found to be more likely to sign a petition, take part in a boycott or occupy buildings.[3]

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[3] Mariya Y. Omelicheva & Ranya Ahmed (2018) Religion and politics: examining the impact of faith on political participation, Religion, State & Society, 46:1, 4-25.

The researcher of **Religion and Politics: The Influence of Religious Affiliation and Beliefs on Political Participation,** Samuel Gonzalez examines data from the 2016 American National Election Survey (ANES) time Series in order to evaluated if religious affiliation and beliefs have an impact on political participation. Observing at the existing data within his survey he focuses on the relationship that more religious affiliation may lead to more political participation. To conduct this study the researcher uses statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) for utilizing the frequencies and testing correlation to determine whether or not his hypotheses are correct. The researcher in this research finds that there is a correlation between an individual looking towards religion as guidance in their day-to-day life and the individual assigning voting as their duty or choice alongside if an individuals has ever attended church or a religious service correlates with their political party identification. He further discovers that overall there is a correlation between the way an individual views religion and their political participation. He concludes his study by commenting that there are many factors that play a huge role in voting. Religion is not the only component that individuals calculate into how there are going to vote in the coming government election.[4]

In the research article **RELIGION, REDISTRIBUTION AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION: Evidence from an Experiment in Nairobi, Kenya**, Gwyneth McClendon and Rachel Riedl tried to examine the effect or lack of religious ideas on two core domains of political life: whether religion effects outlooks about wealth accumulation, inequality and redistribution; and whether religion discourages or inspires political participation. They have done their experiment in Nairobi, Kenya on the influence of Christian messages with a view to using the findings in the field of politics in Sub-Saharan Africa. In this experimental study the main findings of the researchers are that people open to religious messages were choose wealth for themselves and others rather than equity in compared to those who were opened to secular messages. They concludes their study by highlighting the point that self-affirmation messages, whether religious in the form of the prosperity gospel or secular, boost political participation.[5]

[4] Samuel Gonzalez. (2019). Religion and Politics: The Influence of Religious Affiliation and Beliefs on Political Participation.

[5] Gwyneth McClendon, Rachel Riedl. (2014). RELIGION, REDISTRIBUTION AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION: Evidence from an Experiment in Nairobi, Kenya, September 11, 2014.

In the article **Religiosity and political participation - Panel data evidence from post-communist Poland,** Przemysław J. Kurek and Jan Fałkowski pick Poland as their research area because of being one religion dominated country which helps them to acquire more precise result. In Poland about 96% of the adult population identifies as Roman Catholic. The post-Communist region identity of Poland makes it different from the U.S. or Western Europe which makes this article more significant. They show that the role played by the Catholic Church during the Communist dictatorship encourages religious people to participate in political activities. The study finds that religious people in Poland have a higher standard voter turnout rate than non-religious people though there is no major religious issue. This study robustly show that municipalities with higher measures of church attendance exhibit higher voter turnout.[6]

Robyn Driskell, Elizabeth Embry and Larry Lyon in their study **Faith and Politics: The Influence of Religious Beliefs on Political Participation**, claim that people's religious beliefs are considerably associated with their domestic political participation. When individuals' religious activities are solely related to their religious tradition then religion decreases their political participation. On the contrary, individuals' membership in church and active participation raises political participation. They show two different types of religious beliefs namely: macro religious beliefs and micro religious beliefs. Where they postulate that only macro religious beliefs drive individuals to political participation through increasing their macro political behavior. In the case of micro religious beliefs where people only believe in God have no role national politics. Their observation is that individuals' choice of the religious belief somehow connected to the choice of their political activity where macro religious beliefs ultimately increase national political participation.[7]

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[6] Przemysław J. Kurek and Jan Fałkowski. (2022). Religiosity and political participation - Panel data evidence from post-communist Poland, European Journal of Political Economy, Volume 75, December 2022.

[7] Driskell, R., E. Embry, and L. Larry. (2008). "Faith and Politics: The Influence of Religious Beliefs on Political Participation." Social Science Quarterly 89 (2): 294 - 314, June 2008. Wiley-Blackwell for the Southwestern Social Science Association. **https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6237.2008.00533.x**

Chapter Three

Theoretical Framework of the Study

3.1 Theory of Functionalism:

In social sciences functionalism theory based on the principle that all aspects of a society, institutions, roles, norms, etc. serve a purpose and that all are indispensable for the long-term survival of the society. In 19th-century sociologists, predominantly those who viewed societies as organisms made this approach popular. Among the sociologists the French sociologist Emile Durkheim said that it was essential to understand the "needs" of the social organism to which social phenomena correspond. Others sociologists used the idea of function as the interrelationships of parts within a system, their inter-dependence on each other, or their noticeable consequences. Functionalism is used as a method of analysis where any social norm or belief affects other social activities.

As per the functionalist perception of sociology, each aspect of society depends on each other and contributes to society's stability and functioning as a part of the whole. For example, the educational institution arranges for both academic and moral knowledge for the students, after the gaining that knowledge they continue and practice the moral education which helps to maintain social harmony on which a society stands on.

The theory of functionalism is one of the chief theoretical perspectives in social science field. It was originated from the work of French sociologist Emile Durkheim where he argued how social order prevails and the way of remain stable. Functionalism focuses on the macro-level of social construction instead of micro-level of humans daily life. Herbert Spencer, Talcott Parsons, and Robert K. Merton along with Emile Durkheim are prominent theorists of functionalism. In the words of Emile Durkheim: "The totality of beliefs and sentiments common to the average members of a society forms a determinate system with a life of its own. It can be termed the collective or creative consciousness."[8]

Functionalism hypothesizes the society as the totality of its fragments where each part of it works for the solidity of the whole. Durkheim proposed that society is an organism where each element has a particular role to play but can't function alone. If any of them faces any problem to work the others have to adapt themselves in the mechanism.

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[8] Durkheim, Emile. (1997). The Division of Labour in Society, New York: Free Press.

According to functionalists the different fragments of society are principally composed of different social institutions where each of them are intended to fill different requirements to make it stable such as family, government, economy, media, education, and religion are very much essential for better understanding. These institutions are exist to play a vital role to stabilize the social activities as well as national affairs a a whole. Though a state has lots of institutions in it, it will die without the proper and interconnected function among the different parts of society. Whenever any new requirement will appear, new type of institutions will be formed to fulfill the demand. Main assumptions of the theory of functionalism are as follows:

- Universal interdependence and interconnected parts of a system as a whole;
- Typical function of the institutions to maintain the equilibrium of the system or society;
- The method of all fragments of the system in circumstances of disturbance of the whole system works to bring things back to normal;
- Value consensus as an essential way to preserve stability of the system;
- Chief focus on available interconnected principles and customs of the society; and
- Dynamic nature of society as a living organism.

Religion as a social institution has a grate role in human life where through out the human life it influences lots of their activities. Functionalism can describe the utility and the importance of religion as a social institution. The role of religion on one's political participation could be explained through the theory of functionalism.

All the social institutions with some amount of core stability have functional and interconnected harmony to make the whole system workable. This theory also proposes that all cultural or social phenomena have defined helpful task which are inseparable from each other as a integral part of one whole system. Differences could be done between marked functions where results are noticeable by the contributors in the system.

3.2 Theory of Symbolic Interactionism:

Symbolic interactionism is one of the theories of social science which emphases on how individuals interact. The main argument of the theory is person's activities are founded on the senses they are allocated to do, which could be differ from person to person and may alter with the passage of time. Unlike functionalism symbolic interactionism is a micro-level theory that focuses on meanings involved to human interaction, both verbal and non-

verbal, and to symbols. Communication, the exchange of sense through language and symbols, is assumed to be the way in which people make logic of their social worlds.

Theorist Charles Horton Cooley presented the looking-glass self (1902) to define the way of a person's logic of self grows out of interactions with others, and he suggested a threefold process for this development:

- People observe the way others respond to each other;
- They interpret that reaction (usually as positive or negative); and
- They build a self-based meaning of those interpretations. "Looking-glass" is an antiquated term for a mirror, so Cooley theorized that people "see" themselves when they interact with each other.

"The social self is simply any idea, or system of ideas, drawn from the communicative life, that the mind cherishes as its own. Self-feeling has its chief scope within the general life, not outside of it; the special endeavor or tendency of which it is the emotional aspect finds its principal field of exercise in a world of personal forces, reflected in the mind by a world of personal impressions. As connected with the thought of other persons the self idea is always a consciousness of the peculiar or differentiated aspect of one's life, because that is the aspect that has to be sustained by purpose and endeavor, and its more aggressive forms tend to attach themselves to whatever one finds to be at once congenial to one's own tendencies and at variance with those of others with whom one is in mental contact. It is here that they are most needed to serve their function of stimulating characteristic activity, of fostering those personal variations which the general plan of life seems to require."[9]

Without publishing the work on Symbolic interactionism George Herbert Mead (1863–1931) is considered a founder of symbolic interactionism. One of his student, Herbert Blumer, was actually coined the term "symbolic interactionism" and defined the principle properties of the theory as follows:

- Individuals interact with things grounded on senses derived from those things;
- The attributed meaning of things originated from individuals interactions with each other and society;

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[9] Cooley, Charles Horton. (1902). Human Nature and the Social Order. New York: Scribner's, pp. 179- 185.

- The meanings of things are understood by an individual with the observation of the reaction of particular action of given circumstances;
- For example: if someone love doing voluntary work, as per a symbolic interactionist he/she learned it as a result of the knowledge of usefulness of the voluntary work through the interaction he/she had with family, friends, school, or religion; maybe he/she had an experience of the goodness of the work; and
- Symbolic-interactionists as social scientists always in the search of the patterns of interaction between individuals.

The findings of symbolic-interactionists are frequently contained observation of one-on-one interactions. Unlike a conflict theorist who is reviewing a political protest based on class difference, a symbolic interactionist gave more importance on the way of interaction among protesting group along with the emblems and signs protesters use to exchange their thought, to discuss and built a common values. They are more interested to apply qualitative research methods, such as in-depth interviews or participant observation, as they are intended to find out the figurative domains where their research subjects live.

3.3 Theory of Critical Sociology:

With a view to challenging, criticizing and finding the power structure of society and culture the theory of critical sociology or critical theory is derived as a social philosophy. The critical theory as a theory of social science claims that social problems are more related with social structures and cultural norms than with individuals. It as a social theory is more acknowledged to criticize and having a continuous effort to alter society as a whole. It only works with the aspects of society. The main theorists of the critical theory are Max Horkheimer, T.W. Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Leo Lowenthal and Reich Fromm and all of them had the experience of going in the Frankfurt School in Germany in the late 1920's at the institute fur Sozialforschung. Because of the growing capitalism and its impact on creating separate social structure among the societies the Frankfurt's school's theory of society was mostly negative about the way of the functioning of the society. In the 1960s the approach of Frankfurt school become very influential in the social sciences. The critical theory shows the society as the production and the reproduction derived from social struggle of culture industry where this cultural industry is used as a tool to bring individuals together and to create a sense of togetherness.

The critical theory envisioned to free individuals from the human enslavement and suppression. Most of critical theorist particularly Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno had the assumption where this theory is the approach of human emancipation of free capitalist society; the bourgeoisies hold all the controlling power over the working class as they influence the interests of politics, media, culture etc. with an invisible but powerful hidden force. The critical theory discusses about the several forms of manipulation namely: Ideological, where powerful class gives the validation of their activities by imposing one's thoughts onto another, secondly, Psychological, in this area of suppression theorist tries to find out the reason of individuals increasing interest on other people's life, where they describe it as a deterioration of the guardian character in many families and finally, Cultural, it is formed when the whole effort is given to commercialize the situation for upholding the status quo of the proletariat.

Horkheimer strongly believed that a capitalist society can only be reformed if it develops extra democratic norms where "all conditions of social life that are controllable by human beings depend on real consensus" is maintained in a rational society.[10] He found the critical theory as a vital social approach having the potential power to solve the existing social problems. According to Theodor W. Adorno there are four main points for the Critical theory, these are:

- Reflective, this denotes to that facts can be revised separately from other things that we may have to learn such as values.
- Dialectical; this denotes to individual's understanding of the world changing as the world changes too.
- Critical; which states to stating what is wrong with the current society, and coming up with reasonable ideas on how to change it.
- Immanent critique; which is considered as the main support for critical theory.[11]

3.4 Theory of Rational Choice:

Rational choice theory is an important approach for analyzing political participation. It gives a set of framework for understanding individual's economic, social and political behavior in a given circumstances. Though originally it was used for discussing economic

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[10] Horkheimer, Max. (1982). Critical Theory Selected Essays. New York: Continuum Publishing, p.(249-250).

[11] Adorno, T.W. (1993). Hegel: Three studies. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

aspects specially to describe the notion of rational actors, self interest and the invisible hand of famous economist Adam Smith, after the Anthony Downs's seminal work, An Economic Theory of Democracy (1957) it was started to apply for understanding political participation. The core concept of rational choice theory is that total social behavior is the sum of the decisions made by individual actors as a part of society. One of the vital assumptions of this theory is individual actor has priorities out of accessible choice alternatives, where these alternatives should be complete and transitive. When one has the ability to choose the option from alternatives, the situation called completeness. On the other hand, when someone weakly chooses any option over the others which ultimately makes the ability of choosing priorities weak. The rational actor takes the decision by analyzing variety of criteria to male the best choice of action.

The theory of rational choice is not about to define the choice process, but rather it assistances to predict the outcome and list of alternatives. This theory considers the individual as self- interested to maximize personal advantage. According to Downs the features of a rational man are:

- the ability of making decision when challenged with a range of alternatives;
- the capability of ranking all the available alternatives in sequence of one's priority in such way that each is either favorite to, apathetic to, or inferior to each other;
- his ranking of preference must be transitive;
- he always selects from among the available alternatives according to the preference ordering from highest to lowest;
- having confronted with the same alternatives he always makes the same decision.[12]

"Rational choice theory has proposed that there are two outcomes of two choices regarding human action. Firstly, the feasible region will be chosen within all the possible and related action. Second, after the preferred option has been chosen, the feasible region that has been selected was picked based on restriction of financial, legal, social, physical or emotional restrictions that the agent is facing. After that, a choice will be made based on the preference order."[13]

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[12] Down, Anthony. (1957). An Economic Theory of Democracy, Pearson, London, p.6.

[13] De Jonge, Jan (2012). Rethinking rational choice theory : a companion on rational and moral action. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan. p. 8.

Chapter Four

Connection between Religion and Political Participation

4.1 Introduction:

Religion has always been a powerful influence on politics. Though modern states are promising to not use religion as a political force, the unpleasant reality is religion has always been used in politics. Religion being a social institution has been regulating people's values, attitudes, and behaviors. And it plays a crucial role in political issues related to political norms. Now-a-days around the world religious actors and institutions have managed to gain political influence. Religious differences are reflecting on politics and state affairs. Political participation is sometime influenced by religion. Religious ideology has an important role to shape individuals political ideology. Individual's political ideology is the key to ones political participation. Political participation and religion are connected in diverse way.

4.2 Religion:

4.2 (a) Meaning of Religion:

Religion is a set of beliefs and the faith in a supernatural power and worshipping that sacred power. When human beings' spiritual life is related to complete submission to divine authority, is regarded as religion. Religion is generally defined as a social-cultural structure of chosen actions and performance, ethics, principles, worldviews, scripts, sanctified places, prophecies, morals, or organization that usually relates humanity to supernatural, transcendental, and spiritual elements. Religions have holy histories and descriptions, which may be conserved in sacred texts, and symbols and holy places that aim generally to give a true meaning to life. Religions may encompass emblematic stories, which are sometimes said by followers to be true, that may also endeavor to clarify the origin of life, the universe, and other phenomena. Conventionally, faith, in addition to reason, has been considered a source of religious beliefs. At present there are different religions in the world as past. Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism are the four largest religions. There are some traditional folk religions in the world which vary from region to region.

Definitions of religion differ. Some are enormously general, such as that of the American religious scholar Paul Tillich (1886–1965), who called religion anything that deals with "ultimate concern." Some definitions are very narrow, such as those that claim religion is only a belief in God, or Allah, or the Buddha, or some other divine or spiritual being. Definitions can be so broad as to include even such "non-religious" belief systems as communism (a political theory that people should live and govern communally, or as a group) and atheism (the belief that there is no God) or so narrow that they confine themselves to only one organized form of religion and leave out all other forms. (https://www.encyclopedia.com/)

According to **Britannica** of history and society religion is human beings' relation to that which they regard as holy, sacred, absolute, spiritual, divine, or worthy of especial reverence. It is also commonly regarded as consisting of the way people deal with ultimate concerns about their lives and their fate after death. In many traditions, this relation and these concerns are expressed in terms of one's relationship with or attitude toward gods or spirits; in more humanistic or naturalistic forms of religion, they are expressed in terms of one's relationship with or attitudes toward the broader human community or the natural world. In many religions, texts are deemed to have scriptural status, and people are esteemed to be invested with spiritual or moral authority. Believers and worshippers participate in and are often enjoined to perform devotional or contemplative practices such as prayer, meditation, or particular rituals. Worship, moral conduct, right belief, and participation in religious institutions are among the constituent elements of the religious life.

Forerunner sociologist Émile Durkheim defined religion as "a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say set apart and forbidden, beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community, called a church, all those who adhere to them".[14] In the words of Barkan and Greenwood religious rituals are behaviours or practices that are either required or expected of the members of a particular group, such as bar mitzvah or confession.[15] William James wrote, were one asked to characterize the life

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[14] Durkheim, Émile. 1947 [1915]. The Elementary Forms of Religious Life, translated by J. Swain. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.

[15] Barkan, Steven E. and Susan Greenwood. 2003. "Religious Attendance and Subjective Well-Being among Older Americans: Evidence from the General Social Survey." Review of Religious Research 45:116–129.

of religion in the broadest and most general terms possible, one might say that it consists of the belief that there is an unseen order, and our supreme good lies in harmoniously adjusting ourselves thereto. (1902 [1985: 51]; cf. Proudfoot 2000)[16]. Edward Herbert (1583–1648) identified five "articles" or "elements" that he proposed were found in every religion, which he called the Common Notions, namely: the beliefs that

- there is a supreme deity,
- this deity should be worshipped,
- the most important part of religious practice is the cultivation of virtue,
- one should seek repentance for wrong-doing, and
- one is rewarded or punished in this life and the next.[17]

If we observe the list of religious populations' article which delivers a inclusive summary of the distribution and size of religious groups around the world, we can easily understand the importance of religion. "Population Growth Projections, 2010–2050"[18] is a report made by Pew Research Center founded on 2010 baseline estimates.

Table 4.2: List of current world religious populations

Religion	Adherents	Percentage
Christianity	2.382 billion	31.0%
Islam	1.907 billion	24.9%
Secular/Nonreligious/Agnostic/Atheist	1.193 billion	15.58%
Hinduism	1.161 billion	15.2%
Buddhism	506 million	6.6%
Chinese traditional religion	394 million	5.6%
Ethnic religions excluding some in separate categories	300 million	3%
African traditional religions	100 million	1.2%
Sikhism	26 million	0.30%
Spiritism	15 million	0.19%

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[16] https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/concept-religion/

[17] ibid.

[18] The Global Religious Landscape. Pew Research Center. 18 December 2012.

Judaism	14.7 million	0.2%
Bahá'í	5.0 million	0.07%
Jainism	4.2 million	0.05%
Shinto	4.0 million	0.05%
Cao Dai	4.0 million	0.05%
Zoroastrianism	2.6 million	0.03%
Tenrikyo	2.0 million	0.02%
Animism	1.9 million	0.02%
Neo-Paganism	1.0 million	0.01%
Unitarian Universalism	0.8 million	0.01%
Rastafari	0.6 million	0.007%
Total	**7.79 billion**	**100%**

4.2 (b) Aspects of Religion:

Beliefs:

Faith comes first in regard to religion. There is no religion without some distinctive beliefs. Faith has been considered a foundation of religious beliefs. The origin of religious belief includes awareness of individual death, a sense of community, and dreams.

Practices:

The practices of a religion comprise rites, sermons, remembrance or worship of a god or goddess, sacrifices, carnivals, feasts, trances, initiations, funerary services, matrimonial services, meditation, prayer, religious music, religious art, sacred dance, public service, or other features of human culture.

Social Institution:

Religions have different types of social institutions and rules to lead human life properly. This includes prayer places, laws of marriage and inheritance etc.

Mythology:

Some religion has own myths which includes story of God, prophet, deity, different historical happenings etc. According to Joseph Campbell, mythology is often thought of as other people's religions, and religion can be defined as misinterpreted mythology.[19]

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[19] Joseph Campbell, Thou Art That: Transforming Religious Metaphor. Ed. Eugene Kennedy. New World Library ISBN 1-57731-202-3.

4.3 Political Participation:

4.3 (a) Meaning of political participation:

Political Participation denotes to voluntary activities of mass people by express their demands to influence public affairs. Political participation contains a broad range of activities through which people grow and show their views on the world and how it is governed, and tries to take part in and shape the decisions that affect their lives.

a. Political participation describes any number of activities intended to influence public policy voluntarily undertaken by the public.

b. Besides voting, political participation may include activities such as working on campaigns, donating money to candidates or causes, contacting public officials, petitioning, and protesting.

c. The health of a democratic nation's government is often measured by how actively its citizens participate in politics.

d. Political apathy, a total lack of interest in politics or government contributes to the United States suffering one of the lowest percentages of voter turnout among the world's major democracies.

As the name suggests, political participation simply means that a person is participating in the political process by making his or her opinions and beliefs known. In the social sciences, the term 'political participation' is often used to describe an action taken by a citizen to influence the outcome of a political issue.

4.3 (b) Types of Political Participation:

There are many different forms of political participation and whether you know it or not, you've probably taken part in some of them at different points in your life. Some of the most common forms of political participation are:

- **Voting**: In a democracy, voting is the single most important form of political participation that a person can take part in because it ensures that politicians are elected by the people, rather than being assigned to their position of power by someone else.

- **Protest**: Whether or not it is a constitutional right, as it is in the U.S., public protests are another important form of political participation because you are making your opinions known in a very obvious way, with the hope that your actions will influence or initiate change in a particular area of politics.

- **Public consultations**: Like voting, public consultations (which are more commonly known as town hall meetings) offer ordinary citizens the chance to get together in a group with a politician or elected official in order to make their opinions and feelings known.
- **Jury duty**: Although most people shudder at the thought of having to attend jury duty, it is an important type of political participation because it ensures that people who are charged with a crime are judged by people like them, rather than allowing the outcome to depend entirely on a single person, such as a judge.

While these are some of the most common forms of political participation, there are many others. These include:

- Signing a petition
- Writing a letter to a public official
- Blogging about a political issue
- Donating money to a cause
- Volunteering for a campaign
- Joining an activist or interest group
- Holding a public official position
- Occupying a building in an act of protest
- Committing a terrorist act

As long as the activity involves ordinary citizens expressing their opinions by contributing to the political process, you can probably assume that it is a form of political participation.

4.3 (c) Characteristics of meaningful youth political participation:

Effective and meaningful youth political participation has one of three attributes. First, it can be consultative, where young people's voices are heard in an adult-assigned consultation process, where they have capacities, a mandate and information to fully perform their roles, or through a youth-led advocacy initiative. Second, it can entail youth-led participation, where young people have a direct impact on decision-making within their own youth communities, such as through youth-led NGOs, student councils, and youth parliaments with competencies and budgets. Third, it can involve youth collaborative participation, where young people effectively take part in regular political decision-making processes, including as voters, or as members of parliament, political parties, or advocacy groups.

Strategies to enhance meaningful and effective youth political participation can:

1. Be grounded in a rights-based approach to youth political participation and avoid tokenistic and pseudo-participatory activities.

2. Include direct components of consultative, youth-led, and/or collaborative participation, and emphasize learning-by doing and practice-what-you-preach approaches.

3. Meet minimum standards for youth political participation by being transparent, respectful, accountable, youth-friendly, and relevant, inclusive, voluntary, and safe.

4. Include capacity development on the individual and the organizational level, and foster enabling environments, preferably in a reciprocal fashion (such as by developing skills for a reformed structural setting).

5. Be grounded in an accurate understanding of the current state of youth in a given context.

Following a rights-based approach entails considering youth as potential agents of change – as part of the solution, not a problem to be resolved by others. Further, young people are not a homogenous block and other social aspects (such as gender, rural/urban dwelling, ethnicity, language, among others) need to be taken into consideration when designing interventions. An emerging challenge for electoral stakeholders is to find a way to facilitate youth engagement through formal institutionalized processes and simultaneously integrate less traditional forms of political engagement.

Table 4.3 (A): Qualities of political participation[20]

	Outer qualities	**Inner qualities**
Conditions for political participation	Opportunity to choose and to participate	Will and Competence to choose and to participate
Results for political participation	Liberal political system (democracy)	Feeling of freedom/ self-determination/efficacy

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[20] Pausch, Markus. (2011). The Qualities of Political Participation Theoretical classification and indicators. hamburg review of social sciences. August 2011, Volume 6, Issue 1, p. 21.

Table 4.3 (B) : Intentions for, and consequences of political participation[21]

Intention	Consequences for democracy	Consequences for individual freedom
Democratic political participation	+	+
Undemocratic political participation	−	+
Apolitical political participation	−	−
Political absenteeism	−	−

4.4 Relationship between Religion and Political Participation:

The relation between religion and politics continues to be an important theme in political philosophy, despite the emergent consensus (both among political theorists and in practical political contexts, such as the United Nations) on the right to freedom of conscience and on the need for some sort of separation between church and state. One reason for the importance of this topic is that religions often make strong claims on people's allegiance, and universal religions make these claims on all people, rather than just a particular community. For example, Islam has traditionally held that all people owe obedience to Allah's will. Thus, it is probably inevitable that religious commitments will sometimes come into conflict with the demands of politics. But religious beliefs and practices also potentially support politics in many ways. The extent and form of this support is as important to political philosophers as is the possibility for conflict. Moreover, there has been a growing interest in minority groups and the political rights and entitlements they are due. One result of this interest is substantial attention given to the particular concerns and

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[21] ibid.

needs of minority groups who are distinguished by their religion, as opposed to ethnicity, gender, or wealth.[22]

Religion as an ancient social institution has a great impact on human beings' decision making and way of life. Human as a social being wants to express their desire to others. In modern welfare state era people are conscious about their civic rights and want to influence different public policies by various activities which is called political participation. As religion has influence on individuals ideology and choice of life, religion has both positive and negative relationship with political participation.

- Positive relation of religion with political participation means when religion directly or indirectly increase political participation.
- Negative relation of religion with political participation denotes while religion directly or indirectly decrease political participation.

This complex relationship of religion with political participation makes religion more relevant for understanding various influential factors of political participation.

4.5 How religion influences individuals political behaviour and political participation:

The study of religion and politics has always been an important field in political science. Religion has successfully proclaimed itself as a powerful force in the personal, social and political arena. In a personal level religion shapes individual religious faith and political behaviour. Religion can connect individual to others through same religious activities. Religion as a influential force links many facets of national and global politics in the era of global communication. As a spiritual force religion subconsciously controls individual's personal and political behaviour. Political participation indicates any political action and inaction taken by an individual in the political arena including political voting, political campaigning, political lobbying, protesting any political decision and supporting political decisions etc. It further includes making donations, running for office and less direct types of political engagement, such as reading newspaper stories about political events, learning about politics from internet sites, listening to a political debate and

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[22] Callaway, Christopher. Religion and Politics, Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, (https://iep.utm.edu/rel-poli/).

attending a lecture on some aspects of politics.[23] Political participation is tangibly noticed when individuals take part in the political activities including giving their opinion, opposing any political choice, asking about their political rights and more importantly choosing their leader through voting. Although the doctrinal differences and specificities of religious praxis may lead to important differences in political activism within and across religious denominations as well as in comparison to secular political activism, the social action itself demonstrates some consistency across actors, systems of beliefs and dynamics and mechanisms of contention. In other words, neither religious political participation, nor Islamic, Christian or Hindu activism is sui generis.[24] It can, therefore, be studied using the modes of inquiry developed for understanding political contention and collective action, in general.[25] For systematic purposes and relevancy some scholars categorizes the most dominant features of political participation as follows: motive, political opportunity structure, incentive and frames.

Religion shapes individuals and political leaders observation towards political issue. For millennia religion is being used as a source of legitimacy of decision and action of ruling class. People belonging to specific religion have desired that state has to act in favour of their religion. Religious minorities most of the time feel insecure and threaten by religious majority as a citizen of same country and demand for special law and provision to preserve their religion. Thus a minor religious group's activity can be a good example of religion inspired political participation. Some leaders belonging to religious majority group use religion as a tool of collecting political support from the group and motivate people to participate in political activity. Some religious leaders directly try to gain political power in the name of religion. They instigate people to build a nation where all the the state activity would be done within the jurisdiction of religion. Many people for the sack of religious spirituality support them without thinking properly and thus strongly participate in the state

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[23] Driskell, R., E. Embry, and L. Larry. (2008). "Faith and Politics: The Influence of Religious Beliefs on Political Participation." Social Science Quarterly 89 (2): 294 - 314.

[24] Wiktorowicz, Q. (2003). Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

[25] McAdam, D., S. Tarrow, and C. Tilly. (2009). "Comparative Perspectives on Contentious Politics." In Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure: Advancing Theory in Comparative Politics, edited by M. Lichbach and A. Zuckerman, 260–290. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

politics. The present century has already been witnessed the revival of religion based politics in different countries including Bangladesh. Many Bangladeshi citizen are now supporting religion based political parties and the number of their supporter are increasing day by day where these supporter groups are very much politically active and religion is one of the leading reasons behind their political participation.

Table 4.5 : Political Participation[26]

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION				
	Motive	**Structure of political opportunities**	**Incentives**	**Frames**
Role of religion	Religious grievances	Membership in religious organisations	Levels of religiosity	Levels of religiosity and membership in religious organisations
Other factors	Other grievances/ level of satisfaction with life	Membership in voluntary organisations	Repression and/or opportunities for political action	Membership in voluntary organisations

4.6 Religion and Political Participation around the World:

A study has been done in the USA in 2017 to examine the relationship between religion and political activity. It theorises religious influences on political activity and tests the impact of various religious factors on political participation in a large cross-national sample (1981–2014). This study integrates longitudinal data from the aggregated World Values Survey with country-level data in the hierarchical multilevel analysis that allows teasing out the individual-level religious influences, including membership in religious organisations, religiosity and self identification with various religious denominations, and the country-level impacts. They find that religion matters but not always in the expected ways. Religiosity, by itself, often serves as a deterrent rather than mobilising force for

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[26] Mariya Y. Omelicheva & Ranya Ahmed (2018). Religion and politics: examining the impact of faith on political participation, Religion, State & Society, 46:1, 4-25.

political engagement, regardless the denominational differences. It is the membership in religious organisations and other voluntary associations of a secular nature that make individuals more likely to engage in political activity.[27] Their analysis of the impact of doctrinal differences on political participation showed that those individuals identifying themselves as Muslims were less likely to take part in all types of political participation. We observed the same pattern across all other religious groups, except for Buddhists and Jews. Those individuals self-identifying with Buddhism were found to be more likely to sign a petition, take part in a boycott or occupy buildings. The self-identified Jews were found to be more likely to take part in a boycott or participate in a strike. The lower levels of political engagement of self identified Muslims find support in some of the previous research conducted in Muslim-majority states. Stockemer and Khazaeli (2014), for example, found that Muslim-majority countries have lower voter turnout rates than majority non-Muslim countries, when controlling for compulsory voting, electoral system type, regime type and development and other factors. Furthermore, electoral participation has been found to be lower in countries where Islamic tenets are most strongly entrenched in politics (such as Sudan and Algeria in the 1990s) (Stockemer and Khazaeli 2014). Where our findings differ from the previous research is by showing that these lower levels of political participation are not unique to Muslims but are quite prevalent across individuals identifying with other religious denominations.[28] Another study had been done, in Nairobi, Kenya in 2014, focusing on the effects of two important contemporary Christian messages. They find evidence that exposure to religious messages can reduce egalitarianism in complex distribution decisions, compared to exposure to secular messages. They find that exposure to self-affirmation messages, both religious and secular, can be politically empowering and motivate activism.[29] A study, which examines data from the 2016 American National Election Survey (ANES) Time Series in order to evaluated if religious affiliation and beliefs have an impact on political anticipation, has done in 2019 in the USA. Looking at the present data within this survey he focus on the relationship that more religious affiliation may lead to more political participation. The findings of the study help

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[27] ibid, 2.

[28] ibid, p. 15.

[29] McClendon , Gwyneth. Riedl, Rachel. (2014). RELIGION, REDISTRIBUTION AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION: Evidence from an Experiment in Nairobi, Kenya, September 11, 2014.

support that there is a correlation between an individual looking towards religion as guidance in their day-to-day life and the individual assigning voting as their duty or choice alongside if an individuals has ever attended church or a religious service correlates with their political party identification. Overall there is a correlation between the way an individual views religion and their political participation. However, there are many factors that play a huge role in voting. Religion is not the only component that individuals calculate into how there are going to vote in the coming government election.[30]

4.7 Conclusion:

Religion across the world is shaping political issues. Political participation and religion are tangled in a multifaceted dimension. From election campaign to voting individuals political participation in some cases is impacted by religion. Religious beliefs and practices are sometimes support to make political decision by influencing political morality and behaviours. Friendship and hostility among states and instructions are sometime determined by religious values of leaders. From developed to undeveloped country religion in different ways influences political activities. Religion can connect any domestic issue to global issue. Thus religion is related to political participation across the world.

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[30] Gonzalez, Samuel, "Religion and Politics: The Influence of Religious Affiliation and Beliefs on Political Participation" (2019). Student Scholar Symposium Abstracts and Posters. 365.

Chapter Five

Religion and Political Participation in Bangladesh

5.1 Introduction:

Religion can never be separated from politics of Bangladesh. Both religion based politics and the use of religion in politics are present in Bangladesh. Though Bangladesh is build upon the sprit of Bengali nationalism, with the passage of time a group of political leaders use the concept Islam nationalism to fulfill their own political purpose. Bangladesh being a vastly Muslim majority country, it has always been a easy political tool of some political leaders to gain state power by using Islam. A closer look at Bangladeshi politics discloses that Bangladeshi society and politics are deeply filled with Islamic religious values. People would not tolerate an anti-Islamic political party and government. This reality is well known by the political leaders of Bangladesh.

5.2 Historical Context of the Influence of Religion in Political Participation in Bangladesh:

5.2.1 Pre-independence Period:

The political history of Bangladesh is knotted with the political history of Indian subcontinent. From ancient to modern Bangladesh the history of religion is intertwined with the history of politics. The religion of ruling class dominated other religions and reinforced by them. Ancient Bengal was consisted of present-day Bangladesh and the Indian states of West Bengal, Tripura and a part of Assam, located in the eastern part of the Indian subcontinent, located in the Ganges delta and surrounded by the Bay of Bengal in the South. The early political history of Bengal was the power battle of different Indian empires and was characterized by the power struggle between Hinduism and Buddhism for power.

The reign of the Hindu and the Buddhist Mauryan Empire in ancient India:

At the beginning Hinduism is the main religion in the ancient Mauryan Empire which was formed around 321 B.C.E. and ended in 185 B.C.E. and Hinduism was patronized by the emperor. Later on emperor Ashoka, the most powerful emperor, of the Mauryan empire converted to Buddhism and he worked for spreading Buddhism across the empire. Under the reign of him the empire extended its territory and Buddhism as a religion

of peace was its peak. Bengal as on of the Janapadas (kingdoms) of the Mauryan empire became a fertile land of Buddhism.

The reign of the Hindu Gupta Dynasty in Bengal:

From mid-to-late 3rd century in ancient India the Gupta dynasty was in power and they were traditionally Hindus. Hinduism was the most powerful religion across the empire and Buddhism was also allowed to practice.

The reign of the Buddhist Pala Empire in Bengal:

From eighth to 11th century the Buddhist Pala Empire was originated in Bengal and was known as one of the golden eras of Bengal. For four hundred years they were served as a powerful empire and promoter of Buddhism. During the Pala Empire the Buddhist scholars flourished Buddhism from Bengal to other region and were directly patronized by the emperor. Lots of people converted to Buddhism at that time.

The reign of the Hindu Sena Dynasty in Bengal:

The Hindu Sena dynasty ruled the Bengal from 11th–12th century. They worked for the reinforcement of Hinduism and the caste system of Hinduism was introduced during the Sena rule. Senas were Brahmins and the Brahman clan started to torture the Buddhist scholars. They deported many Buddhist scholars from Bengal. The revival of Hinduism was one of the main goals of Senas.

The Muslim rule in Bengal:

With the defeat of Lakshamanasena to the Turkish chief Muhammad Bin Bakhtyar Khalji in 1204 the rule of Sena dynasty came to an end. Though Senas continued to rule in eastern Bengal for some years, the main political power in Bengal was in the hand of Muslims. The rule of Muslims changed the religion scenario of Bengal and introduced Bengal with the Islam. Islam gained a status of one of the powerful religions in Bengal under the rule of Muslim Sultanate. Bengal was a province of the Delhi Sultanate from 1204 and 1352. From 1352 Bengal took the road to independent Sultanate and an independent Bengal Sultanate was existed for two centuries. Islam and the Bengali language were patronized by the rulers. The Muslims Bengal Sultans were famous for their liberalism, where they patronized Hindu Rajas and poet. A great amount of Hindus worked in the royal administration as prime ministers and poets. Buddhist scholars and followers were allowed to perform their religion. When Bengal became the Mughal Subah (province) Muslim ruling continued in Bengal which further continued under the Nawabs of Bengal with quasi-

independent states. The rule of Muslims in the Bengal as well as Indian Subcontinent was come to end with the takeover by the British East India Company in the late 18th century.

The British rule in India:

The British East India Company integrated their power with the conquer of Battle of Plassey in 1757 and Battle of Buxar in 1764 and the whole region came under their rule by 1793. Christianity as on of the major religion was introduced in Indian subcontinent under the British rule. During the reign of the British East India Company with a view to expanding Christianity in this continent they established mission stations and patronized missionaries. The Church Missionary Society (CMS) was notable among them. During the British rule of almost two hundred years they succeeded to convert a great amount of Indian Citizen to Christianity. For enlargement and solidification of their power in the Indian subcontinent they introduced a policy of divide and rule. The British with their malignant policy started to spread hatred between two major religious community Hindu and Muslims. The system of separate electorates worked as a final nail into the coffin of the Hindu-Muslims communal harmony.

One of the prominent Indian nationalist leaders Muhammad Ali Jinnah introduced the two nation theory: an ideology that focused religion, rather than language or ethnicity as the principal integrating feature to delimit residents in British India and emphasized the inevitability for the the formation of two separate country at the end of the British rule. The rising communal tensions between Hindu and Muslims in the 1930s made them politically more cautious and religion driven political participation were increased significantly. Which later on led to the Lahore Resolution of 1940 with the demand of separate state for Muslims and it was adopted by the All-India Muslim League. This resolution became the key factor of Muslims leaders' unification. The Lahore Resolution declared as follows: [31] (2) "Resolved that it is the considered view of this Session of the All India Muslim League that no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principle, namely that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted, with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority as in the North-Western and Eastern Zones of India, should be grouped to

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[31] "23 March Pakistan Resolution Day".(2019). Pakistan Muslim league (N) USA Official Website. Retrieved 14 March 2019.

constitute "Independent States" in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign."

Though later on the term 'Independent States' from Lahore resolution was replaced by 'Independent State' and the demand of one independent state came forward as a name of Pakistan. According to the 'Two Nation Theory' of Mr. Jinnah Muslim leaders had united about the proposal of Pakistan as a new independent Muslim majority state. At the same time Indian National Congress had already started a separate state for Hindus. The devastating impact of the Second World War with a deadly famine made the political situation worsen and weaken law and order situation. Religion based politics reached at such a dangerous stage that led to the riot at Calcutta in 1946. This riot was the bloody evidence of the catastrophe of religion based politics. Thus, Pakistan was born on 14th August in 1947 as a land of Muslims of India where Pakistan would be safe place for Muslims. One day later on 15th August India was born as a multi cultural secular country.

Pakistan period (1947 - 1971):

As a land of Muslims Pakistan got East Bengal, which they later on named as East Pakistan in 1954's constitution of Pakistan. The new state Pakistan was formed with two regions namely: East Pakistan (East Bengal) and West Pakistan. West Pakistan and East Pakistan had a distance of 1200 miles where India located in the middle of them. However the two area of Pakistan not only situated without sharing any physical border between them but also there was no cultural and political similarities, which consequently led huge political chaos in Pakistan. Pakistan, which was assumed as a dream land of Muslims, being Muslim majority country and having Islam as a state religion were constantly failing to fulfill the political expectation across the country. Islam being as the foundation of the birth of Pakistan was continuously facing the problem of national integration. In the words of Rounaq Jahan and Charles Burton Marshall respectively on the idea of Islam as a common faith, which was bring up as a solid basis of national integration, how it was persistently loosing its dominion as a political tool over the time among the mass people of both East and West Pakistan. "Though Islam is most often cited as the main basis of Pakistani nationhood, its validity as an integrating force is limited. The distribution of religious groups in the two wings is actually quite disproportionate. East Pakistan has a large percentage of Hindus, while West Pakistan's Hindu population is minimal. Many Bengalis are reluctant to put too much emphasis on Islam, because that would immediately alienate nearly 20 percent of East Pakistan's population. Moreover, emphasis on Islam is no sure

guarantee for uniting all the Muslims. "[32] "The two provinces of Pakistan have a somewhat different way of looking at Islam. Some West Pakistanis...have a patronizing way of looking at East Pakistanis in this respect. They sometimes...air the idea that Bengali Muslims are....members of the faith who came into it to escape the rigors of being the low men on the totem pole under the caste system prevailing among the Hindus- whereas, in contrast, such west Pakistanis will point out that their own Muslim heritage dates back to the Arabian antecedents who brought the faith in from the area of its origin- so their common faith may set them apart in relation to India, but it does not necessarily pull them together as Pakistanis."[33] The above statement of Rounaq Jahan and Charles Burton Marshall shows that though on the basis of religion Pakistan was born, it was not sufficient enough or strong enough to integrate the people across the nation. The challenge of national integration in Pakistan as a new born country was getting worse day by day which completely and utterly not only confronted the idea of separation on the basis of religion but also proved merely the religion of the majority is not capable of making a nation. Religion is certainly a strong pillar yet its territory of influence the nation as a whole is limited by many other aspects of social and political life. On the contrary, India as a constitutionally secular state having so many different religion and culture had been doing well.

Pakistan as a land of Indian Muslims was divided along language, culture and geographical lines. Though religion could make a new nation named Pakistan, could not integrate the nation at last. Urdu speaking leaders started to dominate the Muslim league and the Muslim league leaders of East Bengal were deprived in Pakistan. The underprivileged leaders of the then East Pakistan formed a new party named All Pakistan Awami Muslim League in 1949 and it's started to become the voice of East Pakistan's Muslim. The leaders afterward realized the necessity of secular political party for whole East Pakistan and removed the word 'Muslim' from the party name and became Awami League in 1955. Religion based politics started to loose its appeal across the country and cultural and economical differences became the vital political issues between two parts of Pakistan. The general election of 1970 is one of the landmark events in the history of politics of Pakistan. The result of general election was the reflection of the people's desire since the election was held on the ground of adult and universal franchise. The election manifesto of major political parties has enormous historical value. The victor political party

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[32] R Jahan, (1994), Pakistan: failure in national integration.

[33] Charles Burton Marshall, "Testimony" pp. 4-5

Awami League's focal point of election manifesto was historical 6-point program. Religion more precisely Islam has nothing to do with its 6-point program. But at a same time it is also true that AL promised not to enact any law which would go against to Quran and Sunnah in their election campaign. Pakistan People's Party emphasized Islamic socialism and the slogans were: Islam is our belief, democracy is our state system and socialism is our economy. Islamic constitution was main issue of Muslim League and other Islamic parties election manifesto.

Table 5.2.1 (A): The Result of the East Pakistan Provincial Council Elections, 1970

Party	General Seats	Women Seats	Total Seats
Awami League	288	10	298
Pakistan Democratic Party	2	0	2
National Awami Party (Wali)	1	0	1
Jamaat-e-Islami	1	0	1
Nizam-e-Islam Party	1	0	1
Independent	7	0	7
Total	**300**	**10**	**310**

Table 5.2.1 (B): The Result of National Council Elections, 1970

Party	General Seats	Women Seats	Total Seats
Awami League	170	7	167
Pakistan People's Party	81	5	86
Pakistan Muslim League (Qayyum)	9	0	9
Muslim League (Council)	7	0	7
Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam	7	0	7
Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan	7	0	7
Jamaat-e-Islami	4	0	4
National Awami Party (Wali)	6	1	7
Convention Muslim League	2	0	2
Pakistan Democratic Party	1	0	1
Independent	16	0	16
Total	**300**	**13**	**313**

The groundbreaking victory of Awami League under the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was a concrete evidence of triumph of 6-points over the proposal of

Islamic constitution by other political parties. As a consequence of wide conspiracy of the president of Pakistan Yahya Khan and the Pakistan People's Party's (PPP) chairman Zulfikar Ali Bhutto instead of consigning the power to Awami League Pakistan occupation army started genocide termed 'operation searchlight' in the mid-night of 25 March 1971. After twenty four years of oppression Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared the independence of Bangladesh on 26 March 1971 and through a nine-month long bloody war Bangladesh got victory on 16 December 1971.

5.2.2 Post-independence Period:

5.2.2.1 Bangladesh's first democratic regime and position of religion in politics: (1972 - 1975)

Bangladesh as a new born country with a previous bitter experience of religion based politics had started her journey with secular constitution. A country which would treat all religion equally. The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh became effective as secular constitution under the government led by the Awami League (AL) on 16 December 1972. Article 12 of the constitution of 1972 ensured secularism as one of the fundamental state policies and religion based politics was officially banned. The first general election of Bangladesh was held in 1973 and due to the prohibition on religion based politics major Islamic political parties such as Jamaat-e-Islami, Nizam-e-Islam, Muslim League with other Islamic parties were not allowed to participate in election.

Table 5.2.2.1: The Result of first General Elections of Bangladesh, 1973

Party	Seats
Bangladesh Awami League	293
Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal	1
Bangladesh Jatiya League	1
Independent	5
Total	**300**

But some scholars expressed their doubt about the implementation of secularism by AL government. They pointed out some measures taken by AL such as declaring Bangladesh as a second largest Muslim country of the world on 10 January 1972 by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, allowing to operate Awami Ulema League though religion based politics was forbidden, attending Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC)

Lahore summit and gaining membership of OIC in 1974, established Islamic Foundation in 1975. "Two things prevented Mujib from making any structural change in Bangladesh political system, or to give it an Islamic Slant, First, such a posture would have cast doubt in the minds of Hindus......Second. Islamization of the constitution would have strained Bangladesh relations with India."[34] A group of rightwing Islamic leaders started to spread the misconception about secularism avowing secularism as a form of atheism and aversive to Islam. These misapprehension about secularism was one of the factors to make the way of military coup more easier.

5.2.2.2 The military regime and instilling religion in politics: (1975 - 1990)

First Military Regime of Bangladesh: (1975 - 1981)

After the assassination of the father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with his family on 15 August 1975 during a military coup d'état, the first martial law administration was started. General Zaiur Rahman became Chief Martial Law Administrator (CMLA) in 1976. He introduced a unique way to consolidate his martial law by means of Islamization of Bangladesh. By passing an ordinance in 1975 general Zia's government stopped the trial of collaborators. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's government started the prosecution of Bangladeshi collaborators those who collaborated with the Pakistani occupational army and accused of murder, attempted murder, rape, or burning under the Collaborators Order of 1972 and the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act of 1973. By stopping the trial of those collaborators general Zia gained a massive support from banned religion based political parties leaders as most of them were accused collaborators and war criminals. This army-led government amended the constitution as a part of Islamization of politics of Bangladesh. When the national leaders do not have an easy command of power, and there is not an automatic and complete acceptance of authority of governmental institutions, they face the legitimacy crisis and one of the means of legitimizing the regime is to place emphasis on values attached to the sentiment of common people.[35] Under the Fifth Amendment of the Constitution of Bangladesh in 1975 they inserted "In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful" at the begging of the constitution, removed the provision of secularism and added 'absolute trust and faith in

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[34] Rafiuddin Ahmed. (1985). Bangladesh: Society, Religion and Politics, Dhaka, p. 24.

[35] Binder. Leonard and others. (1971). Crises and Sequences in Political Development (SPD - 7), Princeton University Press, Princeton, p. 147.

Almighty Allah shall be basis of all actions' in the constitution and removed the ban on religion based politics allowing the registration and of those parties in Bangladesh. The Fifth Amendment of the Constitution of Bangladesh was first major constitutional distortion and clear Islamization of Bangladesh. In 1978 general Zia founded his political party Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

Table 5.2.2.2 (A): The Result of Parliamentary Elections in Bangladesh, 1979

Party	Seats
Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)	207
Bangladesh Awami League	39
Bangladesh Muslim League - Islamic Democratic League	20
Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal	8
Awami League (Mizan)	2
National Awami Party (Muzaffar)	1
Bangladesh Gono Front	2
Communist Party of Bangladesh (Marxist)	1
Bangladesh Jatiya League	2
Jatiya Ekata Party	1
Bangladesh Ganatantrik Andolan	1
Independent	16
Total	**300**

The process of Islamization of first military regime was well accepted by the majority of the people of Bangladesh and the result of the general election of 1979 was tangible evidence. General Zia's government emphasized to maintain more closer relationship with Islamic Arab states than secular neighboring country India. Religion based politics was also regenerated and its walks resounded the soil of independent Bangladesh.

Second Military Regime of Bangladesh: (1982 - 1990)

On 24 March 1982, General Hussain Muhammad Ershad seized political power in a bloodless coup as on 30 May 1981, Ziaur Rahman was assassinated by the military and there was severe political crisis. During the Ershad's military regime the course of Islamization of politics was continued in Bangladesh. Though he often brought the issue of Islam in state affair, he was not intended to flourish Islamic ideology. He wanted to gather support from Islamic political parties along with 'Islam loving' people. He frequently went

to the shrines and mosques and asked people to follow the spiritual path of Islam. He often visited *Atrashi pir shaheb* and showed it as a one of the forms of religiosity. This second military regime introduced a education policy which made Arabic compulsory at elementary level and included Arabic language and Islamic studies at secondary level. His regime founded a new distinct directorate under the ministry of education for Islamic religious school named as *madrassa*. He established a 'Zakat Fund' and appeared to join several *Ijtimas* (annual gatherings of Muslims in Bangladesh). General Ershad criticied the culture of drawing *Alpana* (a traditional Bengali art form of drawing flower) at *Pohela Boishak* (Bengali new year) by accusing it as anti-Islamic culture. He took a innovative step of Islamization by starting a tradition of reciting Quran at the Shahid Minar on martyrs day occasion on 21 February. Many scholars described it as a move to make alliance with Islamic political parties along with collaborators as his government also did not take any step to restart the trial of war criminals. His government adopted similar foreign policy like general Zia to give more importance about maintaining strong diplomatic bond with Islamic Arab countries. General Ershad founded his own political party called Jatiya Party on 1 January 1986. Islamization process was continued to through out his regime.

Table 5.2.2.2 (B): The Result of Parliamentary Elections in Bangladesh, 1986

Party	Seats
Jatiya Party	153
Bangladesh Awami League	76
Jamaat-e-Ismali, Bangladesh	10
Communist Party of Bangladesh	5
National Awami Party (NAP - United)	5
Bangladesh Muslim League	4
Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD - Rob)	4
Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD - Siraj)	3
Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League (BAKSAL)	3
Bangladesh Worker's Party	3
National Awami Party (NAP - Muzaffar)	2
Independent	32
Total	**300**

The result of parliamentary election of 1986 in Bangladesh shows the risen popularity and acceptance of religion based political parties among the people of Bangladesh. Though Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Ismali and Bangladesh Muslim League were against the liberation war of Bangladesh and most of their leaders were collaborators of Pakistan army and accused of war crime, they got 10 and 4 seats respectively in parliamentary election. The political move of general Ershad of earning legitimacy through Islamization was also successful as his political party Jatiya Party secured 153 seats on the election. In 1988 general Ershad's government brought the eighth amendment of the constitution which was one of the major changes of basic structure of Bangladesh constitution. As this eighth amendment declared Islam as a religion of the republic. Both the military-led government use religion as a political weapon where they pretended as a savior of Islam in Bangladesh and deceived the people while strengthening their political power in the name of religion. These two military-led governments slaughtered the true spirit of liberation war of 1971 and established religion based politics in Bangladesh.

5.2.2.3 Restoring democratic regime and a tangled tale of religion in politics: (1991 - present)

Use of religion during the parliamentary elections of 1991:

After experiencing a long period of military dictatorship the politics of Bangladesh found a new hope by restoring parliamentary form of democracy. Islamic political parties strengthened their root in politics and started to become more powerful in the field of politics. But the legacy of Islamization of politics had not gone from the arena of national politics. Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Ismali along with other religion based political party were gaining political support by alluding religious people in the name of preserving religious purity. Being a Muslim majority country Islamic political party had an advantage of accumulating mass people support in the name of religion. The election of 1991 was an evident of the role of religion to legitimate and validate the power. Considering the use of religion and religious emblem this election was curious and diverse. Because in this election left, right, fundamentalist all types of political parties used religion. One of the famous slogan of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) was '*la ilaha illallah, dhaner shis-a bismillah*'. The slogan of freedom party was '*vote dile korale, khushi hobe rashule*' (giving vote to axe will please prophet). Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Ismali collected political fund in the name of religion by telling that by funding them people will go to haven after death and the

slogan of the party was '*onno, boshro, bashosthan, Islam dibe somadhan*' (food, clothing, shelter, Islam will give solution). Though Bangladesh Awami League was believed to be a secular political party, this party also announced that if they would come to the power they would not restore the provision of 'secularism' in the constitution. Extensive use of religion in the politics of Bangladesh was become a trend and fashion for political leaders from different political parties as a source of attracting people in the name of religion.

Table 5.2.2.3 (A): The Result of Parliamentary Elections in Bangladesh, 1991

Party	Seats
Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)	140
Bangladesh Awami League	88
Jatiyo Party (Ershad)	35
Jamaat-e-Ismali, Bangladesh	18
Communist Party of Bangladesh	5
Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League (BAKSAL)	5
Islami Oikkya Jote (IOJ)	1
National Awami Party (NAP - Muzaffar)	1
Bangladesh Worker's Party	1
Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (Siraj)	1
Ganatranti Party	1
National Democratic Party	1
Independent	3
Total	**300**

Bangladesh Nationalist Party won the election and many scholars thought that BNP did not have any strong futuristic development strategy. The main reason behind the victory showcasing great attachment to Islam. Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Ismali got 18 seats in 1991 parliamentary election where in 1986 this party got 10 seats. Another Islamic party Islami Oikkya Jote as a first time election candidate got 1 seat. The rising popularity of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Ismali was proved in the election result and secured fourth place in the election. Though this political party was against the liberation war of Bangladesh, it was becoming more influential in politics day by day.

Use of Religion on 1996 Parliamentary Elections:

During 1996 general elections the largest Islamic political party Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Ismali was against The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and BNP lost its Islamic minded voters support. On the other hand Bangladesh Awami League promised to the mass people that if they would come to the power, they would not do law which would go against the spirit of Islam. Before election campaign the party president of AL Sheikh Hasina performed Umrah (an Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca) and kept covered her head during election period. The result of 1996 parliamentary elections in Bangladesh shows the victory of AL and it proves that the political strategy of AL was correct. A Islamic political party named Islami Oikkya Jote (IOJ) won one seat in 1996 general elections.

Table 5.2.2.3 (B): The Result of Parliamentary Elections in Bangladesh, 1996

Party	Seats
Bangladesh Awami League	146
Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)	116
Jatiyo Party (Ershad)	32
Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Ismali	3
Islami Oikkya Jote (IOJ)	1
Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (Rob)	1
Independent	1
Total	**300**

Use of Religion on 2001 Parliamentary Elections:

After losing 1996 general elections Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) took new political strategy and made an alliance with Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Ismali. BNP with the help of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Ismali circulated that Bangladesh Awami League is a pro-Indian political party and AL is harmful to Islamic ideology. In this election BNP with Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Ismali won the election and came to the state power again. This time Islamic political party, Islami Oikkya Jote (IOJ) won two parliamentary seats. A worth mentioning matter is Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Ismali won 17 seats and Islami Jatiya Oikya Front secured 14 parliamentary seats. The power of religion in politics of Bangladesh was proved for one more time.

Table 5.2.2.3 (C): The Result of Parliamentary Elections in Bangladesh, 2001

Party	Seats
Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)	193
Bangladesh Awami League	62
Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Ismali	17
Islami Jatiya Oikya Front	14
Jatiyo Party (Ershad)	4
Islami Oikkya Jote (IOJ)	2
Krishak Sramik Janata League	1
Jatiyo Party (Manju)	1
Independent	6
Total	**300**

Use of Religion on Parliamentary Elections of 2008, 2014, 2018

Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) made a four party alliance with Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Ismali, Bangladesh Jatiyo Party and Islami Oikkya Jote (IOJ) before 2008 election. But BNP led four party alliance defeated to Bangladesh Awami League led grand alliance in 2008 general elections in Bangladesh. Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Ismali won only 2 seats and Islami Oikkya Jote failed to gain any seat this time.

Table 5.2.2.3 (D): The Result of Parliamentary Elections in Bangladesh, 2008

Party		Seats
Grand Alliance	Bangladesh Awami League	230
	Jatiyo Party (Ershad)	27
	Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal	3
	Bangladesh Worker's Party	2
	Liberal Democratic Party	1
	Total	**263**
Four Party Alliance	Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)	30
	Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Ismali	2
	Bangladesh Jatiyo Party	1
	Islami Oikkya Jote (IOJ)	0
	Total	**33**
Independent		4
Total		**300**

On 2014 general elections one Islamic political party named Bangladesh Tarikat Federation managed to gain 2 parliamentary seats. No other religion based political party was able to secure any seat in this election.

Table 5.2.2.3 (E): The Result of Parliamentary Election in Bangladesh, 2014

Party	Seats
Bangladesh Awami League	234
Jatiyo Party (Ershad)	34
Workers Party of Bangladesh	6
Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal	5
Jatiyo Party (Manju)	2
Bangladesh Tarikat Federation	2
Bangladesh Nationalist Front	1
Independent	16
Total	**300**

Aiming the 2018 general elections religion based political parties was very active in 2017. Among total 66 Islamic political parties, 61 Islamic political parties made an alliance and support Bangladesh Awami League and rest 5 Islamic political parties made an alliance with Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). On 2018 general elections again Bangladesh Tarikat Federation as a Islamic political party managed to gain parliamentary seat but this time only one seat. No other religion based political party was capable enough to secure any seat in this election.

Table 5.2.2.3 (F): The Result of Parliamentary Elections in Bangladesh, 2018

Party	Seats
Bangladesh Awami League	257
Jatiyo Party (Ershad)	22
Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)	6
Workers Party of Bangladesh	3
Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (Inu)	3
Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh	2
Gano Forum	2
Jatiyo Party (Manju)	1

Bangladesh Tarikat Federation	1
Bangladesh Nationalist Front	1
Independent	2
Total	**300**

Government led by the Bangladesh Awami League with the fifteenth amendment of the constitution restored secularism and freedom of religion in 2011.

5.3 Name, Nature, Ideologies, Financing and Strength of Religion based Political Parties and Non-political Religious Groups in Bangladesh

5.3.1 Name of political parties and non-political religious groups in Bangladesh and differences among them:

There are many political parties in Bangladesh but not all of them are registered by Bangladesh election commission (EC), names of registered political parties by Bangladesh election commission are given below:

Table 5.3.1 (A) : Political Parties in Bangladesh

1. Bangladesh Awami League	17. Communist Party of Bangladesh (Marxist–Leninist) (Barua)	34. Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal
2. Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)	18. Ganatantri Party	35. Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (Rab)
3. Bangladesh Congress	19. Gano Azadi League	36. Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (Siraj)
4. Bangladesh Freedom Party	20.Gano Forum	37. Krishak Sramik Janata League
5. Bangladesh Jatiya Party	21. Bangladesh Islami Chattra Sena	38. Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)
6. Bangladesh Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal	22. Islami Oikya Jote	39. Nagorik Shakti
7. Bangladesh Khilafat Andolan	23. Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Bangladesh	40. National Awami Party (Bhashani)
8. Bangladesh Minority	24. Jatiya Ekata Party	

Janata Party	25. Bangladesh Supreme Party (BSP)	41. National Democratic Alliance (Bangladesh)
9. Bangladesh Muslim League	26. National Democratic Party (Bangladesh)	42. Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti
10. Bangladesh National Awami Party	27. Oikya National Awami Party	43. Progressive Democratic Party (Bangladesh)
11. Bangladesh National Awami Party-Bangladesh NAP	28. Nationalist Democratic Movement (Bangladesh)	44. Islamic Democratic League
12. Bangladesh Nationalist Front	29. Islamic Front Bangladesh	45. Islami Andolan Bangladesh
13. Bangladesh Tarikat Federation	30. Nizam-e-Islam Party	46. National people's Party (NPP)
14. Socialist Party of Bangladesh	31. Jatiya Ganotantrik Party	47. Trinamool BNP
15. Socialist Party of Bangladesh (Marxist)	32. Jatiya Party (Ershad)	48. Jatiya Gano Front
16. Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh	33. Jatiya Party (Manju)	

Table 5.3.1 (B): Religion based political parties and non-political groups in Bangladesh

• Bangladesh Hindu Bouddha Christian Oikyo Parishod • Bangladesh Congress • Bangladesh Islami Front • Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami • Bangladesh Khilafat Andolan	• Bangladesh Hindu League • Bangladesh National Hindu Party • Bangladesh Tarikat Federation • Islami Andolan Bangladesh • Islami Jatiya Oikya Front	• Islamic Front Bangladesh • Islami Oikya Jote • Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Bangladesh • Khelafat Majlish • Hefazat-e-Islam Bangladesh • Nizam-e-Islam Party

Differences between secular and religion based political parties:

The differences between secular and religion based political parties are tangible. The core difference between them is the ideological difference. Religion based political parties work to establish a particular religion based nationalism. On the other hand, secular political parties usually effort to form nationalism based on language, tradition, culture etc. Religion based political parties connect state power and authority to religion and want to transform administration structure according to their religious belief. On the contrary, secular political parties want to keep religion separate from state affairs but allow all religion to perform their rituals without any state interference. The election manifesto and campaign of religion based political parties highlight their religious approach of state power to gain political support. Various cultural, political, social and economic development strategies are presented by secular political parties to attract mass support. Where leaders of religion based political parties try to explain every political issue and solve political problem in accordance of religion, secular leaders are practical to solve them.

5.3.2 Nature, Ideologies, Strength of Religion based Political Parties and Non-political Groups in Bangladesh:

By analyzing several contents we found that the nature and ideology of these previous mentioned parties and groups have some common features. One of the common natures of them is they are far-right wing and conservative. Soverignty of Allah (swt), khilafah of mankind, sharia legal system, Islamic identity, Islamic values and Islamic state are some important ideologies of Islamic political parties and non-political groups in Bangladesh. The common ideology of Islamic political parties and non-political groups is to establish Bangladesh as a Islamic state with Sharia legal system and they are opposed to secularism. Islamic fundamentalism is their core political ideology. On the other hand others political parties and non-political groups of non-Muslims are strong supporter of secularism, as being religiously minority in Bangladesh they think that only true secular constitution and administration cloud save their interest. Leaders of Hindu, Bouddha, and Christian religion are continuously keep accusing the existing religion based politics by pointing that Islamic political parties are threat to their rights. BHBCUC accused state power by saying that the ruling class has illegally and unconstitutionally made Islam a state religion by using the Pakistani style of using religion as a political tool to perpetuate the

dictatorship by resisting the progressive trend of liberation war consciousness.[36] Their ideology is Bengali nationalism. Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council has strongly protested against the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution. Voices have been raised that the unconstitutional provisions of the anti-state religion of Bangladesh must be withdrawn, Bengali nationalism and secularism must be re-established, and the discriminatory activities of arresting, torturing and depriving members of religious minorities must be stopped.[37]

Table 5.3.2: Taxonomy of Islamist Political Parties in Bangladesh[38]

Distinguishable Traits	Name of the IPPs
Pragmatist/Opportunist Want to establish Islamic social order in society through the state, believe in "Islamic revolution", participate in elections; support-base is wide-ranging	Bangladesh Jamaat-i-Islami (JI)
Idealist and Orthodox Want a pure Islamic state; support base is largely within qwami madrassahs	Jamiyate Ulema-e-Islam, Khelafat Andolon, Ahle Hadith, Islami Morcha, Khelafat Mojlish, Nejam-e-Islam (Some of the above political parties founded a seven-party combine called the Islami Oikkya Jote – IOJ, the Islamic United Alliance)
Pir (Preacher of Islam) centric and Mazar (Shrines) based Aim to establish a state based on traditional Islam and sharia; party organized around individuals; weak support-base	Zaker Party, Islami Shashontantra Andolon (Islamic Constitution Movement, renamed Islami Andolon Bangladesh), Bangladesh Tariqat Federation
Urban Elite-Centric Want to establish Khelafat; internationally connected,	Hizb- ut-Tahrir Bangladesh

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[36] https://bhbcop.org/

[37] ibid.

[38] Riaz. Ali.(2010). Religion and Politics in Bangladesh, New York. pp. 45 - 70.

highly educated middle class leadership, yet to take part in elections	
"Jihadists" Militant Islamists who aim to establish an Islamic state in Bangladesh through "jihad."	Harkat-ul-Jiahd al Islam Bangladesh (HuJI-B), Jamaat-ul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), Hijbut Tawheed, Shahadat-e-Al Hikma

The core strength of Islamic political parties and non-political groups is wide upon the madrassa students and their family members. A good number of rural area residents also support these Islamic political parties and non-political groups only because of religion. People from urban area are more likely less interest on religion based politics. The key strength of non-Muslims political parties and non-political groups is their communal harmony both across the country and worldwide as they perceived Islam as a threat to their religion.

5.3.3 Financing of religion based politics in Bangladesh:

Political finance is very significant to political participation. The finance resources and the distribution, collection and spent of those resources are have a great influence on the effectiveness of political actors. The content analysis of several media reports presented that both domestic and foreign sources are funding the political activities of religion based politics in Bangladesh. For political campaign and other activities they need money. The Ministry of Religious Affairs administered three funds for religious and cultural activities: the Islamic Foundation, the Hindu Welfare Trust, and the Buddhist Welfare Trust. According to the government, the Christian community requested that no similar organization be set up for their community; however, recently (2006) Christian leaders were informed that the state would establish a welfare trust for their community.… The Buddhist Welfare Trust [was] founded in the 1980s.[39] Though the the sources of political funding political and other non-political groups should be transparent, there is lack of transparency in it in Bangladesh. In reality, the political parties in Bangladesh, irrespective of their size

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[39] The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, International Religious Freedom Report 2006: Bangladesh.

and ideology, hardly keep any account of their funding sources and expenditures.[40] The process of fund raising by political parties in Bangladesh is generally kept undisclosed. It is quite clear that the fund raising activity in the country normally takes place in a non-transparent manner. The political parties in the country collect individual, local and overseas donations from the supporters, admirers and business and industrial financiers.[41] The funding of religion based political parties and non-political groups include national and international charities, zakat (only for Islamic groups), membership selling etc. from both individuals and institutions. Several foreign countries including Kuwait, the UK, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, India are considered to give fund to these parties and groups in Bangladesh. Domestically some expatriates and rich businessmen are funding them, in this case ideological solidarity is the main factor behind these financing. Some of them have commercial activities and them marketing their organizations. For example, Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami has affiliation with lots of commercial institutions. A donation from religious minded people is one of the core sources of funding of these groups. BHBCUC in their website mention it that BHBCUC is not biased to any religion or political parties or government and not meant for economic or any personal interest. The members and public donations are the source of fund for this charitable organization.[42]

5.4 Current State of Religion based Political Party in Bangladesh:

Bangladesh being a unitary state has unicameral legislature. Bangladesh has constitutional supremacy with parliamentary form of government, whereby the head of government is the Prime Minister. Though in the politics of Bangladesh multi-party system is prevail, it is dominated by two political parties - Bangladesh Awami League (AL) and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). Both of them are secular political parties according to their party manifesto. Bangladesh Awami League (AL) was founded in 1949 as a Awami Muslim League. Since 1955 Awami League by omitted Muslim from party name reveal as a secular political party. Since then this party is considered as a vanguard of secularist ideals and under the leadership of this party Bangladesh was born. On the other hand, BNP was founded in 1978. Though according to its party manifesto it is a secular party, it largely

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[40] Faiz A. Chowdhury, Funding of political parties, The Daily Star, Tuesday, December 26, 2023. https://www.thedailystar.net/news/funding-of-political-parties

[41] ibid.

[42] https://bhbcop.org/

used religion in political strategy by using Islam in political arena. Though Bangladesh is a Muslim majority country the very first 1972's constitution of the country was completely secular. Which banned all types of religion based politics and prohibited to give any religion a political status by the state. The first government of BNP brought Fifth Amendment of the constitution in 1979 which removed secularism from the constitution and allowed religion based politics in Bangladesh. Though the fifteenth amendment of the constitution restored secularism as one of the fundamental state policies, it inserted article 2A which recognized Islam as a state religion in 2011. But unlike 1972 there is no ban on religion based political parties in national politics. From 1991 to 2008 two major secular parties, Bangladesh Awami League (AL) and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) consecutively won the national election. BNP boycotted the election of 2014. Bangladesh Awami League won the election of 2014 and 2018. Observing the rising support of Islamic leaders in Bangladesh, BNP allied with two Islamic parties in 2001s election. Since then Bangladesh Jamaat-i-Ismali is the most important political alliance of BNP.

Previous tables show that among all the Islamic political parties Bangladesh Jamaat-i-Ismali has more political followers but the number of the them are low in compare to whole voter of Bangladesh. The most import fact is the voters of religion based political parties are constantly remained almost same. The highest number of voter of religion based political parties has never been more then 6.6% in the history of Bangladesh election. Which at a same time proves that these sections of people are guided by their religious ideology and want a Islamic political party in power. The results of general elections shows there is no scope to deny the fact that religion has influence on political participation.

5.5 Religion and Political Participation in the constitution of Bangladesh:

5.5.1 Religion in the constitution of Bangladesh:

Bangladesh became independent on 16th December 1971. After the victory of liberation war the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh was adopted and enacted on 4th November 1972 and became effective on 16th December 1972 on the first anniversary of the victory day. The Constitution of 1972 has gone through 17 amendments as of 2023. Secularism in Bangladesh was adopted in the spirit of neutrality of religion rather the religionlessness. The original constitution of Bangladesh was secular in nature where secularism was mentioned in the preamble of the Constitution of Bangladesh and article 8 enshrined it as one of the fundamental principles of state policy along with

nationalism, socialism and democracy. If we want to look back to the historical background of secularism in constitution of Bangladesh instead of Islamic Republic, we would trace its origin back to the colonial British regime. Secularism in Indian subcontinent was completely new under the British colonial rule as a few citizen of the British India was acknowledged with western political ideology. For strengthening and sustaining their colonial rule The British ruler applied 'the divide and rule' policy and was fueling the communalism between Hindus and Muslims. As a result before independence of India and Pakistan the notion of secularism and its acceptance created so many doubts and confusion among the intellectuals of both India and Pakistan, which was further continue passing on to the politician of Bangladesh. According to M. N. Roy the pattern of secularism in Congress was: "Constitutionally India will be a secular state ...but her political life, dominated by the party in power, is not secularized, far from it. As a matter of fact, the congress has attained its present position in the country by exploiting of the religions sentiments and prejudices of the backward masses."[43] In the words of Muhammad Ali Jinnah at his presidential address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan on August 11, 1947 in Karachi: "You are free, you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this state of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or crewed that has nothing to do with the business to the state...........We are stating with the fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one state. Now I think we should keep that in front of us as our ideal and you will find that in course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the State."[44] "Two things prevented Mujib from making any structural change in Bangladesh Political system, or to give it an Islamic Slant, First, such a posture would have cast doubt in the minds of Hinds..... . Second, Islamization of the constitution would have strained Bangladesh relations with India."[45]

When Bangladesh achieved victory on the liberation war of 1971 over the then West Pakistan government and occupation army, new government banned political parties with

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[43] M. N. Roy, (1968)) 'The Secular state' in V. K. Sinha (ed) Secularism in India, Bombay, p. 158.

[44] Quad E Azom Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Speeches as Governor General of Pakistan 1947-48, Karachi p. 9

[45] 'Islam and Bengali Nationalism' in Rafiuddin Ahamed (ed.), *Bangladesh: Society, Religion and Politics*, (Chittagong, 1985) p. 24.

religious affiliation. The people of the then East Pakistan witnessed a religion based heinous oppression during the liberation war of 1971. Which was one of the core reasons behind the banning of religion based politics in Bangladesh. After the assassination of father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975 the martial law rule was started and during the martial law rule from 1975 to 1990 the Constitution of Bangladesh was amended in favour of religion based politics. The Fifth Amendments Act of the Constitution of Bangladesh was passed in 1979 under a parliament led by Ziaur Rahman. This amendment is marked as a first distortion of constitution because it fundamentally altered the nature of the constitution of Bangladesh. It inserted "Bismillah-Ar-Rahman-Ar-Rahim (In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, and the Merciful) into the preamble. This Fifth Amendment removed the ban on religion based politics and gave permission of registration of those parties. One of the major changes was the removal of secularism from the state policies and addition of "absolute trust and faith in Almighty Allah". This amendment of the constitution demolished the secular feature of the constitution and permitted politics based on religion. This further gave political right to anti-liberation forces including Jamaat-e- Islam and war criminals that headed to an alarming growth of political parties and organizations based on religion in Bangladesh. The Eight Amendment of the Constitution of Bangladesh was done on 7 June 1988 during the martial law rule of Huseyn Mohammad Ershad and it declared Islam as the state religion. The Fifth Amendment of the Constitution was declared illegal by the High Court on 29 August, 2005 as it was a distortion of original constitution and undermined the very sovereign character of the republic. This unconstitutional amendment was declared illegal in a verdict of the Supreme Court in 2010. The Fifteenth Amendment Act of the Constitution of Bangladesh was one of the important amendments of the constitution to restore the original form of the Constitution of Bangladesh and was passed on 30 June 2011 by the government led by Awami League, following the judgment of the apex court on the illegality of the fifth, eighth and thirteenth amendments. This amendment restored secularism and freedom of religion as one of the fundamental principles of state policy at the same time it inserted Islam as a state religion by introducing article 2A in the constitution. **Article 2A** of the constitution says: "The state religion of the Republic is Islam, but the State shall ensure equal status and equal right in the practice of the Hindu, Buddhist, Christian and other religions."[46] For the revivalism of secularism article 12 of the Constitution of Bangladesh is restored, which declares freedom of religion. The concept of

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[46] Article 2A, The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 2011.

secularism and freedom of religion is stipulated in **Article 12** of the constitution, which is : "The principle of secularism shall be realised by the elimination of - (a) communalism in all its forms ; (b) the granting by the State of political status in favour of any religion; (c) the abuse of religion for political purposes; (d) any discrimination against, or persecution of, persons practicing a particular religion."[47] The notion of freedom of religion is postulated in Article 41 of the Constitution of Bangladesh, which is as follows: "(1) Subject to law, public order and morality – (a) every citizen has the right to profess, practise or propagate any religion; (b) every religious community or denomination has the right to establish, maintain and manage its religious institutions. (2) No person attending any educational institution shall be required to receive religious instruction, or to take part in or to attend any religious ceremony or worship, if that instruction, ceremony or worship relates to a religion other than his own."[48] There is a debate about the explanation of article 12 (c) "the elimination of the abuse of religion for political purposes", whether it means the prohibition of religion-based politics or not. Religion based political parties are saying that constitution prohibits the abuse of religion for political purposes and they are never abusing the religion for political purpose. Thus they have the right to politics. The debate about the explanation of article 12 regarding true meaning of secularism and legality of religion-based politics is getting complicated day by day. Questions such as: a) is a political party's name with the words 'Muslim' or 'Islamic' or 'Hindu' or 'Christian barred under the constitution? or, b) is the religious political ideology of a political party aiming establishing religious state authority prohibited under the constitution? Or, c) are the both forbidden under the constitution; make the debat more problematic and need to lawful explanation. The answer to the first query is in the negative because it is not just the name of the parties that matters. What matters is whether a political party wants to change the structure of the constitution and laws of a state on the basis of a particular religious set of guidelines. In such circumstances, it is considered using religion for political purposes is contradictory to the Constitution of a multi-lingual, multi-ethnic and multi-religious of Bangladesh. When political parties in their manifestoes want to change the structure, system of government, judiciary and laws of a state in accordance with the principles and beliefs of a particular religion among multi-religious citizens, people of other faiths in such a state perceive gross

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[47] Article 12, The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 2011.

[48] Article 41, The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 2011.

discrimination on the basis of religion. Such discrimination is arguably untenable under the Bangladesh Constitution."[49]

5.5.2 Political participation in the constitution of Bangladesh:

      Part III of fundamental rights of the constitution of Bangladesh ensures political participation both in national and local level by inserting the provision of freedom of movement, freedom of assembly, freedom of association and freedom of thought and conscience, and of speech including freedom of press. The notion of freedom of movement is listed in **article 36** of the constitution, which states that: "Subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the public interest, every citizen shall have the right to move freely throughout Bangladesh, to reside and settle in any place therein and to leave and re-enter Bangladesh."[50] The concept of freedom of assembly is enlisted in **article 37** of the constitution, which proclaims that: "Every citizen shall have the right to assemble and to participate in public meetings and processions peacefully and without arms, subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interests of public order or public health." [51] **Article 38** of the constitution is about freedom of association that is : "Every citizen shall have the right to form associations or unions, subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interests of morality or public order : Provided that no person shall have the right to form, or be a member of the said association or union, if- (a) it is formed for the purposes of destroying the religious, social and communal harmony among the citizens; (b) it is formed for the purposes of creating discrimination among the citizens, on the ground of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or language; (c) it is formed for the purposes of organizing terrorist acts or militant activities against the State or the citizens or any other country ; (d) its formation and objects are inconsistent with the Constitution."[52] And **article 39** of the constitution ensures freedom of thought and conscience, and of speech declares by saying that: "(1) Freedom of thought and conscience is guaranteed. (2) Subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interests of the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, decency or morality, or in relation to contempt of

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[49] Barrister Harun Ur Rashid, Religion-based political parties and the Bangladesh Constitution, The Daily Star, Tuesday, April 11, 2023.

[50] Article 36, The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 2011.

[51] Article 37, The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 2011.

[52] Article 38, The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 2011.

court, defamation or incitement to an offence– (a) the right of every citizen to freedom of speech and expression; and (b) freedom of the press, are guaranteed."[53]

For ensuring people's political participation and representation in every level of government administration the constitution of Bangladesh includes democracy and human rights as one the fundamental principles of state policy. **Article 11** of the constitution speaks about democracy and human rights enunciates in such way: "The Republic shall be a democracy in which fundamental human rights and freedoms and respect for the dignity and worth of the human person shall be guaranteed and in which effective participation by the people through their elected representatives in administration at all levels shall be ensured."[54] The constitution of Bangladesh safeguards the representation of mass people by including article 59 of local government on the executive on part IV of chapter III and article 65 and 66 of parliament on the legislature on part V of chapter I of it. **Article 59** of the constitution is about local government and it articulates that. "(1) Local government in every administrative unit of the Republic shall be entrusted to bodies, composed of persons elected in accordance with law."[55] **Article 65** of the constitution is all about the establishment of parliament, which asserts that: "(1) There shall be a Parliament for Bangladesh (to be known as the House of the Nation) in which, subject to the provisions of this Constitution, shall be vested the legislative powers of the Republic. (2) Parliament shall consist of three hundred members to be elected in accordance with law from single territorial constituencies by direct election and, for so long as clause (3) is effective, the members provided for in that clause; the members shall be designated as Members of Parliament."[56] **Article 66** of the constitution gives a clear view about political participation and it deals with the qualifications and disqualifications for election to Parliament, and it affirms that: "(1) A person shall subject to the provisions of clause (2), be qualified to be elected as, and to be, a member of Parliament if he is a citizen of Bangladesh and has attained the age of twenty-five years. (2) A person shall be disqualified for election as, or for being, a member of Parliament who – (a) is declared by a competent court to be of unsound mind; (b) is an undischarged insolvent; (c) acquires the citizenship of, or affirms or acknowledges allegiance to, a foreign state; (d) has been, on conviction for a criminal

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[53] Article 39, The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 2011.

[54] Article 11, The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 2011.

[55] Article 59, The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 2011.

[56] Article 65, The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 2011.

offence involving moral turpitude, sentenced to imprisonment for a term of not less than two years, unless a period of five years has elapsed since his release; (e) has been convicted of any offence under the Bangladesh Collaborators (Special Tribunals) Order, 1972 ; (f) holds any office of profit in the service of the Republic other than an office which is declared by law not to be disqualified its holder ; or (g) is disqualified for such election by or under any law."[57]

5.6 Conclusion:

In the politics of Bangladesh no one can deny the influence of religion upon mass people's political decision. It seems that religion is one of the most significant driving aspects in the politics of Bangladesh. Religion propaganda has always been present in the political culture of Bangladesh. Though Bangladesh started its journey with secularism as one of the fundamental principles of state policies, secularism cloud survive only for a short time. At present secularism is restored in the constitution of Bangladesh alone with state religion Islam in it. The influential power of Islamic leaders is now dropping with time in the politics of Bangladesh but it is still present. From 1976 to 2008 Islam was a powerful political tool which is used widely in Bangladesh. The political scenario is changing and use of religion is reduced in a smaller extent. The educated youth are less interested in religious propaganda rather they want economic development. The present government has curved down the rise of religious extremism in Bangladesh. Despite everything the rise of Hefazat-e-Islam Bangladesh gives a clear message that any religious movement could bring a big challenge and change in the politics of Bangladesh.

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[57] Article 66, The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 2011.

Chapter Six

Case Studies

6.1 Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Ismali:

Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami is the largest religion based Islamist political party in Bangladesh. The present ameer of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami is Dr. Shafiqur Rahman. The Bangladesh Supreme Court annulled the registration of the Jamaat-e-Islami on 1 August 2013. Jamaat-e-Islami was against the independence of Bangladesh and they collaborated with the Pakistan Army in genocide, rape, mass killings of Bangladeshi nationalists and pro-intellectuals. Many leaders of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami are accused of war crimes.

Formation:

Syed Ab'ul Ala Maududi founded the Jamaat-e-Islami at Islamia Park, Lahore on 26 August 1941 with a view to promoting social and political Islam. Jamaat-e-Islami divided into two separate parties for India and Pakistan after the formation of Pakistan. After the liberation of Bangladesh the East Pakistan wing of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan became Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami.

After the victory of liberation war of 1971 the new government of Bangladesh banned religion based politics along with Jamaat-e-Islami from political participation as the the government was secular. Several leaders of it went into exile during 1972 - 1975. Following the assassination of the first president Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman through military coup in 1975, the ban on religion based politics and the Jamaat-e-Islami were lifted and exiled leaders were permitted to return. The new journey of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami was started from that military regime.

Elections:

Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Ismali in Bangladesh general elections

Years	Results
1973	The party was banned as a collaborator and religion based politics was forbidden.
1979	As there was no restriction upon them they made it to the general elections, the party together with Muslim League won 20 seats.
1986	It won 10 seats.
1991	It won 18 seats.
1996	It won 3 seats.

2001	It 17 seats, took part by forming alliance with BNP.
2008	It won 2 seats, took part by forming alliance with BNP.
2013	The Bangladesh Supreme Court annulled it's the registration.

Views:

Jamaat-e-Islami, under the leadership of Syed Ab'ul Ala Maududi, was against the formation of a separate state of Pakistan for the Muslims of India in pre-partition British India. It did even not support the Muslim League during the election of 1946, though Muslim League was the largest Muslim political party in India. Nor did it support the "Composite Nationalism" (Muttahida Qaumiyat Aur Islam) of the Jamiat Ulama e-Hind. Maulana Abul Ala Maududi, the founder of Jamaat-e-Islami, actively worked to prevent the partition of India, arguing that concept violated the Islamic doctrine of the ummah.[58] Maulana Maududi had seen the separation as making a historical border that would divide Muslims from one another and he was the advocate of united India for the betterment of Islam. The agenda of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Ismali is the formation of an 'Islamic state' with the Sha'ria legal system, removing secularism and un-Islamic laws. The principal political notion of it is 'Iqamat-e-Deen', which is founding Islamic state by gaining of state power.

Student Wing:

Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami has one of the strong student wings in Bangladesh named Islami Chhatra Shibir. It has five principles:[59]

Dawah (Calling towards Allah) - Conveying the message of Islam to the students and inspiring them to acquire knowledge and to arouse in them the sense of responsibility to practice Islam in full.

Organization - To organize the students who are ready to partake in the struggle for establishing the Islamic way of life within the fold of this organization.

Training - To take appropriate steps to impart Islamic knowledge among the students integrated under the organization to make them men of character, capable of braving the challenges of Jahilyah and, thus, to prove the superiority of Islam.

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[58] Oh, Irene (2007). The rights of God : Islam, human rights, and comparative ethics. Georgetown University Press. p. 45. ISBN 978-1-58901-463-3.

[59] Shibir.org.bd. Retrieved 14 April 2015.

Islamic Education Movement and Student-oriented Problems - To struggle for changing the existing system of education on the basis of Islamic values to build up ideal citizens and enhance leadership to solve real problems of the students.

Establishing Islamic Social Order - To strive tooth-and-nail to establish Islamic social order for freeing humanity from all forms of economic exploitation, political oppression and cultural servitude.

6.2 Bangladesh Tarikat Federation

Bangladesh Tarikat Federation (BTF) is a religion based, more precisely, a right-wing Sufi political party in Bangladesh. Syed Najibul Bashar of the Maizbhandaria tariqah with several Pir-Mashaikh established BTF. At present Syed Najibul Bashar is the only Member of Parliament (MP) who is representing this party on the house of the nation. He is the president of BTF and Syed Rezaul Haque Chandpuri is general secretary of the party.

Formation:

The background of the formation of Bangladesh Tarikat Federation is very interesting as the founder of BTF Syed Najibul Bashar was the former member of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). When BNP formed an alliance with Bangladesh the Jamaat-e-Islami in 1999, Syed Najibul Bashar gave his resignation from BNP by accusing Jamaat-e-Islami of supporting terrorists and established Bangladesh Tarikat Federation in 2005.

In 2017, party's secretary-general M. A. Awal attempted to form a coalition of Islamic parties which would include the Islami Oikya Jote along with the Khilafat Andolan, Faraizi Andolan and the Imam-Ulama Parishad. However, this attempt was opposed by Bashar, the chairman of the federation. On 17 April 2018, Bashar replaced Awal with Syed Rezaul Haq Chandpuri as secretary-general.[60]

Elections:

In 2008 Bangladeshi general elections Bangladesh Tarikat Federation were incapable to gain any seats and this party had 45 candidates across the country. In 2014 Bangladeshi general elections the federations were able to gain two parliamentary seats; one with Bashar in Chittagong-2 and another with the party's erstwhile secretary-general M. A.

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[60] Tariqat Federation to float new Islamic alliance". Dhaka Tribune. 7 July 2017. Retrieved 11 July 2018.

Awal in Lakshmipur-1. The party sought 30 seats to contest the 2018 Bangladeshi general election under the Grand Alliance. The party managed to only keep the Chittagong-2 constituency, which is also the headquarters of the Maizbhandaria order.[61]

Views:

Bangladesh Tarikat Federation wants to establish an Islamic state and Sha'ria legal system. It blamed the Qawmi Madrasah system in response to the July 2016 Dhaka attack and they denoted their activities as terrorism.

6.3 Islami Oikkya Jote (IOJ)

Islami Oikkya Jote is a far-right Islamic political party in Bangladesh. The present president of the party is Maulana Abdul Latif Nezami and secretary-general is Mufti Faizullah. Islamic Fundamentalism is its political ideology.

Formation:

Islami Oikkya Jote was founded on 22 December, 1990. Six Islamic political parties named as: Bangladesh Khilafat Majlis, Bangladesh Khilafat Andolan, Nizam-e-Islam Party, Islami Andolan Bangladesh, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Bangladesh and Faraizi Andolan were allined and establish Islami Oikkya Jote aiming to attend the general elections of 1991.

Elections:

Islami Oikkya Jote managed to gain only one seat on 1991 general elections. In 1996 IOJ also gained only one seat on general elections. In 1999 IOJ joined BNP-led four party alliances and won two seats on 2001 parliamentary elections and they also won two seats on by-election of same year. After that these political parties are going through the crisis of disintegration.

Views:

The front was strongly opposed of building any non-Islamic idol, sculpture, statue in the country. Islamic ideology and Islamic fundamentalism was their core party principle. The Islami Oikya Jote decided to run independently as an only Islamic front with all Islamic parties on March 2017 for the upcoming 2019 general elections in Bangladesh.[62] It constantly warned to remove the Lady Justice statue from in front of the Supreme Court in

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[61] "AL still undecided on seat sharing". The Independent. Dhaka. Retrieved 11 July 2018.

[62] Manik Miazee (11 March 2017). "IOJ to take part in next polls independently". Dhakatribune.com. Retrieved 12 March 2018.

2017. Islami Oika Jote to counter the Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami formed a new alliance of Islamic parties on July 2017.

Student Wing:

Islami Oikya Jote has a student wing named Islami Chhatra Khelafat and they support of Hefazat-e-Islam Bangladesh. It took part at Shapla Square protests in 2013.

6.4 Islami Jatiya Oikya Front:

Islami Jatiya Oikya Front (IJOF) was a right wing transitory political alliance in Bangladesh. IJOF was alliance of Jatiya Party (Ershad), Islami Shashontantra Andolan (ISA), and three smaller parties.

Formation:

With a view to gaining more parliamentary seats on the general elections of 2001, Islami Jatiya Oikya Front was formed by five right wing political parties. After 2001 general elections the front was collapsed.

Elections:

This front was dominated by Jatiya Party (Ershad) as it fielded candidates in 281 parliamentary constituencies out of 300 parliamentary constituencies. Other political parties of the front got chance to field fielded candidates on remaining 19 parliamentary constituencies. The front succeeded to win in 14 seats with 7.25% of the votes. Hence, later were allotted 3 reserved women seats out of 45 reserved women seats.

Views:

Fazlul Karim who was the founder of the Islami Shashontantra Andolan (ISA) stated that IJOF's objective was to form an Islamic administration and government. Other two important objectives were converting Bangladesh into a federation of eight autonomous provinces, and barring women from becoming prime minister.

6.5 Bangladesh Muslim League:

The Bangladesh Muslim League is a religion based political party in Bangladesh which has it's origin to the All-India Muslim League. All-India Muslim League was the largest Islamic political party in British India with objective of protecting the rights of Muslims of the British India. It's present party president is Adv. Badrudozza Ahmed Suja and general secretary is Kazi Abul Khair.

Formation:

The Bangladesh Muslim League is the successor of the All-India Muslim League. All-India Muslim League was established at Dhaka in 1906. The All India Muslim League became the Pakistan Muslim League after the partition of British India and the independence of Pakistan in 1947. The Pakistan Muslim League was completely against of the Bangladesh liberation war in 1971 and one of the main collaborators of Pakistan occupational army and government. After the independence of Bangladesh Pakistan Muslim League became Bangladesh Muslim League.

Elections:

After the Independence of Pakistan in 1947 the Pakistan Muslim League was elected into power in East Pakistan. But it lost power to the most popular political front of that time named the United Front in 1955 provincial elections in East Pakistan. The Muslim League divided into two separate political parties named: Convention Muslim League and the Council Muslim League in the 1960. After the independence of Bangladesh in 1971 both two political parties of Muslim League, Convention Muslim League and the Council Muslim League, were banned as religion based politics was banned by the first government of Bangladesh. According to the political parties regulation ordinance which was passed in 1976 to legalize religion based politics in Bangladesh, both divided political parties of Muslim League then reunited and made Bangladesh Muslim League on 8 August 1976. After the Independence of Pakistan in 1947 the Pakistan Muslim League was elected into power in East Pakistan. But it lost power to the most popular political front of that time named the United Front in 1955 provincial elections in East Pakistan. The Pakistan Muslim League divided into two separate political parties named: Convention Muslim League and the Council Muslim League in the 1960. After the independence of Bangladesh in 1971 both two political parties of the Pakistan Muslim League, Convention Muslim League and the Council Muslim League, were banned as religion based politics was banned by the first government of Bangladesh. According to the political parties regulation ordinance which was passed in 1976 to legalize religion based politics in Bangladesh, both divided political parties of the Pakistan Muslim League then reunited and made the Bangladesh Muslim League on 8 August 1976. Again the Bangladesh Muslim League divided into two parties in 1978. The traditional group of the party was led by Abdus Sabur Khan and the new liberal bloc of the party was led by Shah Azizur Rahman. Following the separation of party Shah Azizur Rahman later on joined the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), later on he became

the Prime Minister of Bangladesh as a member of BNP. Under the leadership of Abdus Sabur Khan the Bangladesh Muslim League took part in the 1979 parliamentary elections and it abled to win in 20 seats.

Views:

The political ideology of Bangladesh Muslim League is Muslim nationalism. As a religion based political party its political position is right-wing to far-right.

6.6 Hefazat-e-Islam Bangladesh:

Hefazat-e-Islam Bangladesh became one of the significant names in the field of politics in recent years. It is a Islamic advocacy group comprising ulamas (teachers) and students of Qawmi madrassa.

Formation:

To protest women development policy of 2009 a group of ulamas formed a pressure group named Hefazat-e-Islam (Protectorate of Islam) in 2010. It formulated a 13-point charter and submitted to the government of Bangladesh by demanding them to implement. This includes: restoring the phrase 'Absolute faith and trust in the Almighty Allah' in the constitution of Bangladesh, enacting a statute preserving a provision of death sentence to prevent defamation of Islam, making Islamic education compulsory from primary to higher secondary levels, withdrawing the women policy and anti-religion education policy, ending construction of sculptures at intersections, schools, colleges and universities through out the country, closing to anti-Islam activities by NGOs across the country etc.

Popularity:

Its 13- point charter got popularity and they started to increase pressurizing government to implement them. Its publicity and activities assisted mobilizing people across the country and a great number of ulama and madrassa students directly supported and participated on its events. Gradually a fraction of mass people were started to support its activities because of Islam. Hefazat-e-Islam within three years of their activities became a strong player in the field of politics as it got support from most of the Islamic political parties in Bangladesh. The Dhaka siege program of Hefazat-e-Islam on 5 May 2013 was an important event as thousands of madrassa students and ulama were gathered at Motijheel's Shapla Chottor, in Dhaka. This event had a great impact on political mobilization.

Ideology:

The ideology of Hefazat-e-Islam Bangladesh is Islamic fundamentalism and its desires were presented through its popular 13-point charter. The core notions of popular 13-point charter of Hefazat-e-Islam are as follows:[63]

1. Reestablish 'Complete trust and faith in almighty Allah' in the constitution.

2. The Jatiya Sangsad (House of the Nation) has to enact laws with the provision of death sentence as the capital punishment for maligning Allah, Prophet (pbuh), and Islam.

3. The movement and propaganda of the atheists, apostates, and Islam haters associated with the so called 'Ganajagaran Mancha' must be stopped. And the atheists, apostates, and Islam hating persons or organizations that are trying to make disharmony in the country by publishing hateful and defamatory contents in any medium must be arrested and given strict punishment.

4. For the benefit of the country there is no other substitute to authorizing the women. To attain this we must ensure security, education, health, safe job environment, honourable living, and fair wages for the women. To secure our women in their homes and in workplaces and to prevent sexual harassment the overall security must be improved and women must be encouraged to dress modestly and encouraged to wear the hijab. And at the same time the mingling of men and women immodestly in the public places, harassment of women, open fornication and adultery, sexual harassment, all forms of violence against women, the tradition of dowry, and other forms of oppression on women must be stopped and dealt with strictly.

5. Anti Islamic aspects and provisions in the Women Policy and in the Education Policy must be abolished and from the elementary stage to the higher secondary level the basic teachings of Islam must be made mandatory for Muslim students.

6. Erecting statues, lighting candles like the idolaters and the invasion of anti religious cultures must be stopped.

7. Mocking Islamic attires like the Kufi, beard, and other Islamic culture in radio and television must be stopped. The disgusting practice of making antagonists in plays and in cinemas wear Islamic attires and thus creating anti Islamic feelings among the youth has to stop too.

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[63] "Govt must accept 13 points if wants to stay in office: Hefajat chief". Priyo News. 6 April 2013. Archived from the original on 29 May 2014. Retrieved 28 May 2014.

8. Muslims must be able to freely go to the mosques, including the national mosque, and be able to pray and carry out other religious activities.

9. The anti Islamic and anti Bangladesh NGOs and Christian missionaries across the country, particularly in Chittagong must be stopped.

10. The Quadiyanis must be declared non Muslims and their propaganda and covert activities must be stopped.

11. Attacks, suppression, oppression, threats and intimidation, indiscriminate shooting and killing of God and prophet loving people, scholars, madrasa students, and imams must be stopped.

12. The arrested students, teachers and scholars be must be released and the cases against them must be withdrawn immediately.

13. The rights of the minorities must be protected. Measures must be taken to maintain communal harmony and peace.

6.7 Bangladesh Hindu Bouddha Christian Oikyo Parishod:

Bangladesh Hindu Bouddha Christian Oikyo Parishod also acknowledged as Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council (BHBCUC) is an association of the religious and ethnic minorities of Bangladesh to shield their human rights. It is a non-profitable organization.

Formation:

This organization was originally established by a retired Major General of Bangladesh Army named Chitta Ranjan Dutta in Dhaka, in 1975. It was formally started its journey by Chitta Ranjan Dutta with other two current presidents of BHBCUC, Bodhipal Mohathero and Mr. T.D. Rosario in June 1988. When Islam was declared as State Religion with Eighth Amendment Act of the Constitution of Bangladesh on 9 June 1988, following this on that very day BHBCUC was made, though declaration was completed later. BHBCUC observed 9 June as Black Day. It has some branches in other foreign counties.

Objectives and Goals:

Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Parishad is a non-political organization uniting Hindus, Buddhists and Christians living in Bangladesh. Principles of Liberation War Nationalism, Secularism, Establishment of Democracy and Socialism, Protection of Unity and Solidarity of Bengali Nation, Ensuring Basic Human Rights and Freedoms of People of All Levels irrespective of Religion, Caste and Community, Recognition of Human Dignity

and Values The main objectives and goals of this organization will be to end inequality-deprivation-communalism, to end exploitation-torture-inequality on backward people including indigenous peoples, to build a society free from exploitation by establishing social freedom and justice and to build overall state structure based on equality of people of all communities.

The continuous movement for the establishment of democratic rights against Pakistani bi-nationalism, communal state system, dictatorship, exploitation and misrule and the ultimate result of which the war of liberation created unprecedented unity and equality among the people of all communities and revived the Bengali nation the organization will continue to work.[64]

6.8 Bangladesh Hindu League and Bangladesh National Hindu Party:

Two Hindu political parties named Bangladesh Hindu League and Bangladesh National Hindu Party took part in the 1991 general elections in Bangladesh. Bangladesh Hindu League contested at 6 parliamentary constituencies but was fail to gain any seats and their bail forfeited. Bangladesh National Hindu Party also took part in the 1991 general elections in Bangladesh and it had only 2 candidates at 2 parliamentary constituencies. It failed to gain any seat and their bail also forfeited.

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[64] https://bhbcop.org/

Chapter Seven

Research Methodology

Research methodology chapter is the most important part of this paper titled "Influence of Religion on Political Participation among Public University Students in Bangladesh" as it includes the framework of all the methods and techniques used in this study. The aim of this chapter is to give a very clear idea to the readers about the whole process of the study from data collection to get outcomes.

7.1 Research Design:

The present research is quantitative and qualitative in nature. It is easier way to get required data and information through the following mixed approach. Different statistical tools have been used in the quantitative approach which facilitates to know the clear and exact knowledge through numerical figures while qualitative inclines to draw the actual facts of the problems. A cross-sectional analysis of influence of religion on youth's political participation helps to know how different individuals and groups relate differently.

7.2 Research Methods:

This research is mainly a social research to exploit facts. Sample survey has been used as a research method in quantitative approach while literature review has been used as research method in the qualitative approach. The university students of Bangladesh are the area of this study. This study is mainly based on survey. This method is also used in pronouncement creation procedure. To the experts the survey research is used: "to answer questions that have been raised to solve problems that have been posed or observed, to assess needs and set goals, to determine whether or not specific objectives have been met, to establish baselines against which future comparisons can be made, to analyze trends across time, and generally, to describe what exists, in what amount, and in what context." In survey research, independent and dependent variables are used to define the scope of study, but do not explicitly controlled by the researcher. Before conducting the survey, I predicate a model that identifies the expected relationships among these variables. The survey is then constructed to test this model against observations of the phenomena. The questionnaire consisted both open and close ended questions.

7.3 Tools and Techniques of Data Collection:

In this study data have been collected through primary resources. Interview schedule and observation techniques have been applied in the study to get required data and information through both open and closed ended questions. Checklist is used as a technique of data collection in the survey. Secondary resources like books, articles, reports, journals, research papers etc. have been gathered to enrich the study.

Quantitative Data Collection: For collecting data from the primary source the quantitative part was done by sapling survey. A questionnaire was made in the first place for collecting data from the fixed sample area where both open and closed end question were included. For this quantitative part of the data collection five points Likert scale was used in the closed end question with the intension to quantify the qualitative data. After making all the arrangements of the data collection the researcher collected the data from the respondents through face to face structured interviews.

Qualitative Data Collection: While collecting data for the research paper the researcher for the qualitative part of data collection used open end question on the questionnaire. The open end question allows the respondent to give his/her personal opinion about the subject matter without any prior fixed idea by the researcher. At the end of the questionnaire the researcher set an area where respondents were allowed to give any personal thought related to research subject to make the data stronger. The researcher being neutral and without influencing the respondents had collected the data for her research paper.

7.4 Research Area:

Students from university of Dhaka and university of Jagannath were selected as a research area of the study for the convenience of researcher. Students as a respondent were divided in two categories based on their age and educational discipline namely: honours students and masters students.

7.5 Population of the Study:

The population of the study includes different educational discipline students for more versatile data which in turn is very much helpful to understand the overall situation thought of the university students.

7.6 Sample Size:

A questionnaire was made to carry out the survey. The survey is conducted among 200 university students of Bangladesh from the students of University of Dhaka and University of Jagannath. Socio-economic background of the respondent is also considered for diversified result. The respondents are selected on the basis of convenience sampling. They are belonged form different age groups.

7.7 Sampling Technique:

At the starting 200 students were randomly selected from the fixed research area, and then the respondents were divided into two groups based on their age and educational discipline.

7.8 Data Analysis and Presentation:

All the data were properly analyzed in this study. Like data collection methods of the study, the techniques of data analysis also differ for quantitative and qualitative data. The data analysis techniques for both of the methods are given below:

Quantitative Data Analysis: For analyzing and presenting data Microsoft Excel was used. Then the data were presented through Microsoft Excel, Pie chart, bar chart and column chart.

Qualitative Data Analysis: The results from the questionnaire were found after reading the data according to serial for several times. The researcher was very careful during the analyzing of qualitative data from the questionnaire to understand the actual meaning of the answers of the respondents.

7.9 Validity and Reliability:

The validity and reliability issues of the study were main concern of the researcher while conducting the research. For maintaining the reliability and attaining the validity of the study, she set all the research questions very cautiously. At the same time all the questions were pertinent with the research matter leading the data to be consistent. A great attention was given to select the measurement tools for accomplishment of the research. In fine, the validity and reliability were confirmed by the researcher while conducting the research.

Chapter Eight

Findings of the Study

This chapter will deal with the presentation of findings from quantitative data analysis as well as the findings from qualitative data analysis.

## 8.1 Findings from Quantitative Data Analysis:

Demographic Information

Age Pattern of the Respondents:

Table 8.1: Age of the participants

	Total	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Average
Age of the participants	50	19-21 22-23 24-25 26 and above	19-21	26 and above	22-23

The total number of respondents in this study was 200. Minimum age of the respondent was between 19-21 years old whereas maximum is 26 years old and above. Most of the people are between the ages of 22-23.

Figure 8.1: Age Pattern of the Respondents
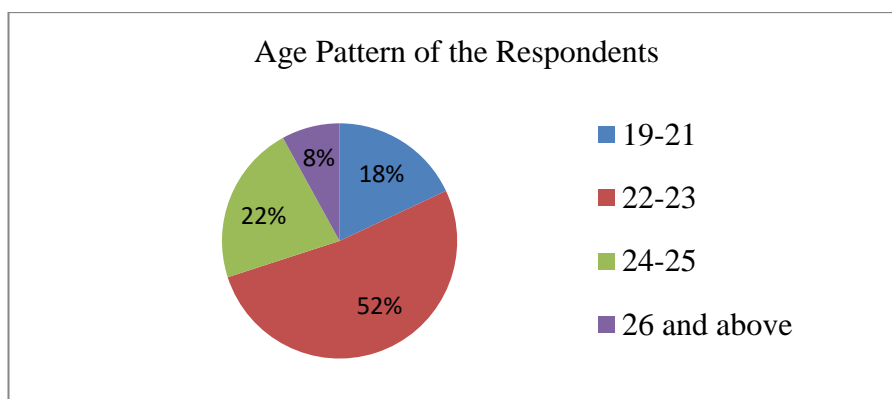
Among the 200 respondents, 52% are from the age range of 22-23, 22% are from the age range of 24-25, 18% are from the age range of 19-21 and 8% of the respondents are from the age range of 26 and above.

Gender:

Table 8.2: Gender

Male	Female	Total
117	83	200

Among 200 respondents of the study, 117 were male and the rest 83 were female which indicates that 58.5% of the respondents were male student and 41.5% were female student.

Figure 8.2: Gender
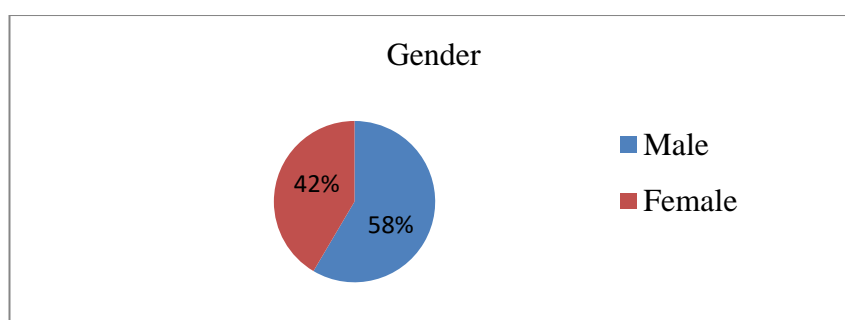
Table 8.3: Education

Degree	No
Honours	113
Masters	84
MPhil	3
Total	**200**

Among the 200 respondents, 113 (56.5%) people were honours students, 84 (42%) people were masters students and 3 (1.5%) people were M. Phil. researcher.
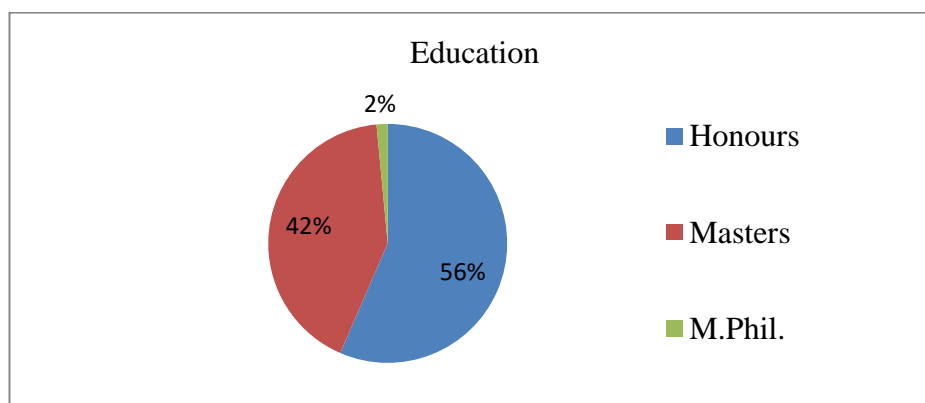
Figure 8.3: Education

Table 8.4: Religion

Religion	No
Islam	128
Hinduism	69
Christianity	1
Buddhism	2
Total	**200**

Among 200 participant, 128 (64%) student were Muslim, 69 (34.5%) were Hindu, whereas 2 (1%) were Buddhist and the rest of them were Christian which is 1 (0.5%) student of the study.

Figure 8.4: Religion
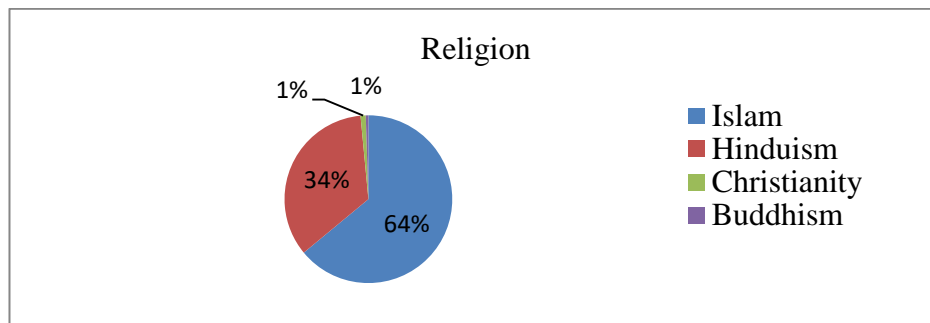
Table 8.5: Active participation in student politics

Active participation in student politics	No
Yes	79
No	121
Total	**200**

Among the 200 respondents, 79 (39.5%) student have active participation in student politics whereas 121 (60.5%) have no affiliation with student politics.

Figure 8.5: Active participation in student politics
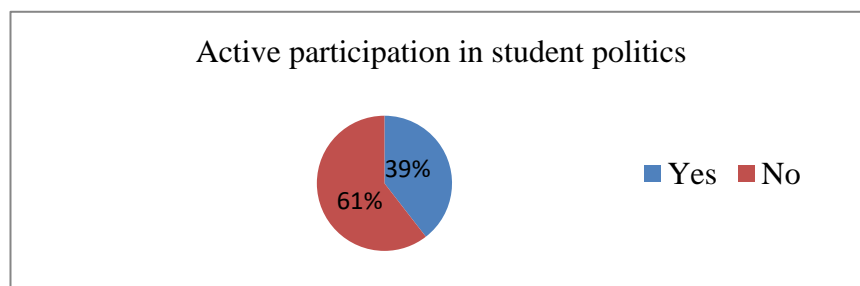
A five points (1 = strongly agree, 2 = Agree, 3= Neutral, 4= Disagree, 5= strongly disagree) likert scale was used to identify whether they consider religious ideology as one of the influential factors to decide political issues.

Table 8.6: Considering religious ideology as one of the influential factors to decide political issues

Strongly Agree	47
Agree	103
Neutral	07
Disagree	43
Strongly Disagree	0
Total	200

Among 200 respondents, 47 (23.5%) student strongly agreed with the statement that religious ideology is one of the influential factors to decide political issues, whereas 103 (51.5%) student agreed, 07 (3.5%) student remained neutral and the rest 43 (21.5%) students disagreed respectively. There is no one left to strongly disagree with the statement.

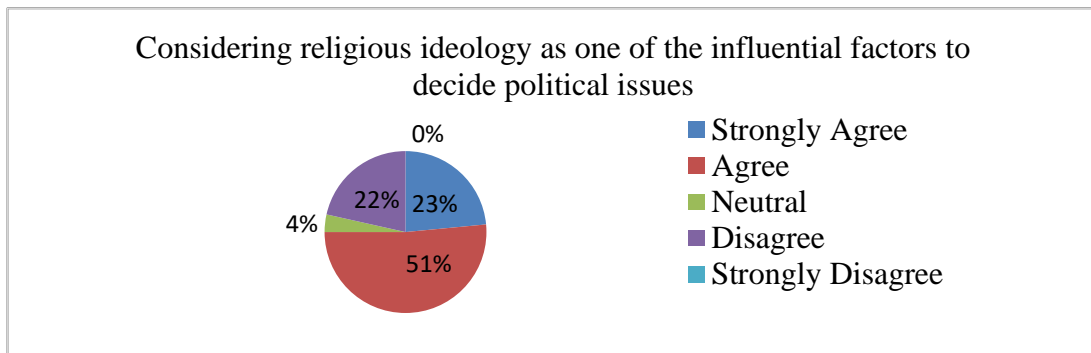**Figure 8.6: Considering religious ideology as one of the influential factors to decide political issues**

Table 8.7 : Religious ideology encourages to participate in politics

Opinion	No
Yes	63
No	137
Total	**200**

As the opinion asked to the participants whether their religious ideology encourages them to participate in politics, among the 200 respondents, 63 (31.5%) respondent were encouraged by religious ideology to participate in politics whereas 137 (68.5%) were never encouraged by religious ideology to participate in politics.

Figure 8.7 : Religious ideology encourages to participate in politics

Religious ideology encourages to participate in politics
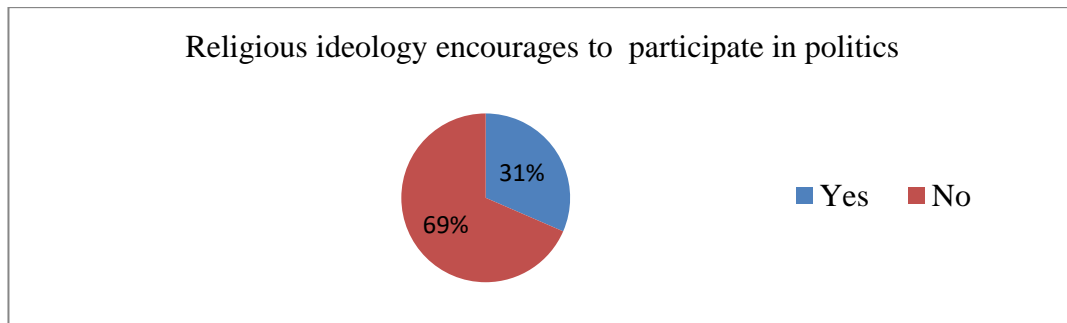
Table 8.8 : People find most desirable in a leader

People find most desirable in a leader	No
Similar religious ideals and performance	11
Similar political ideals and performance	143
Others personal traits	46
Total	**200**

From the whole sample which is 200 respondents only 11 respondents said that they will support a leader with same religious ideology as he has rather a leader from different faiths which represents 5.5% of the total respondents of the study; whereas 143 (71.5%) respondents said a leader with same political ideology would be the first priority for them to choose a leader. The rest 46 (23%) would search for others personal traits of a leader.

Figure 8.8: People find most desirable in a leader

People find most desirable in a leader
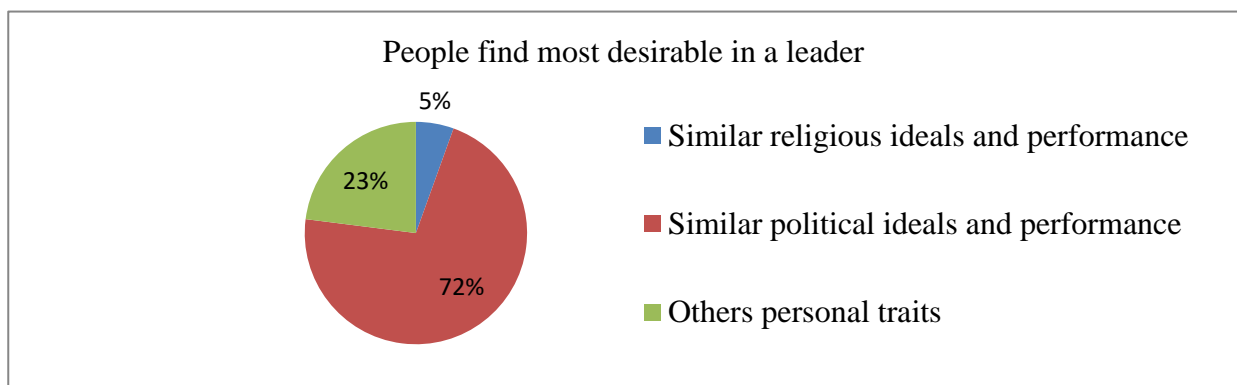
Table 8.9 : Ever took any political decision due to religious influence

Opinion	No
Yes	39
No	161
Total	200

Among the 200 respondents, 39 (19.5%) student in there life have taken any particular political decision due to religious influence whereas 161 (80.5%) have no such event.

Figure 8.9 : Ever took any political decision due to religious influence
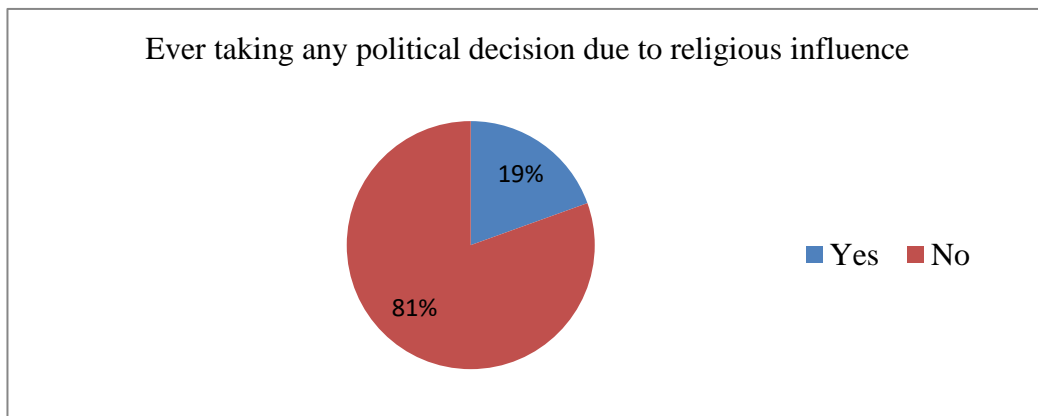
Table 8.10 : Level of satisfaction about the presence of secular constitution in Bangladesh

Highly Dissatisfied	13
Dissatisfied	41
Neutral	06
Satisfied	107
Strongly Satisfied	33
Total	200

As the opinion asked to the participants about the level of satisfaction about the presence of the secular constitution in Bangladesh, among 200 respondents, 13 (6.5%) student were highly dissatisfied, 41 (20.5%) participants were dissatisfied, whereas 06 (3%) student remained neutral, 107 (53.5%) respondents were satisfied about the issue and the rest 33 (16.5%) student were strongly satisfied respectively.

Figure 8.10 : Level of satisfaction about the presence of secular constitution in Bangladesh

Level of satisfaction about the presence of secular constitution in Bangladesh

17% 6% 20% 3% 54%

- Highly Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Neutral
- Satisfied
- Strongly Satisfied
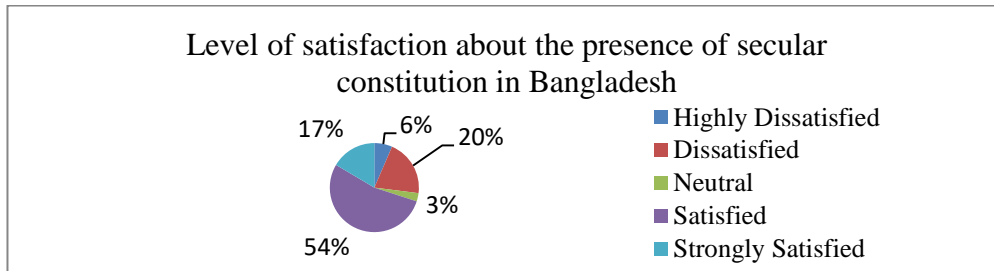
Table 8.11 : Secularism will help to consolidate democracy in Bangladesh

Strongly Agree	19
Agree	87
Neutral	13
Disagree	69
Strongly Disagree	12
Total	200

Among 200 respondents, 19 (9.5%) student strongly agreed with the statement that secularism will help to consolidate democracy in Bangladesh, whereas 87 (43.5%) student agreed, 13 (6.5%) student remained neutral, 69 (34.5%) student disagreed and the rest 12 (6%) respondent strongly disagreed with the statement respectively.

Figure 8.11 : Secularism will help to consolidate democracy in Bangladesh

Secularism will help to consolidate democracy in Bangladesh

6% 9% 35% 7% 43%

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
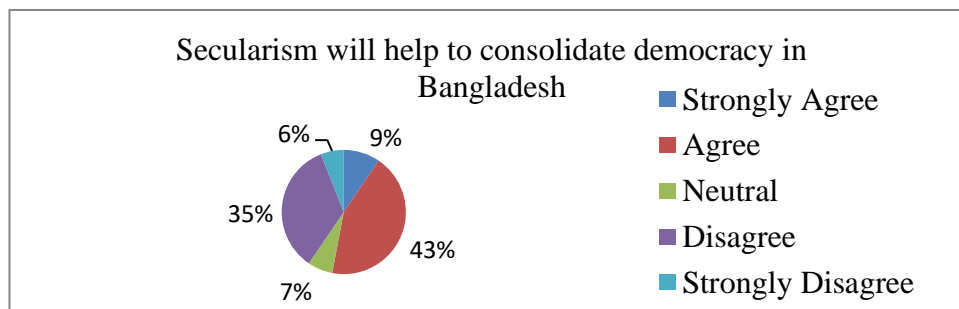
Table 8.12 : Preference between secular and religion based political parties

Opinion	No
Secular political party	137
Religion based political party	93
Total	**200**

Among 200 participants, 137 (68.5%) student prefer secular political party to religion based political party, whereas 93 (31.5%) student prefer religion based political party to secular political party.

Figure 8.12 : Preference between secular and religion based political parties

Preference between secular and religion based political parties

■ Secular political party
■ Religion based political party

32%
68%

Table 8.13 : Level of satisfaction about the presence of religion based political parties under the secular constitution in Bangladesh

Highly Dissatisfied	29
Dissatisfied	59
Neutral	25
Satisfied	53
Strongly Satisfied	34
Total	200

As the opinion asked to the participants about the level of satisfaction about the presence of religion based political parties under the secular constitution in Bangladesh, among 200 respondents, 29 (14.5%) student were highly dissatisfied, 59 (29.5%) participants were dissatisfied, whereas 25 (12.5%) student remained neutral, 53 (26.5%) respondents were satisfied about the issue and the rest 34 (17%) student were strongly satisfied respectively.

Figure 8.13 : Level of satisfaction about the presence of religion based political parties under the secular constitution in Bangladesh
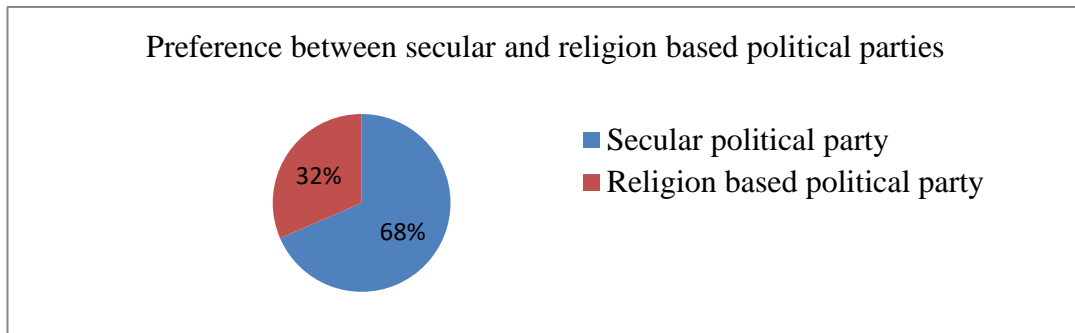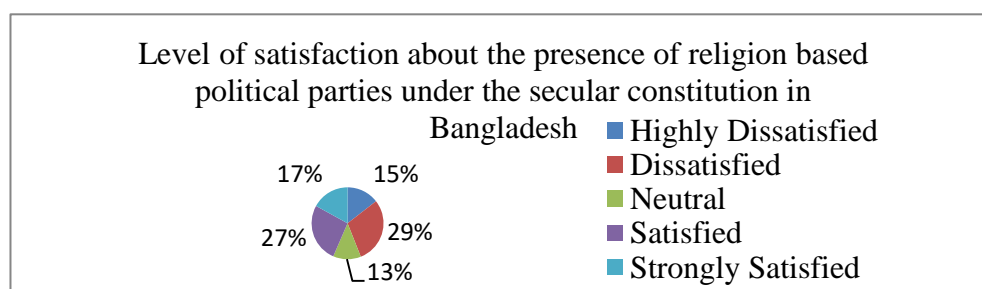

Level of satisfaction about the presence of religion based political parties under the secular constitution in Bangladesh

■ Highly Dissatisfied
■ Dissatisfied
■ Neutral
■ Satisfied
■ Strongly Satisfied

17%   15%
27%   29%
     13%

Table 8.14 : Religiosity impacts leadership practices and behaviors

Strongly Agree	47
Agree	115
Neutral	02
Disagree	36
Strongly Disagree	0
Total	200

As the opinion asked to the participants whether religiosity impacts leadership practices and behaviors, among 200 respondents, 47 (23.5%) student strongly agreed with the statement that religiosity impacts leadership practices and behaviors, whereas 115 (57.5%) student agreed with the statement, 02 (1%) student remained neutral and the rest 36 (18%) student disagreed respectively. There is no one left to strongly disagree with the statement that religiosity impacts leadership practices and behaviors.

Figure 8.14 : Religiosity impacts leadership practices and behaviors

Table 8.15 : Religion influences the views of many decision makers and their voters and shapes the environment in which decision makers act

Strongly Agree	44
Agree	51
Neutral	0
Disagree	97
Strongly Disagree	08
Total	200

Among 200 respondents, 44 (22%) student strongly agreed with the statement that religion influences the views of many decision makers and their constituents and shapes the environment in which decision makers act, whereas 51 (25.5%) student agreed, 0 (0%)

student remained neutral and the rest 97 (48.5%) student disagreed respectively. The rest 08 (4%) respondent strongly disagreed with the statement.
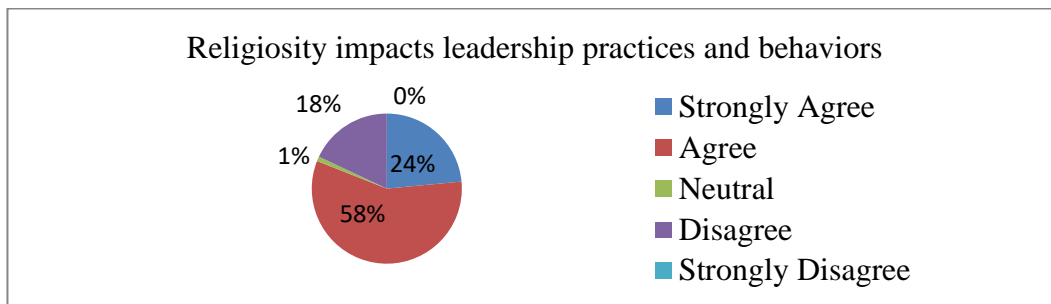
Figure 8.15 : Religion influences the views of many decision makers and their voters and shapes the environment in which decision makers act
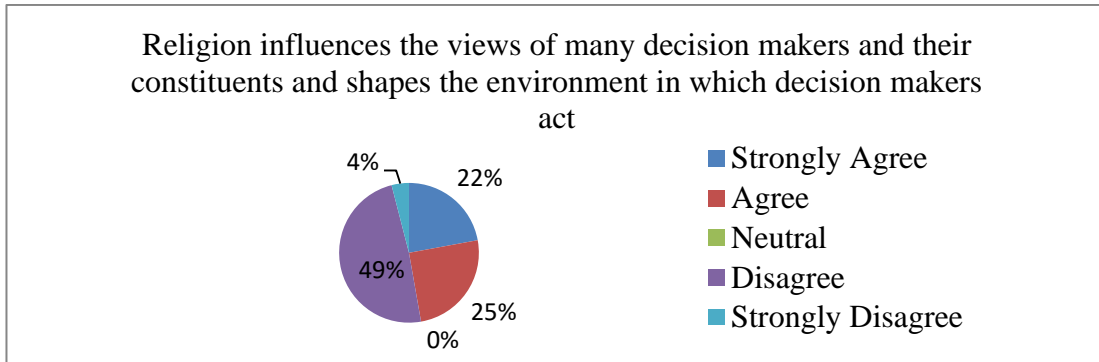
Table 8.16 : The religious belief of politicians expresses in their political actions in Bangladesh

Opinion	No
Yes	28
No	172
Total	**200**

As the opinion asked to the participants whether the religious belief of politicians express in their political actions in Bangladesh, among the 200 respondents, 28 (14%) student agreed that the religious belief of some politicians express in their political actions whereas 172 (86%) disagreed with the statement.

Figure 8.16 : The religious belief of politicians expresses in their political actions in Bangladesh
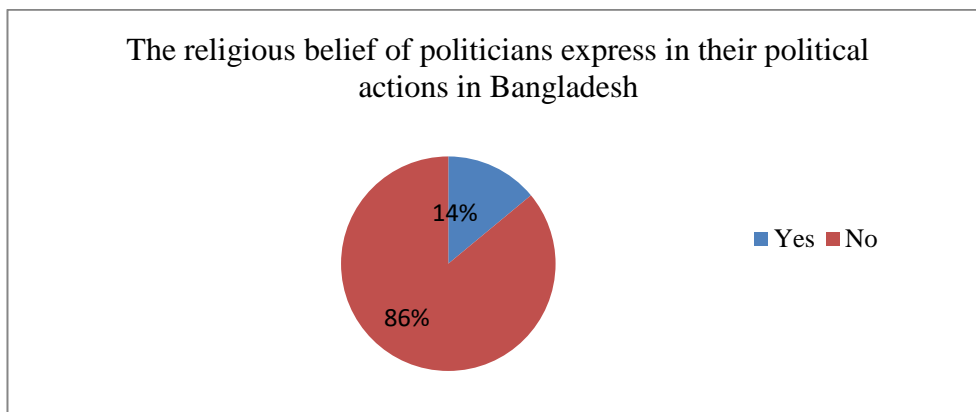
Table 8.17 : Politics must be guided by ethics drawn from religion

Strongly Agree	52
Agree	98
Neutral	13
Disagree	37
Strongly Disagree	0
Total	200

Among 200 participants, 52 (26%) student strongly agreed with the statement that politics must be guided by ethics drawn from religion, whereas 98 (49%) student agreed, 13 (6.5%) student remained neutral, 37 (18.5%) student disagreed with the statement respectively. There is no one left to strongly disagree with the statement.

Figure 8.17 : Politics must be guided by ethics drawn from religion

Politics must be guided by ethics drawn from religion

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
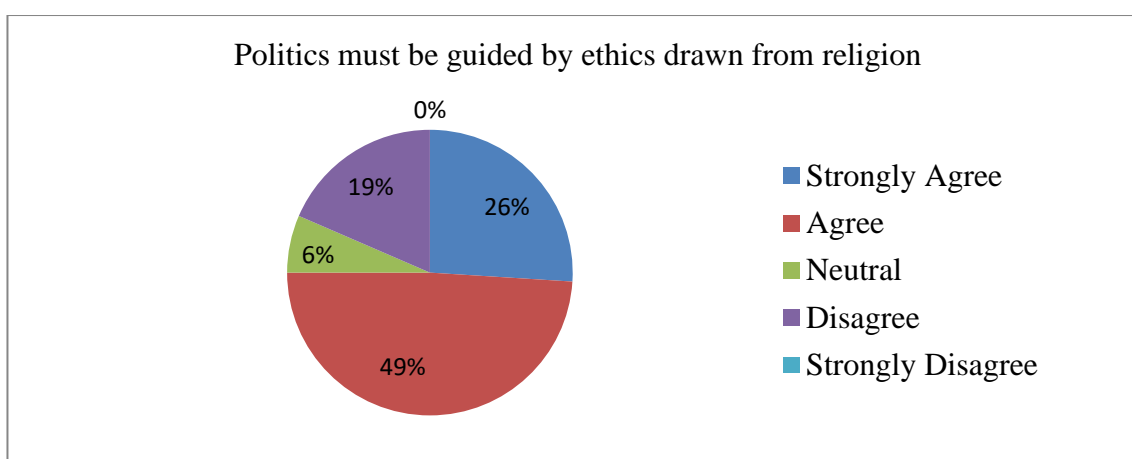
Table 8.18 : The interests of state and religion are interrelated

Strongly Agree	65
Agree	101
Neutral	21
Disagree	13
Strongly Disagree	0
Total	200

Among 200 respondents, 65 (32.5%) student strongly agreed with the statement that the interests of state and religion are interrelated, whereas 101 (50.5%) student agreed, 21 (10.5%) student remained neutral and the rest 13 (6.5%) student disagreed respectively. There is no one left to strongly disagree with the statement.

Figure 8.18 : The interests of state and religion are interrelated

The interests of state and religion are interrelated

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
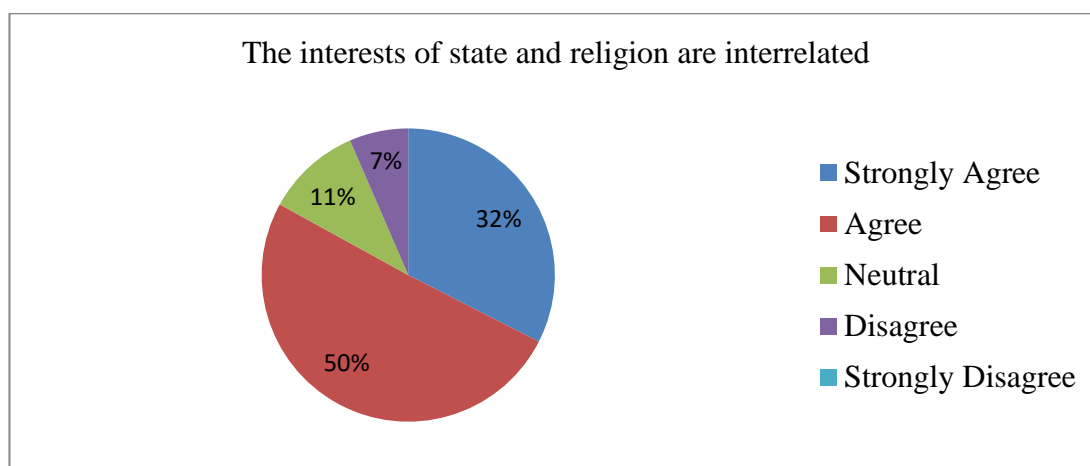
Table 8.19 : "Religion has nothing to do with politics"

Strongly Agree	21
Agree	67
Neutral	09
Disagree	52
Strongly Disagree	51
Total	200

Among 200 respondents, 21(10.5%) student strongly agreed with the statement that secularism will help to consolidate democracy in Bangladesh, whereas 67 (33.5%) student agreed, 09 (4.5%) student remained neutral, 52 (26%) student disagreed and the rest 51 (25.5%) respondent strongly disagreed with the statement respectively.

Figure 8.19 : "Religion has nothing to do with politics"

Religion has nothing to do with politics

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
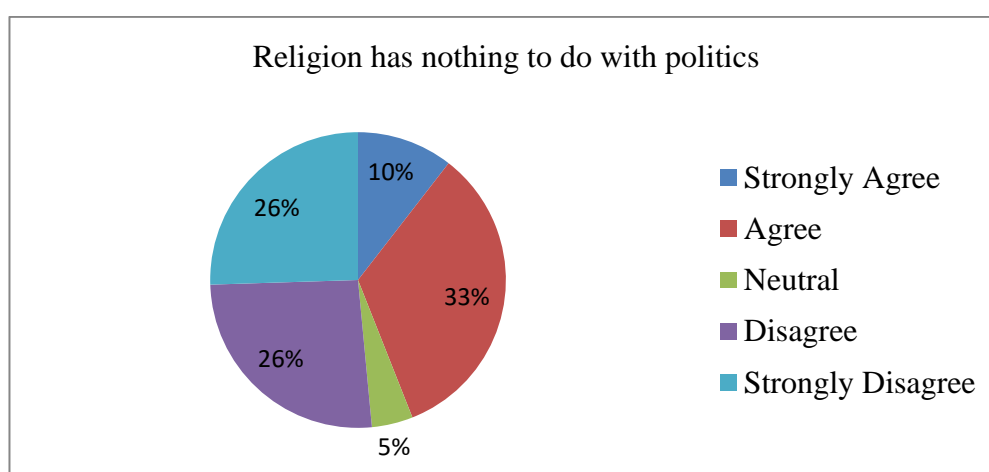
Table 8.20 : "Those who say religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion is"

Strongly Agree	49
Agree	53
Neutral	13
Disagree	69
Strongly Disagree	16
Total	200

Among 200 participants, 49 (24.5%) student strongly agreed with the statement that "those who say religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion is", whereas 53 (26.5%) student agreed, 13 (6.5%) student remained neutral, 69 (34.5%) student disagreed and the rest 16 (8%) respondent strongly disagreed with the statement respectively.

Figure 8.20 : "Those who say religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion is"

"Those who say religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion is"
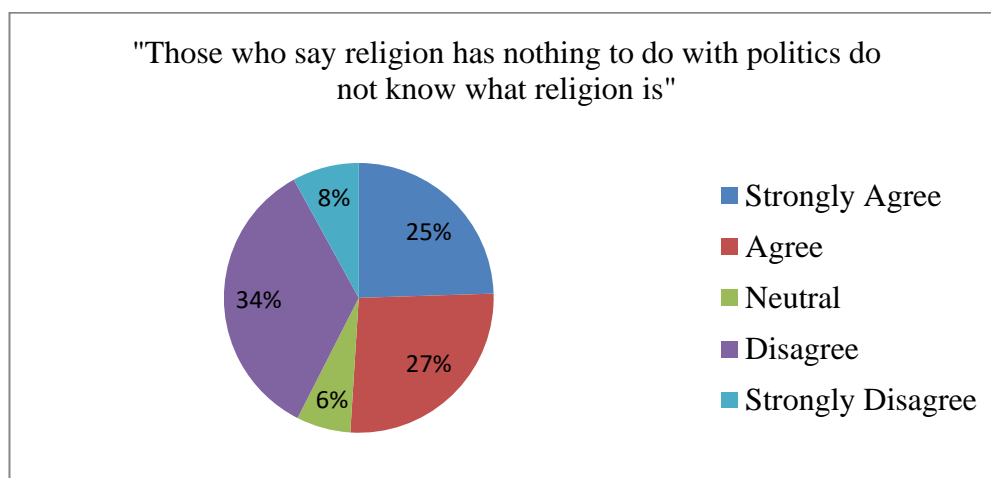
Table 8.21 : "Religion can never be separated from politics"

Strongly Agree	28
Agree	125
Neutral	02
Disagree	45
Strongly Disagree	0
Total	200

Among 200 respondents, 28 (14%) student strongly agreed with the statement that "religion can never be separated from politics", whereas 125 (62.5%) student agreed, 02 (1%) student remained neutral and the rest 45 (22.5%) student disagreed respectively. There is no one left to strongly disagree with the statement.

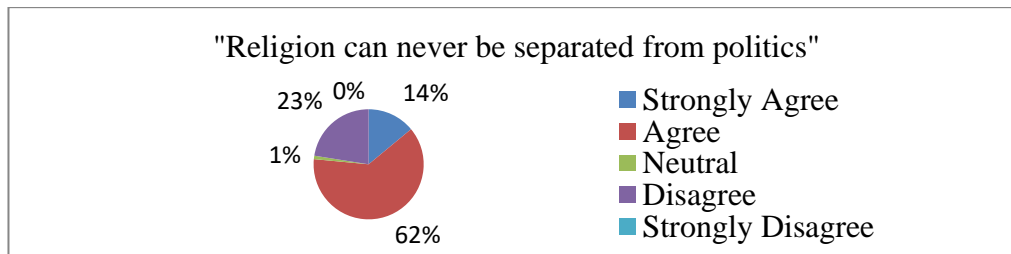**Figure 8.21 : "Religion can never be separated from politics"**

Figure: "Religion can never be separated from politics" — Strongly Agree 14%, Agree 62%, Neutral 1%, Disagree 23%, Strongly Disagree 0%

Table 8.22 : Factor influencing the relationship between religion and politics

Factor influencing the relationship between religion and politics	No
Heterogeneity	16
Relationship between religion and other divisions in society	37
Nature of religion and its attitude towards politics	89
Historical process	58
Total	**200**

As the opinion asked to the participants about the factor influencing the relationship between religion and politics, among 200 respondents, 16 (8%) student think that heterogeneity between religion and politics is the factor to influence their relationship, 37 (18.5%) participants think it is the relationship between religion and other divisions in society, whereas according to 89 (44.5%) nature of religion and its attitude towards politics is the factor and the rest 58 (29%) student consider historical process as the factor.

Figure 8.22 : Factor influencing the relationship between religion and politics

Figure: Factor influencing the relationship between religion and politics — Heterogeneity 8%, Relationship between religion and other divisions in society 18%, Nature of religion and its attitude towards politics 45%, Historical process 29%
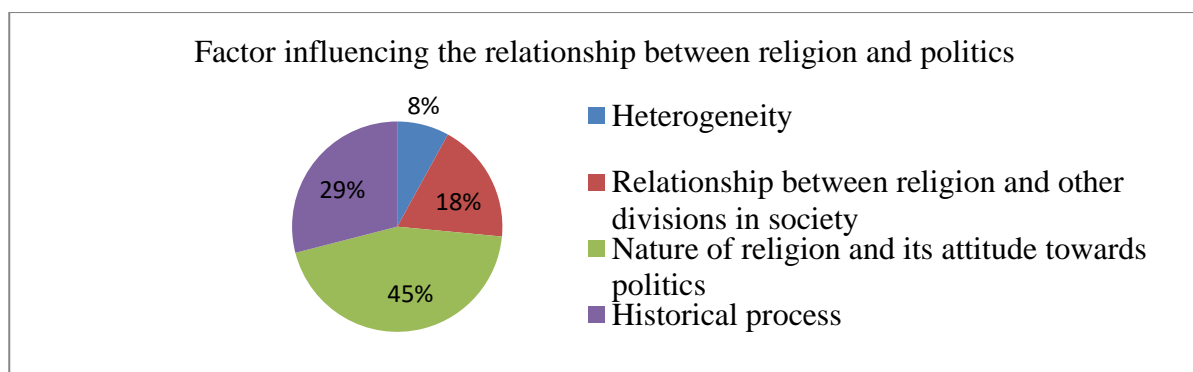
Table 8.23 : Religion is an issue which can connect any domestic conflicts with international issues

Strongly Agree	52
Agree	113
Neutral	0
Disagree	35
Strongly Disagree	0
Total	200

Among 200 respondents, 52 (26%) student strongly agreed with the statement that religion is an issue which can connect any domestic conflicts with international issues, whereas 113 (56.5%) student agreed, 0 (0%) student remained neutral and the rest 35 (17.5%) student disagreed respectively. There is no one left to strongly disagree with the statement.

Figure 8.23 : Religion is an issue which can connect any domestic conflicts with international issues
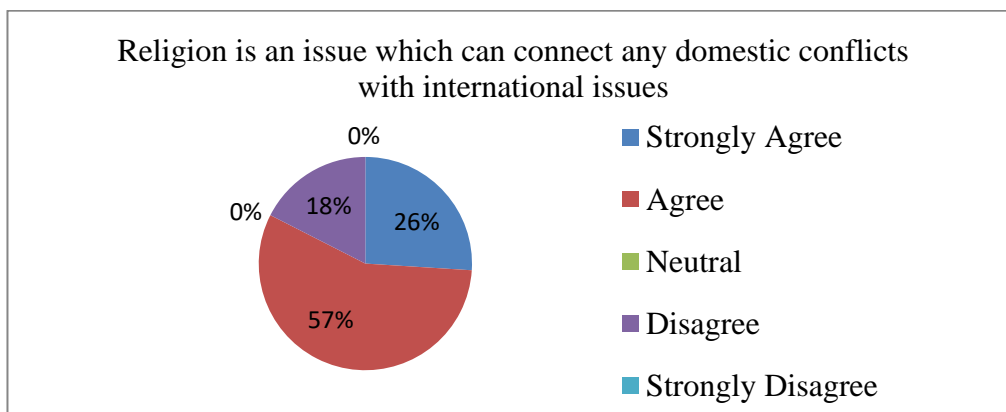

Table 8.24 : Increasing educational ratio will help to develop secular behavior in the state

Strongly Agree	07
Agree	81
Neutral	29
Disagree	78
Strongly Disagree	05
Total	200

Among 200 participants, 07 (3.5%) student strongly agreed with the statement that increase of educational ratio will help to develop secular behavior in the state, whereas 81 (40.5%) student agreed, 29 (14.5%) student remained neutral, 78 (39%) student disagreed and the rest 5 (2.5%) respondent strongly disagreed with the statement respectively.

Figure 8.24 : Increasing educational ratio will help to develop secular behavior in the state

Increasing educational ratio will help to develop secular behavior in the state

- 4% Strongly Agree
- 40% Agree
- 15% Neutral
- 39% Disagree
- 3% Strongly Disagree
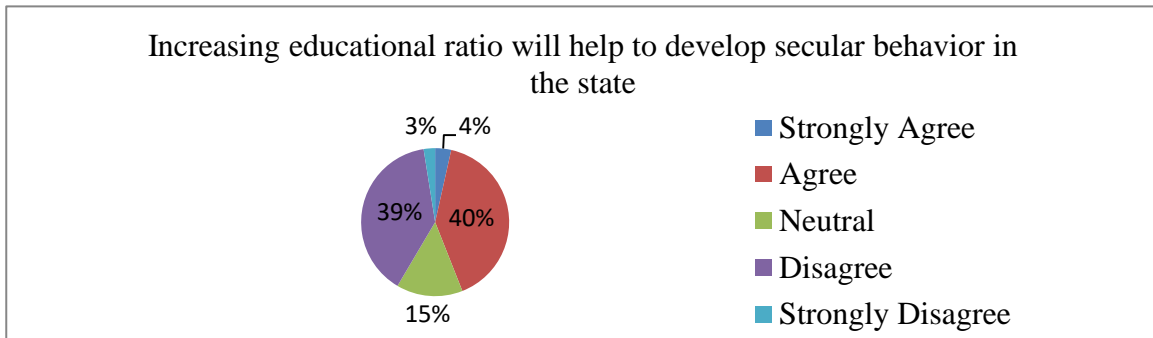
Table 8.25 : "Being more religious does not make someone less nationalist"

Strongly Agree	56
Agree	93
Neutral	05
Disagree	35
Strongly Disagree	11
Total	200

Among 200 participants, 56 (28%) student strongly agreed with the statement that "being more religious does not make someone to be less nationalist", whereas 93 (46.5%) student agreed, 05 (2.5%) student remained neutral, 35 (17.5%) student disagreed and the rest 11 (5.5%) respondent strongly disagreed with the statement respectively.

Figure 8.25 : "Being more religious does not make someone less nationalist"
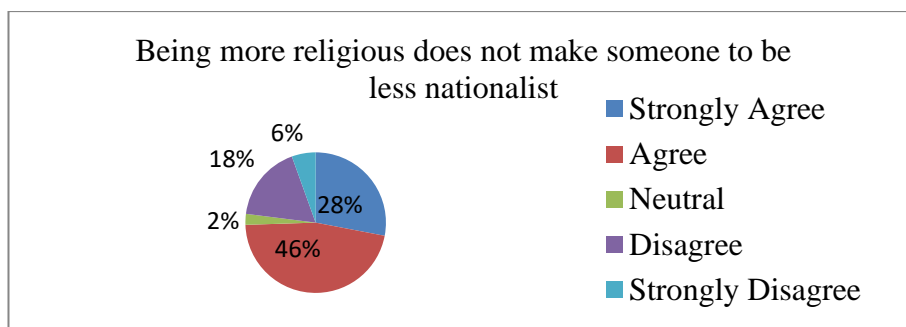

Being more religious does not make someone to be less nationalist

- 28% Strongly Agree
- 46% Agree
- 2% Neutral
- 18% Disagree
- 6% Strongly Disagree

Table 8.26 : The politicians of Bangladesh use religion as a source of legitimacy for political decisions and actions

Strongly Agree	28
Agree	87
Neutral	06
Disagree	79
Strongly Disagree	0
Total	200

Among 200 respondents, 28 (14%) student strongly agreed with the statement that the interests of state and religion are interrelated, whereas 87 (43.5%) student agreed, 06 (3%) student remained neutral and the rest 79 (39.5%) student disagreed respectively. There is no one left to strongly disagree with the statement.

Figure 8.26 : The politicians of Bangladesh use religion as a source of legitimacy for political decisions and actions

Table 8.27 : Are the religious differences among politicians expressed in the politics of Bangladesh?

Strongly Agree	03
Agree	24
Neutral	11
Disagree	134
Strongly Disagree	28
Total	200

As the opinion asked to the participants whether the religious differences of politicians are expressed in the politics of Bangladesh, among 200 respondents, 03 (1.5%)

student strongly agreed with the statement that the religious differences of politicians are expressed in the politics of Bangladesh, whereas 24 (12%) student agreed, 11 (5.5%) student remained neutral and the rest 134 (67%) student disagreed respectively. The rest 28 (14%) respondent strongly disagreed with the statement.

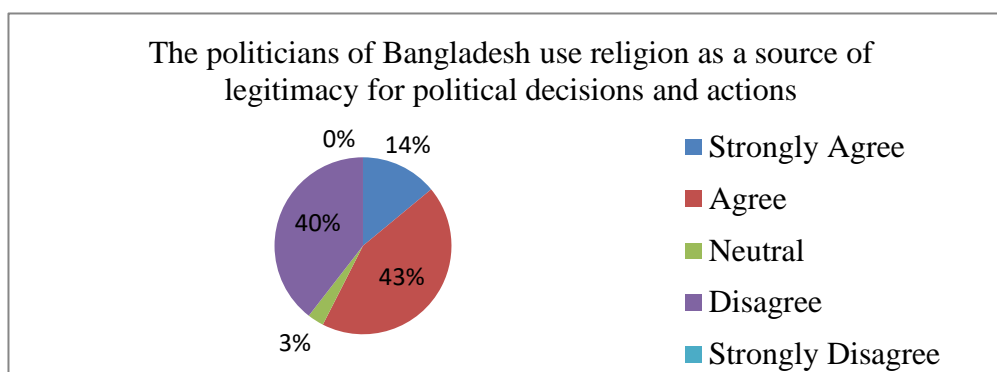**Figure 8.27 : Are the religious differences among politicians expressed in the politics of Bangladesh?**

Are the religious differences among politicians expressed in the politics of Bangladesh?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

1%
14%
12%
6%
67%
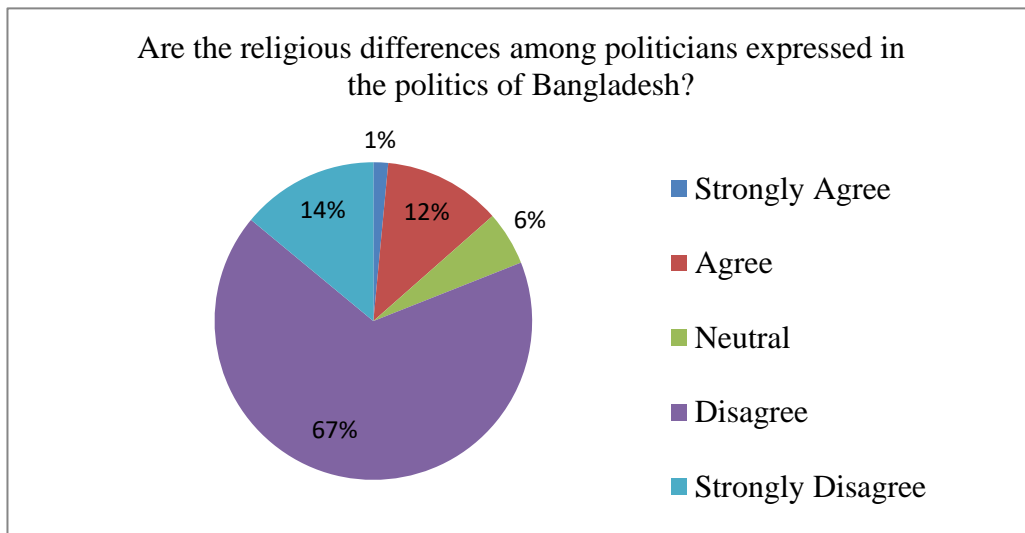
Table 8.28 : Any dominant group rationalizes its authority over minority by means of religion in Bangladesh

Strongly Agree	0
Agree	31
Neutral	05
Disagree	105
Strongly Disagree	59
Total	200

As the opinion asked to the participants whether any dominant group rationalizes its authority over minority by means of religion in Bangladesh, among 200 respondents, no respondent strongly agreed with the statement, whereas 31 (15.5%) student agreed, 05 (2.5%) student remained neutral and the rest 105 (52.5%) student disagreed respectively. The rest 59 (29.5%) respondent strongly disagreed with the statement.

Figure 8.28 : Any dominant group rationalizes its authority over minority by means of religion in Bangladesh

Any dominant group rationalizes its authority over minority by means of religion in Bangladesh

0%

15%

2%

30%

53%

■ Strongly Agree
■ Agree
■ Neutral
■ Disagree
■ Strongly Disagree
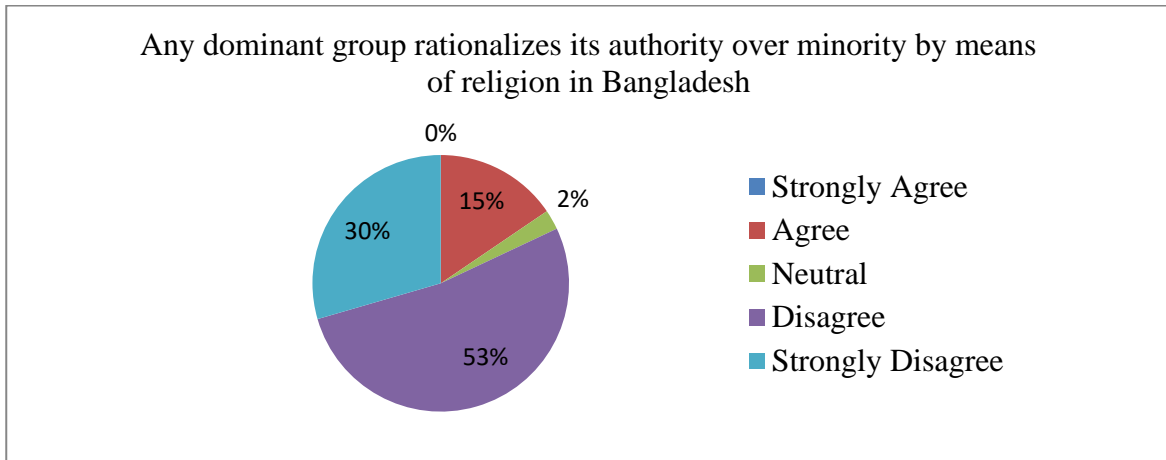
Table 8.29 : Experience of any kind of religious animosity arising out political issue

Opinion	No
Yes	03
No	197
Total	**200**

As the opinion asked to the participants whether they have ever experience of any kind of religious animosity arising out political issue, among the 200 respondents, 03 (1.5%) student in there life have experienced some sort of religious animosity arising out political issue whereas 197 (98.5%) have no such experience.

Figure 8.29: Experience of any kind of religious animosity arising out political issue
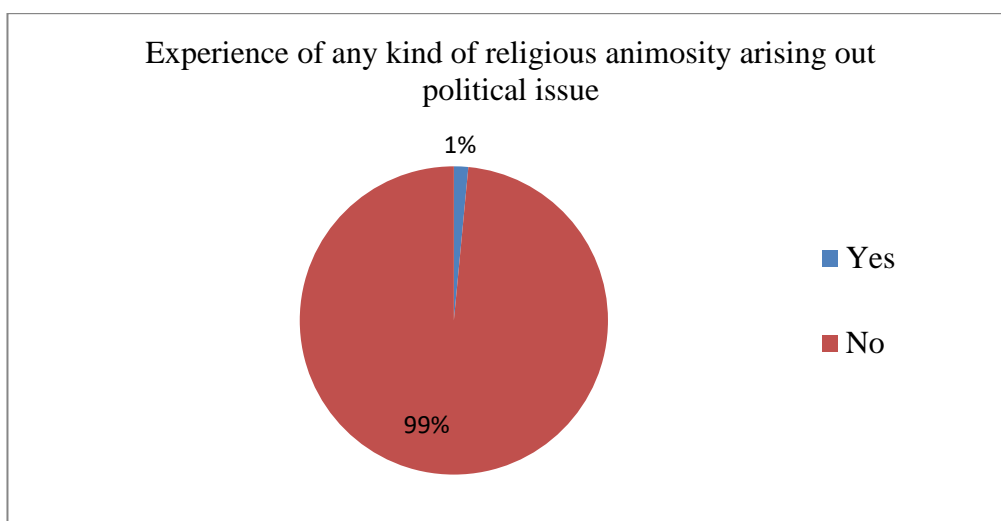
Experience of any kind of religious animosity arising out political issue

1%

99%

■ Yes

■ No

Table 8.30: Religion based political parties of Bangladesh try to make political gains by putting one religion against the other

Strongly Agree	39
Agree	58
Neutral	0
Disagree	82
Strongly Disagree	21
Total	200

Among 200 participants, 39 (19.5%) student strongly agreed with the statement that religion based political parties of Bangladesh try to make political gains by putting one religion against the other, whereas 58 (29%) student agreed, no respondent remained neutral, 82 (41%) student disagreed and the rest 21 (10.5%) respondent strongly disagreed with the statement respectively.

Figure 8.30: Religion based political parties of Bangladesh try to make political gains by putting one religion against the other
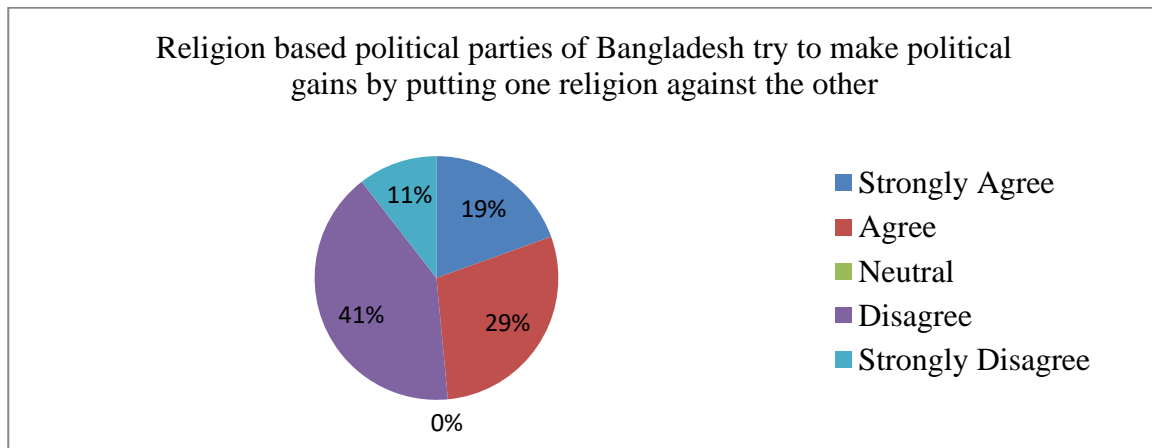

Table 8.31: Moral values of religion can be used positively in politics

Strongly Agree	96
Agree	102
Neutral	2
Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	0
Total	200

As the opinion asked to the participants whether moral values of religion can be used positively in politics, among 200 respondents, 96 (48%) student strongly agreed with the statement that moral values of religion can be used positively in politics, whereas 102 (51%) student agreed, 2 (1%) students remained neutral with the statement respectively. There is no one left to disagree and strongly disagree with the statement.

Figure 6.31

Moral values of religion can be used positively in politics
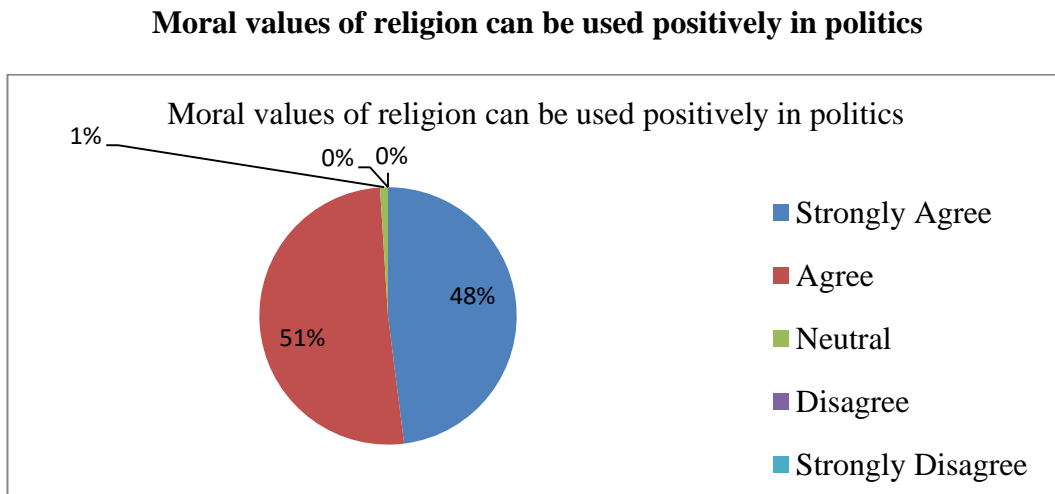
8.2 Quantitative Analysis through Descriptive Statistics:

The general analysis of the survey is as follows:

The survey gave an outline of the perception of influence of religion on political participation among the public university students in Bangladesh. As the question asked, if religious ideology is one of the influential factors to decide political issues, majority of the students think religious ideology is influential to adopt political issues where only few students find religious philosophy has no impact on political actions. Most of the students of the study population were never encouraged by religious ideology to participate in politics whereas a minor number of respondents were directly encouraged by their religious ideology to participate in politics. Majority of the respondents support a leader for his political ideology and activities and less than 6% of them follow a leader for his religious belief and doings, on the other hand only 23% would search for others personal qualities. Near 20% students have taken political decision under the influence of religion and rest of them never had such experience. Majority of the participants support the existence of secular constitution of Bangladesh and they are also in favor of secular political party. Less

than half of the respondents are happy with the presence of religion based political parties, almost 13% of them had no opinion about this and 44% students are unhappy on this issue. On the notion of impression of religiosity over leadership practices and behaviors majority of the participants think that religiosity effects leadership conducts and performances and only the few respondents think otherwise. Giving personal view regarding the influence of religion over the visions of many leaders and their constituents and how religion shapes the environment in which they perform nearly 48% participants accept that religious belief has influential power and it does so. On the contrary, more than half of the respondents think that leaders and voters religious faith does not influence their political activities. Regarding the issue of expressing religious belief of politicians in their political engagements in Bangladesh majority of the respondents disagree with this thought and a lower number of the participants convey their acceptance on this issue. Majority of the respondents want that ethics drawn from religion must guide politics and they also think that the interests of state and religion are interconnected. On the topic of religion's connection with politics more than half of the respondents give consent on this whereas almost same amount of participants disagree it this issue. Majority of the respondents think that religion can never be parted from politics. A very large number of participants think that religion is a matter which can connect any national conflicts with global subjects. On the helpfulness of increasing educational ratio to develop secular conduct in the country almost half of the participants find education as a positive tool to grow secular behavior and more than half of them think otherwise. In response to the topic about the politicians of Bangladesh using religion as a source of legitimacy for political declarations and engagements more than half of the members agree with the subject where almost the other half of the participants express disagreement. The religious differences among politicians are expressed in the politics of Bangladesh, this statement is believed by a small number of respondents where majority of them completely disagree with this notion. A trivial number of participants think that dominant group rationalizes its authority over minority by means of religion in Bangladesh but majority of the respondents deny the perception. As asked in the survey about the issue of making political gains by religion based political parties by putting one religion against the other in Bangladesh majority of the contributors disagree with the question and almost one-third of the respondents approve the assumption. Almost all the respondents think that moral values of religion can be used positively in politics.

8.3 Major Findings from the Qualitative Analysis:

The study titled 'Influence of Religion on Political Participation among Public University Students in Bangladesh' discovers that there is a mix opinion and ideology among the students of Bangladesh about the influence of religion on political participation. Bangladesh is constitutionally a secular state having different religions and faiths where majority of the population are Muslims. Most of the university students are in favour of secular nature of the state and they prefer to support secular political parties as well. As a same time they also think that as a democratic country every ideology should have the opportunity to take part in national politics labeling themselves as they want. State should not marginalize any religion based political party as it could be dangerous by creating extremism. The researcher found that when any decision of the government hurts individuals' religious principles they became more cautious about their rights and started to feel to participate in different political movements. Each of the respondents admits that they will never accept any approach of the state with direct object to alter the way of individual's practicing religion. Respondents have a certain amount of respect and trust to religious scholars and they accepted that religious intellectuals have a significant role in shaping individuals vision. As a tool of opposing any decision of government majority of the participants prefer election voting along with joining in boycotts, whereas rest of them are divided as some choose taking part in unofficial strikes and hartal, others go with singing petitions and participating protests. Another finding of the study is respondents, who are from financially sound family, are less interested in taking part in political campaign and protest. Answering about the role of different religious movements, which are took place recently in the country, participants acknowledge that these movements made people politically more active and increase political mobilization across the country. The role of non-political religious groups in the area of politics has been enlarged with these movements.

8.4 Discussion:

This study has aimed at discovering the influence of religion on political participation in Bangladesh among the public university students. For measuring the influence of religion on political participation attitudes of respondents were compared towards different major dimensions of political and religious values such as political participation guided by religious ideology, supporting a political leader for religious ideals and performance, supporting a political leader for political ideals and performance, attitudes

towards personal traits of political leader, approval of secular constitution etc. It has been transpired that religious values have influencing power over the youth, but most of them support secular aspect of the constitution indicating that educational system of Bangladesh is congenial to build secular political ideas in the presence of strong religious values. Among the respondents, all of them have own religious belief and are followers of the same; but most of them emphasized on political ideology over religious ideology in selecting a political leader. In the upshot of my study it appears that those who are directly involved with student politics are mostly supporter of a secular political system, simultaneously they admit the existence of religion based political party considering the marginalization of religion based political party could have led to extremism and should have their voice in mainstream politics. Supporting the existence of religion based political party does not mean that these students are motivated by their religious values or belief; rather they are guided by the true essence of democracy which allows every voice in politics. The legacy of Islamization of politics of two military regimes creates pertinent circumstances for religion based politics in Bangladesh.

Being a moderate Muslim majority country Bangladesh is passing through a very sensitive time where on the one hand, the present government restored secularism as one of the state policies which was present in the original constitution along with other three state policies namely: nationalism, socialism, and democracy, but on the other hand religion based political parties and some religion groups are completely against this secular constitution. These religions based political parties and religion groups are provoking Muslim specially the youth against this secular constitution saying that it is contradictory to the Sharia of Islam and as a Muslim they should protest it and Bangladesh should have a Islamic constitution based on the Qu'ran and the Sunnah. They are very active all over the country and continuously trying to change the ideology of the people about the importance of religion on political arena. Their main target is pious Muslims and they use religion as a political tool. A group of naive Muslims containing uneducated, less educated along with educated persons believe those religious leaders and do not support the secular constitution. Global injustice against the Muslims and Islamophobia all over the world is creating hatred towards secularism among the Muslims. Though the number of the supporter of Islamic constitution is increased in Bangladesh in recent years, it is very low in compare to moderate Muslims. Majority university students uphold the secular nature the constitution of Bangladesh. Large number of university students participates on politics without having

any connection of their religious belief. From the beginning, religion has a driving force in political history of Indian subcontinent. Bangladesh has also the history of interference of religious force in national politics, but the then Bengal province as well as the whole Indian subcontinent had a glorious history of communal and religious harmony before the British rule. Under the British colonial ruling, the ruler infuse the poison of communal hatred as a part of 'divide and rule' policy and Bangladesh has still the pride of communal and religious harmony and the respondents being students of university are mostly in the support of secular political system and their participation on politics are not guided by their religious ideology but political ideology. As all the respondents have individual religious faith, they never support any political decision or act which is disrespectful towards respective religion and they think that the state should remain respectful towards all faiths which Bangladesh keeps doing. This research has found considerable differences among the respondents about the notion to oppose any government decision that is disrespectful towards their religious belief. In this regards some pursue voting participation along with campaigning and lobbying, on the other hand some prefer to protests and political movements. All these activities are different form of political participation in the realm of politics. Thus the feeling of religious deprival or being disrespected boosts political participation. Religious scholars are directly or indirectly molding the mindset of individuals and inspire them to being politically active. The result of this study gives a positive sign about the ideology of Bangladeshi young students on their political participation.

Chapter Nine

Recommendations and Conclusion

9.1 Recommendations:

Though the security of people and the maintenance of peaceful coexistence among the people of different religion is the responsibility of state, it is a multi-dimensional attempt to which several actors have significant role. One of the important actors is religious leaders as their speeches are received with respect. They can easily influence their community with their spiritual leadership. State should encourage them to use religion as a positive force instead of spreading religious hatred in the society. As religion can not be fully separated from politics, it is important to understand for state authority how can they use the messages of religion in a positive way to engage people politically. The following recommendations are offered on the understanding gathered during this research and on the conclusions given previously:

- State should exhibit equal respect for all religions and avoid all types of discrimination against any religion as mentioned in the constitution of Bangladesh to avoid any kind of provoking situation which could lead communal conflict.

- With a view to increasing political participation state together with religious actors and leaders should raise awareness about the importance of political participation for the betterment of nation as youths are the most significant segment of the society having potentiality to bring new leadership and ideas.

- State should arrange diverse categories of programs to engage and educate youth politically by using religion in a positive manner in politics. By organizing various community gatherings, interfaith works, cultural programs and sports where people from different beliefs and faiths will take part in these events which will eventually help to grow the sentiment of mutual respect and tolerance among themselves.

- State should undertake initiative to encourage youth to participate in various political events by providing them economic and institutional opportunities to recognize and train influential youths who can contribute to mobilize others which in a long run will increase political participation.

- State should eliminate impediments to make people capable to participate all sorts of campaigns, movements and activities at national, local and community level which

will ultimately be supportive to grow people's political participation as the sense of political awareness will grow with these actions of social engagement of themselves. The realization of earlier exclusion of mass people will help to learn how to have voice in to achieve all types of access to political and economic progress by increasing political participation.

- Government has to be watchful to preserve communal harmony about provocative actions of political, religious leaders and actors who mislead people in the name of religion to come to power and legitimate their actions.

- Educational program should be designed by the government in such way which allows individuals to know their respective religious values including the philosophy of world religions.

- Political system of the country should be inclusive where political parties with different ideologies would not be marginalized including those who hold extremist ideologies intended to listen to and address grievances of the youth to develop a productive methods of talking to young people. Proper measures can be taken only when the actual reason behind youth being supportive to ideologies that promote violent extremism can be identified.

- To prevent violent religious extremism government should take a sustainable plan of action where political and financial support will be given to religious leaders to implement this plan of action across the country to actively promulgate the ethics and values of religion relating communal harmony and civic solidarity.

- Public education campaigns focusing on promoting mutual respect and understanding should be introduced where religious leaders from different faiths could cooperatively recognize and share principal texts from their respective sacred texts that could be used to support the elevation of mutual respect and understanding.

- Several types of training program to uphold interreligious corporation at different levels should be introduced for religious leaders by the state as their voices are heard by the people and have an influential impact on mass people thus have the power to mobilize people.

- The proper application of freedom of religion, safeguard of human rights and keeping spiritual actors and leaders away from political manipulation could assist to stop the mistreatment of religion driven violence.

9.2 Conclusion:

Bangladesh, despite a few extra-constitutional obstacles, has been very successful in keeping harmony among people of all faiths, which is consistent with the long-standing political and cultural history of the Bangladeshi people. The main object of the study was examining the relationship between religion and political participation at the individual level. This research found that religion influences political participation, but it works differently in different situations. When individual feels that their religion is neglected or they are deprived of anything just because of their religion, these circumstances encourage individuals to participate in politics for accomplishing their demands. These situations connect religiosity positively with political participation. On the other hand, when there are no such above mentioned incidents relating to individual's religion, religious persons are often less interested in politics. In this case religiosity is negatively connected with political participation. The young generation especially the students of public university largely in number are guided by their personal political ideology in political participation instead of their religious beliefs. This behaviour of the respondents is one of the highpoints of this study as it connects religious beliefs with political participation negatively. Among the respondents entire non-Muslims support secular constitution and they are more likely to take part in politics as they perceive Islamic political parties as a constant threat to them. Islamic thoughts are divided into different religious schools. There are both ideological similarities and dissimilarities among the leaders of Islamic political parties. Ideological differences make it difficult for them to unite on questions about nature of constitution, structure of political organization, pluralism, human rights and communal harmony. Witnessing the ideological differences among religious leaders, majority Muslim youths support secular structure of politics. At the same time, the differences about the definition of legitimate political authority, institutional structures and the proposed strategies of the religion based political parties sometime work as a mobilizing force to their followers as each of the group wants to achieve their own goal. This study has shown that being a one religion dominated country the degree and type of influence of religious beliefs on political participation is comparatively less in Bangladesh. Those who support religion based politics and be active in politics because of religiosity their mode of political participation is qualitative in nature and therefore difficult to measure. Some non-political religious groups for example Hefazat-e-Islam, Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian unity council had amplified their roles recently which mobilized a large number of their followers to political

activities. Thus these movements are positively related with political participation. Religion cannot be entirely separated from politics in Bangladesh as the majority of the population is conscientious. They have respect to their religious values but it does not prevent them from supporting secular political ideology. One of the vital findings of the study is that a large number of people are unable to understand the trick of political leader of using religion as a political weapon to legitimate their actions. Political leaders could earn legitimacy from the bulk of the society by pretending as a savior of Islam in Bangladesh. The two military regimes of Bangladesh are the biggest witness of this statement and the influence of religion on political participation is clearly visible. A small number of religious extremist is present in Bangladesh where they are successful to politically motivate their faithful for violent acts. Observing their violent acts mass people are being discouraged religion based politics in Bangladesh. The independent roles played by religion on political participation is observable among a very small number of the respondents. Maximum respondents accept that religious leaders have an effective impression on their spiritual life but they have little influence on their political life whereas their political decisions are guided by different on going elements of given environment. But at the same time they admit that religious intellectuals encourage them to remain cautious about political issues. Thus higher levels of association with religious organization are positively connected with political participation. As majority of the participants trust in the fact that having secular constitution in the country in the long run helps to consolidate democracy and prefer secular political parties instead of religion based political parties, is a clear indication of little influence of religion on political participation on Bangladeshi youth. Therefore, the higher levels of democracy and secular behaviour reduce the impact of religion on political participation. One of the major findings of the study is the highest number of respondents support a political leader for his political philosophy. Contrarily, the lowest number of participants select their political leader for his personal religious ideology. An undeniable fact is ones political philosophy, if he is a believer, can not be fully devoid of his religious beliefs as religion directly or indirectly has power to guide individuals intuition. This complex nature of individual ideology or philosophy make the researcher to draw a conclusion by stating that the interaction between religious factors and non-religious factors influences the decisions of the individuals on political participation. The students are deeply motivated by their respective political ideologies and promote communal and religious harmony rather than communal hatred which indicates a bright ray of hope for a harmonious Bangladesh as prevails now.

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Appendix

Questionnaire

1. Are you a voter?

2. What is your religion?

3. Do you have active participation in student politics?

4. Do you consider religious ideology as one of the influential factors to decide political issues?

5. Does your religious ideology encourage you to participate in politics?

6. What qualities do you desire in a good political leader?

      i) Similar religious ideals and performance;

      ii) Similar political ideals and performance; and

      iii) Others personal traits.

7. Have you ever taken any political decision due to religious influence?

8. Express your level of satisfaction about the presence of secular constitution in Bangladesh.

9. Do you consider that secularism will help to consolidate democracy in Bangladesh?

10. Which one do you prefer between secular and religion based political parties?

11. Express your level of satisfaction about the presence of religion based political parties under the secular constitution in Bangladesh.

12. Do you think that religiosity impacts leadership practices and behaviors?

13. Do you consider that religion influences the views of many decision makers and their voters and shapes the environment in which decision makers act?

14. Have you ever seen the religious belief of any politician expressed in his political actions in Bangladesh?

15. Politics must be guided by ethics drawn from religion- do you agree with the statement?

16. Do you think that the interests of state and religion are interrelated?

17. "Religion has nothing to do with politics"- do you agree with this statement?

18. "Those who say religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion is" - give your outlook about this statement of Mahatma Gandi?

19. "Religion can never be separated from politics" - give your opinion about this statement of Mahatma Gandi?

20. Which one among the following do you think the factor influencing the relationship between religion and politics?

        i) heterogeneity,

        ii) relationship between religion and other divisions in society,

        iii) nature of religion and its attitude towards politics, and

        iv) historical process.

21. Do you think religion is an issue which can connect any domestic conflicts with international issues?

22. Do you think that the increase of educational ratio will help to develop secular behavior in the state?

23. "Being more religious does not make someone less nationalist" - give your view about with this statement?

24. Do the politicians of Bangladesh use religion as a source of legitimacy for political decisions and actions?

25. Are the religious differences among politicians expressed in politics of Bangladesh?

26. It is believed that dominant group to rationalize its authority over minority by means of religion. Do you agree with this discourse?

27. Have you ever experienced any kind of religious violence?

28. Do you agree with it that religion political parties of Bangladesh try to make political gains by putting one religion against the other?

29. Can moral values of religion be used positively in politics?

30. What is the role of religious movement in shaping political participation?

31. How do you evaluate the insertion of Islam as a state religion into a secular constitution?

32. How do you evaluate the presence of religion based political parties under the secular constitution in Bangladesh?

33. Briefly express in what extent and how your religion connects you to politics.

34. How do you assess the role of religious scholars to mobilize individuals in regard of political issues?

35. If any policy of the government hurts your religious values, what measure will you take to stop it? Give your opinion on your preferable approach among voting, taking part in unofficial strikes and hartal, singing petitions, joining in boycotts, participating protests, or any other manner and the reason behind choosing it.

36. Briefly describe your family's financial condition and your interest in political activity.

37. How do you evaluate the role of non-political religious groups in recent religious movements in national politics?