

**Religion and Politics in Bangladesh: The Role of Bangladesh
Awami League and Bangladesh Nationalist Party, 1991-2014**

*Thesis submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
for award of the degree of*

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Mohammad Humayun Kabir



**Centre for South Asian Studies
School of International Studies**

Jawaharlal Nehru University

New Delhi-110067

July 2018



**CENTRE FOR SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI-110067**

DECLARATION

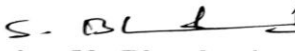
Date: 19.07.2018


I declare that the thesis entitled "RELIGION AND POLITICS IN BANGLADESH: THE ROLE OF BANGLADESH AWAMI LEAGUE AND BANGLADESH NATIONALIST PARTY, 1991-2014" submitted by me for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.


Mohammad Humayun Kabir 19.7.2018


CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this thesis be placed before the examiners for evaluation.


Prof. Sanjay K. Bhardwaj
Chairperson, CSAS


संस्थापक/Chairperson
केन्द्र, दक्षिण एशियाई अध्ययन केंद्र
Centre for South Asian Studies
विद्यापीठ, आंतरराष्ट्रीय अध्येक्षण
School of International Studies
जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय
Jawaharlal Nehru University
नई दिल्ली/New Delhi-110067


Prof. Sanjay K. Bhardwaj
Supervisor


संस्थापक/Chairperson
केन्द्र, दक्षिण एशियाई अध्ययन केंद्र
Centre for South Asian Studies
विद्यापीठ, आंतरराष्ट्रीय अध्येक्षण
School of International Studies
जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय
Jawaharlal Nehru University
नई दिल्ली/New Delhi-110067

DEDICATED

To My Beloved Wife

Khayrun Nahar Mona

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Lots of people have helped me in the completion of my thesis in form of comments, remarks, discussion, taking part in-depth interview and collecting research materials. Though it is impossible to mention all the name here, but I express my gratitude to all of them.

I am greatly indebted to my supervisor Professor Dr. Sanjay K Bhardwaj. Professor Bhardwaj has extensively visited Bangladesh and he has a deep knowledge about the politics, culture, society, man and nature of Bangladesh. This knowledge helps to understand the state, society, history, culture and politics of Bangladesh in a new light. His encouragement, patience, kindness, suggestions, critical comments and guidance help me a lot to complete this thesis. So, I express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor. In this connection I also express my gratefulness to Dr Pabitra Bhardwaj for her hospitality in her house and guidance to be familiar with Delhi.

I express my sincere gratitude to all faculty members of the Centre for South Asian Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University for their valuable guidance and suggestions from time to time.

I would like to thank the politicians, academicians, civil society members who participated in-depth interview that I have conducted as part of this thesis. I am indebted to Dr. Nuh-Ul-Alam Lenin, Former Presidium Member, Bangladesh Awami League; Ms. Shamsunahar Chapa, Education and Human Resource Affairs Secretary, Bangladesh Awami League; Ms. Marufa Akhter Popy, National Executive Committee Member, Bangladesh Awami League; Mr. Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, General Secretary, Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP); Dr. Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, National Standing Committee Member, Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP); Professor Dr. A B M Obidul Islam, Education Secretary, National Executive Committee, Bangladesh Nationalist Party; Dr Abul

Kashem, Professor, Department of History and International Relations, University of Rajshahi; Dr Syed Anwar Husain, Professor, Department of History, University of Dhaka, currently Bongabondhu Professor, Bangladesh University of Professionals, Dhaka; Dr. Mohammad Musfequs Salehin, Associate Professor, Centre for Peace Studies (CPS,), UiT-The Arctic University of Norway; Dr. Abul Kashem Fazlul Haque, Professor, Department of Bangla, University of Dhaka; Advocate Rana Dasgupta, General Secretary, Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council and Prosecutor, International War Crimes Tribunals, Mr. Badruddin Umar etc. In many ways their understanding about politics, culture and use of religion help me a lot to frame my opinion, explanation and arguments.

I am grateful to Prof. Dr. AKM Golam Rabbani, former General Secretary of The Asiatic Society of Bangladesh for his encouragement of research and providing me the Khan Bahadur Ahasanullah Research Grant for my data collection, which help me to collect primary data and enrich my thesis.

I acknowledge with a sense of obligation the encouragement and assistance which provided by Dr Mohammad Musfequs Salehin, my childhood friend who helped me a lot to understand this research and made necessary correction. I also acknowledge the valuable service of Mr Omar Faroque, Mr Khorshed Alam and Mr. Shamim, Shapla, Shamol Malum and Rabiul Awal.

I am indebted to the staff of Jawaharlal Nehru University Library, Teen Murti Library, Dhaka University Library, Bangla Academy Library, Asiatic Society Library, Bangladesh National Archives and Library and the Seminar Library of Department of IHC, University of Dhaka.

I sincerely thank the Department of Islamic History and Culture, University of Dhaka and all the faculty members and staffs of this departments for their co-operation and support. I also thank the authority and staffs of the University of Dhaka for their valuable support.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the support and encouragement of some persons who have been constant source of inspiration for me throughout this journey till now. I am indebted to Professor Dr. Muhammad Samad (Pro Vice-Chancellor, University of Dhaka), Professor Dr. Habiba Khatun, Professor Dr. Taufiqul Hayder, Professor Md Mahafuzul Islam, Professor Dr. Aatur Rahaman Miazi, Professor Dr. Abu Mohammad Delwar Hossain (Dean Faculty of Arts, DU).

Special words of thanks to all my friends whose love, affection, encouragement and support over the years cannot go unacknowledged: Mr. Mohammad Bellal Hossain, Ms. Suraiya Akhter, Mr. Abdur Rahim of Dhaka University, Mr. Mr. Mohammad Zihadul Islam, Mr. Mohammad Mahmudul Hassan, Mr. Md Alamgir Hassan, Dr. Meeraj Ahmed, Mr. Mohammad Monirul Islam Sarker (Ph. D scholar, JNU), Mr Golam Rabbani (Ph. D scholar, JNU), Dr. Karmveer Singh, Ms. Pushpa Gautam, Dr Rajeesh C.S, Dr. Ms. Ashwati Jayaprakash Ck (Ph. D. Scholar, JNU), Ms. Shahazadi Ema (Ph. D Scholar, JNU), Debraj Chakraborty, Mr. Sandeep Kumar (CSAS).

No words of appreciation are sufficient to express gratitude to my family members specially my mother whom I lost in the course of my research work in 2015, whose love, affection and encouragement always guiding me to the world of knowledge and truth. I am deeply indebted to my M.Phil. supervisor, my philosopher and guide and whom I consider my second mother National Professor Dr Sufia Ahmed who always encourage me to research and learning. I also acknowledge the love and care of my mother-in-law in this regard.

Last, but not least, I would like to express gratitude to my wife whose enduring patience and encouragement during the whole journey of my Ph.D. research. I am grateful to her for her invaluable support and inspiration. I thank her for love and emotional support to complete this work.

PREFACE

Religion represent the inner core of life for the millions of people around the world while politics means the activities associated with the governance of a country or area, especially the debate between parties having power. Throughout the history, religion tend to be closely associated with such governance procedure. Therefore, the relation between religion and politics continues to be an important theme in contemporary political sphere, despite the emergent 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. Yet, many across the predominantly Muslim countries surveyed by Pew Research Centre want Islam to have a major influence in politics. Thus, it is probably inevitable that Islamic commitments will have strong influence in political affairs as Islamic beliefs and practices potentially support politics in many ways in many countries including Bangladesh. Thus, this dissertation aims at exploring the interplay between Islam and politics in contemporary Bangladesh during the 1991-2014 with a particular focus on the two main political party centre-left Bangladesh Awami Language (AL) and nationalist and pro-Islamic Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

Partition of India and Pakistan based on 'Two-nation theory' is a classic example of use of religion in political affairs in the Indian sub-continent. Yet, Bangladesh emerged as a secularist state in 1971 as the result of more than two decade-long linguistic nationalist movement and a long brutal war against Pakistan. The most significant element of the nationalist movement that brought Bangladesh into being was the replacement of religion with ethnicity as the primordial marker of identity. The country framed its constitution in 1972, incorporating secularism as one of the four state principles in the constitution, while proscribing the use of religion in politics. The

declaration of secularism as a state principle, in theory, consigned religion to the private realm, and therefore did away with the mix of religion and politics. However, the meaning of “secularism” remained vague to both the ruling elites and the common masses. The government soon began undercutting the spirit of secularism through an array of activities including broadcasting religious programs on the state-controlled media. Political leaders also began using religious expressions in their speeches. Islam gained a more visible role in the public arena after the brutal killing of the father of the nation Bongabhandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975.

The military regime of Ziaur Rahman (1975- 1981) brought changes to the state principles, replacing secularism with “absolute trust and faith in the Almighty Allah,” and allowing the religion-based political parties to participate in the political process. The regime also directly encouraged religious activities, befriended Islamists, and incorporated religious education as part of the school curriculum. The government also insisted on the Muslim identity of the Bangladeshi population as opposed to their ethnic identity. Ziaur Rahman’s successor, General Hussain Muhammad Ershad, who usurped the state power in 1982 through another coup, in its bid to gain political legitimacy, declared Islam the state religion in 1988. One of the defining features of the Ziaur Rahman and Ershad regimes was their belief in the role of Islam in public life and in politics. These regimes succeeded in bringing Islam into the country’s political discourse and strengthened the legitimacy of Bangladesh’s Islamists—both constitutionally and politically.

However, return of democracy in 1991 did not lessen the use of religion in politics rather it increased in manifold. Furthermore, Bangladeshi society experienced with the rise of the Islamic party and the mainstream political party like Awami League and BNP have been continuously supporting the process of Islamisation in Bangladesh. Before the election of the 1991 two major party of the Bangladesh had competed for each other about to use the Islamic icon in the political arena. Pro-secular Awami League started to use Islamic jargon in the political meeting, while BNP had gotten support from Jamaat-e-Islami to win the 1991 election. Thus, a political party which

was against the liberation war had become the legitimate party in Bangladesh. Before the heyday of the 1991 election political parties of Bangladesh had been used Islamic slogan in the election campaign. For example, BNP supporters chanted, ‘La ilaha illallah, dhaner shishe Bismillah’ (there is no God but Allah, vote for paddy-sheaf saying God the merciful); Awami League supporters came up with slogan ‘La ilaha Illa-Allah, nauker malik tui Allah’ (There is no god but Allah, the boats belongs to Allah); and finally Jammatt supporters chanted ‘vote dilly pallay, khushi habe Allahi’ (Allah will be pleased with you if you vote for the scale). Moreover, before the 1996 election Awami League (AL) run their caretaker government movement with making tacit alliance with Jamaat-e- Islami.

Electoral victory of BNP in 2001 general election marked the country with severe violence including gang rape, touching and physical assault against the Hindu minority. Moreover, country-wide terror bombing in 2005 and the rise of the militant Islamic group Jammattul Mujaheden and its leader Bangla bhi was one of the most significant episode of rising Islamic militants in the country. This is due to BNP’s alliance with Islamist political parties, softer attitude and direct/indirect support towards Islmaist militants and lack of good governance in the country during BNP’s rule. At the same time in 2005, the High Court Division (HCD) of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh declared the removal of secularism from the Constitution illegal and the Appellate Division of the same Court upheld the decision of the High Court Division. However, it took several more years for the Bangladesh Parliament to amend the constitution and finally it happened in 2011 during Awami League’s rule.

Yet, Awami League’s position regarding the amendment of the constitution to add secularism was quite controversial as they still keep Islam as state religion and other Islamic ideals in the constitution. In this regard, Awami League’s position is rather clear as they see no contradiction between the concept of secularism and these inclusions in the Constitution because they operate merely as an acknowledgement of Bangladesh’s status as a Muslim majority country and do not, in practice, undermine the constitutional guarantees of equal rights and protection of all citizens including

religious minorities. AL has become successful in bringing the war criminals before justice and many of the main leaders were hanged. Yet, AL's alliance with the fundamentalist Hefazat-e-Islam undermine their rule and commitments to secularism.

Over time, secularism in Bangladesh has been slowly eroded due to a dangerous combination of political expediency, variety in Islamic ideology and practices embedded in Bangladeshi social structure and foreign influence. While the military dictators courted Islamist groups in order to bolster their legitimacy, the major political parties i.e. AL and BNP used religion and Islam in particular for their electoral victory. While AL and its supreme leader went on to assure religious clerics that her government is working to spread Islam in Bangladesh, including by increasing the number of mosques and Islamic cultural centres funded by Saudi Arabia, its efforts to curb militancy is undeniable, as it is trying to tame extremist groups by pursuing concessions that make it harder to frame the government as somehow "anti-Islam," a charge used by political opponents.

BNP on the other hand, has always been playing 'protector of Islam' and 'anti-India' rhetoric in their electoral politics. However, the way in which both the BNP and the AL had dealt with the politics of religion was so similar that it could not be argued that the ideology presented by either had an impact on the practice of secularism. A closer analysis of recent developments shows the rhetorical nature of these differences and the instrumentalist nature of nationalism in Bangladesh. This thesis further assume that it is pertinent to conduct rigorous research to see whether the promotion of Islam in Bangladesh and rise of political Islam by the two major political parties merely represents the cultural resistance of Muslims to secular nationalists.

CONTENTS

Page No.

Acknowledgement	i-iii
Preface.....	iv-vii
List of Figures and Tables.....	xii
Abbreviations and Acronyms	xiii-xv

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction to Research.....	2
1.2 Background of the research	2-9
1.3 Literature Review	9
1.3.1. Islam, State and Legitimacy.....	9-11
1.3.2. Secularism, De-secularization, Islam and Religion and Politics.....	11-14
1.3.3. Political Islam and Islamist Movement.....	15-16
1.3.4. Political Use of Religion and Major Political Parties	16-17
1.4. Definition, Rationale and Scope of the Study	17-19
1.5. Objectives	19-20
1.6. Research Questions	20
1.7. Hypotheses.....	20-21
1.8. Methodology.....	21
1.8.1 Structure of the Thesis.....	21-22

CHAPTER-2

THE STATE OF BANGLADESH: INCLUSIVE AND EXCLUSIVE IDENTITY IN POST-COLONIAL TRANSFORMATION

2.1. Introduction	24
2.2: Nature of Bangladesh State and Society	24-25
2.2.1. Colonial Legacy and Post-colonial Transformation.....	25-27
2.2.2. Syncretic Islam in Bangladesh	27-28
2.2.3: Syncretic vs. Authentic Islam: A Conflicting schema?.....	29
2.3: Identity debate from 1947 to 1971	30

2.3.1: Two Nation Theory and Bengali Muslim Identities	30-34
2.4: Bangladesh as a Post-Colonial State	34-38
2.5: Secular vs. Islamic Identities in Bangladesh State	38-41
2.6: Use of Islam During Military Period	41-44
2.7: Use of Islam during Democratic period	45-46
2.8: Conclusion.....	46-47

CHAPTER 3

POLITICS OF SECULARISM AND BANGLADESH AWAMI LEAGUE

3.1. Introduction.....	49
3.2. Genesis of Awami League	50-53
3.3. Journey of Secular Politics by Awami League	54
3.3.1. The Language Movement	54-55
3.3.2. Change in Nomenclature and Membership Provision of EPML.....	56-58
3.4. Politics of Awami League During the Pakistan Period.....	58-63
3.5. Politics of AL During the First Government of Bangladesh (1971-75).....	64-66
3.6. Politics of AL During the Military Era (1975-91)	66-70
3.7. Politics of AL During the Democratic Period (1991-2014).....	70-71
3.7.1 : Politics of AL as Opposition Party (1991-1996)	71-73
3.7.2 : Politics of AL During the First Government Under Sheikh Hasina (1996-2001).....	74-75
3.7.3 : Politics of AL as Opposition Party (2001-2006)	75-77
3.7.4 : Politics of AL during the Second Government Under Sheikh Hasina (2008-2014).....	78-80
3.8: The Trial of the War Criminals	80-85
3.8.1 : Shahabagh Movement	85-86

3.8.2: Counter of Shahabagh Movement (Hefazat-e- Islam)	86-88
3.10: Conclusion	88

CHAPTER 4
RELIGIOUS POLITICS AND BANGLADESH NATIONALIST PARTY (BNP)

4.1: Introduction	90-91
4.2: Genesis of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).....	91-93
4.3: Politics of Ziaur Rahman and Formation of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)	93-99
4.4: Politics of Ziaur Rahman and the Role of Religion	100-106
4.5: Politics of BNP During the Post Zia Period	106-108
4.6: Politics of Begum Khaleda Zia and the Use of Religion in Politics.....	108-113
4.6.1. First Government of Begum Khaleda Zia (1991-1996)	113-116
4.6.2: BNP as in Opposition (1996-2001).....	117-120
4.6.3 : Second Term Government of Begum Khaleda Zia (2001-2006).....	121-124
4.6.4 : Recent Trend of Politics of Begum Khaleda Zia (2008-2014)	124-127
4.7. Rise of Religions Extremism in Bangladesh	128-131
4.8: Conclusion.....	131-132

CHAPTER 5
SECULAR-RELIGIOUS INTERFACE: FROM 1991-2014

5.1: Introduction	134-135
5.2: Contested Ideas of Secularism in Contemporary Bangladesh.....	135-138
5.3: The Growth of an Islamic Politics	138-143
5.4: Islam, Bangladeshi Nationalism and Politics of BNP:	

Discourse and Practices	143-144
5.4.1 : Religious Discourse in BNP's Politics.....	144-146
5.4.2 : Practice of religious politics	146-150
5.5: Islamic and Secular Politics in Awami League's Political Discourse and Practices.....	150
5.5.1 : Awami League, Constitutional Amendments and the Conflict between Islam and Secularism	150-156
5.6: Familiocracy and Intraparty Democracy	156-157
5.6.1 Dynasties and Alliances	157-159
5.6.2 Intraparty Democracy in BNP and AL.....	159-161
5.7. Growth of Religions Education (Madrassa) in Bangladesh.....	161-169
5.8: The State of Minorities in Bangladesh.....	169-171
5.8.1 : Constitutional and Legal Safeguard for the Minorities in Bangladesh.....	171-173
5.8.2 : The State of Minorities during first Government of Bangladesh.....	173-174
5.8.3 : State of Minority during Military Rule	174-176
5.8.4 : State of Minorities During Democratic Rule.....	176-179
5.8.4.1: Vested Property Act (1974) and Vested Property Return Act (2011)	179-180
5.8.5 : Recent Challenges of the Minorities in Bangladesh	180-183
5.9: BNP, the Rise of Islamism and Threat Towards the Democracy of Bangladesh.....	184-185
5.10: Conclusion.....	185
CHAPTER 6	
CONCLUSION	186-199
References	200-220
Annexure	221-256

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

	Page No.
Figure-1: Historical Genealogy of Bangladesh Polity: Mobilized Verses Contested Ideals	53
Figure 2: Bangladesh Awami League Fragmentation	68
Figure 3: Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) Fragmentation	110
Table 4.1: Results of the Second National Parliamentary Election, 1979.....	104
Table 4.2: Result of the Fifth Parliamentary Election, 1991	113
Table: 4.3: Result of the Seventh National Parliament Election, 1996	116
Table 4.4: Ideological Orientation of Political Parties of Bangladesh	118
Table 4.5: Result of the Eight National Parliamentary Election, 2001	120
Table 4.6: Result of the Ninth National Parliamentary Election, 2008.....	125
Table 4.7: Results of the Tenth National Parliamentary Election, 2014.....	127
Table 5.1: Growth of Quomi and Aliya Madrassain Bangladesh (1950-2008)	163
Table 5.2: Number of Main stream Educational Institution and Madrassa and their Students (1991-2008).....	164
Table 5.3: Result of SSC and Dakhil and Percentage (2006-2016).....	167
Table 5.4: Discrimination of Religions Minorities in Defence Service (Army)	177
Table 5.5: Discrimination of Religions Minorities in Police Service.....	178
Table 5.6: Discrimination of Religions Minorities in Administrative Service.....	178
Table 5.7: Representative of Minority Community in the Parliament	181
Table 5.8: Decaling Hindu Population in Bangladesh.....	182

ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYMS

AI	Amnesty International
AIML	All India Muslim League
AL	Awami League
BD	Basic Democracy
BEC	Bangladesh Election Commission
BGF	Bangladesh Gono Front (Bangladesh People's Front)
BHBCOP	Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Oikyo Parishad (Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council)
BJL	Bangladesh Jatiya League (Bangladesh National League)
BKM	Bangladesh Khelafat Majlish
BKSAL	Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League (Bangladesh Peasants' Workers' Awami League)
BLP	Bangladesh Labour Party
BML	Bangladesh Muslim League
BML	Bengal Muslim League
BNP	Bangladesh Nationalist Party
BPL	Bangladesh People's League
BSCF	Bangladesh Scheduled Cast Federation
BWP	Bangladesh Worker's Party
CA	Chief Advisor
CEC	Chief Election Commissioner
CML	Council Muslim League
CMLA	Chief Martial Law Administrator
COP	Combined Opposition Party
CPB	Communist Party of Bangladesh
CSG	Chief of General Staff
CTG	Caretaker Government
DGFI	Directorate General of Forces Intelligence
DL	Democratic League
EBR	East Bengal Regiment
EC	Election Commission
EPAL	East Pakistan Awami League

EPAML	East Pakistan Awami Muslim League
EPNAP	East Pakistan National Awami Party
GA	Gono Adalat (People's Court)
GAL	Gono Azadi League (People's Liberty League)
GD	Gonotantik Dal (Democratic Party)
GDNC	Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee (Committee for the Elimination of the Killers and Collaborators)
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
GOJ	Gonotantik Oikko Jote (Democratic United Front)
GP	Gonotantik Party (Democratic Party)
HI	Hefazat-e-Islam
HUIJB	Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami Bangladesh
ICT	International Crimes Tribunal
IDL	Islamic Democratic League
IOJ	Islami Oikko Jote (Islamic United Front)
JAGODAL	Jatiyatabadi Gonotantik Dal (Nationalist Democratic Party)
JAP	Jatiya Ekota Party (National United Party)
JES	Joint Electorate System
JF	Jatiyatabadi Front
JGMU	Jatiya Gonotantik Mukti Union (National Democratic Freedom Union)
JI	Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh
JJP	Jatiya Janat Party (National People's Party)
JMB	Jamaat-ul Mujahideen Bangladesh
JMJB	Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh
JP	Jatiya Party (National Party)
JSD	Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (National Socialist Party)
KSP	Krishak Sramik Party (Peasants' Labours' Party)
ML	Muslim League
MP	Member of Parliament
NAP	National Awami Party
NCG	Non-Party Caretaker Government
NDF	National Democratic Front

NFD	National Front for Democracy
NIP	Nizam-e-Islam Party
NSC	National Standing Committee
NSI	National Security Intelligence
OIC	Organization of Islamic Cooperation
PML	Pakistan Muslim League
PPR	Political Parties Regulations
RRC	Riot Resistance Committee
SD	Sammyabadi Dal
SES	Separate Electorate System
SKSD	Sramik Krishak Samajbadi Dal
ULFA	United Liberation Front of Assam
VPA	Vested Property Act
WP	Workers Party

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1: Introduction to the Research

Emergence of Bangladesh as an independent state in 1971 envisages a secular state, though the principle of secularism was replaced by the commitment to an Islamic way of life through a series of constitutional amendments and proclamation between 1977-1988. With the return of democracy in 1990s, Bangladeshi state has started witnessing religious electoral politics in Bangladesh. The use of religion in politics is thus far more complex and require an in-depth analysis of two major political parties i.e. Bangladesh Awami League (AL) and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and their engagement in religious politics. Therefore, the main aim of this thesis is to explore the nature and extent of use of religion in Bangladeshi politics in general and by the secular centre-left e.g. Bangladesh Awami League and centre-right Bangladesh Nationalist Party in particular.

1.2: Background of the research

Religion represents the inner core of life for millions of people around the world. It is one of the oldest social institutions, which govern the social as well as personal behaviour of human being. It provides with the guidelines, laws and principles relating to his/her interaction with his/her fellow being and God. Yet, religion has been a significant player in many conflicts around the world since the dawn of civilization. Religion sometimes causes conflict; other time it simply helps sustaining the conflict. In many cases, it is used as a pretext for conflicts that have deeper roots in other issues like economy, inequality, deprivation etc. In addition, it is usually argued that religion has been used as a source of legitimacy i.e. to legitimate the role of the tyrant or the undemocratic or the military regime across the world. Yet, political use of religion or politicisation of religion is very much evident where

religion is being used to legitimise the political actions and at the same time religion of majority influenced the secular polity to turn into a religious domain. Although religion has always been part of national and international politics, particularly after the 9/11, religion in general and Islam in particular gained prominence in academic, policy and popular discourse. Therefore, use of religion and Islam in particular in the West Asia and other Muslim majority states has raised debates.

Bangladesh is predominantly a Muslim country and ranked as the 3rd largest Muslim inhabited country after Indonesia and Pakistan. The complex articulation of religion and politics in Bangladesh has a long history. Religion has always been susceptible to politicisation and at the same time, a tendency of religionisation of politics is evident. Therefore, the rise of religious rights that advocate theocratic the creation of an Islamic state in Bangladesh did not happen instantaneously in Bangladesh. So, in order to understand the nexus of religion and politics in Bangladesh, it is essential to reflect on political and historical context of the origin of religious politics. Since the time of the inception of the independent Bangladesh, it opted for a secular nationalist ideology as embodied in its Constitution. However, the principle of secularism was subsequently replaced by a commitment to the Islamic way of life. It was done through a series of constitutional amendments and government proclamations during the military rule between 1977 and 1988. The image of Bangladesh as a moderate and tolerant Muslim majority country was shattered on the morning of August 17, 2005 when around 459 bombs were simultaneously exploded in 63 [out of 64] districts across Bangladesh.

Although Bangladeshi state did not see the recurrence of Islamist violence to same extent as of 2005, the recent incidence of killing the secular bloggers and online activists indicates the continuation of the Islamist violence against the secular people and polity. Ansullah Bangla Team has claimed responsibility. These murders show a clear presence of the threat from the Islamist against secular voice.

Factors such as the advent of military rule in 1975, the crisis of legitimacy were behind the growth of religious politics in Bangladesh (Jahangir 1986). Apart from the military and the return of the collaborators and Jamaat-e-Islam¹ in Bangladesh politics, Jahangir (1990) identifies a third strand of ‘fundamentalism’ i.e. the rise of the Tabligh movement². Furthermore, Bangladesh is divided into two extreme poles: Bangladesh Awami League and the secular forces on the one end and BNP-Jamaat and Islamist forces on the other. This political and ideological polarisation did not happen overnight, rather a systematic social engineering since the independence of the country was at the forefront.

After the independence in 1971, Bangladesh had started its journey under the leadership of father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (1920-1975) on a secular basis of nationhood. However, religion soon became an important component in statehood. The Constitution of Bangladesh which was adopted by the Bangladesh Parliament on 4 November 1972, inserted ‘nationalism’, ‘socialism’, ‘democracy’ and ‘secularism’ in its preamble paragraph 2 as fundamental principles of the state (GoB 1972).

But, Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman’s regime can’t be left out of the process of Islamisation of the country. Kabir (2001) argues ‘Mujib sought to maintain a kind of balance between the secular and religious forces without sacrificing his basic commitments’. Reviving the Islamic Academy (it was banned in 1972 and upgrade to a foundation in March 1975) and frequent attendance in Islamic gatherings, pursuing membership of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) in February 1974, establishing diplomatic ties with Pakistan, and securing the founder membership of the Islamic Development Bank in 1975 mark his rule (Riaz 2003).

¹ Largest religion based political party in Bangladesh

² Part of an international ‘pietistic’ movement with its base in the subcontinent i.e. Delhi. The literal meaning of Tabligh is ‘propagation’ (Hours 1995: 147). The Tabligh movement in Bangladesh is run by religious leaders, who, unlike the Jamaatis (i.e. members of Jamaat-e-Islami), shun direct involvement in politics. The growing influence of this movement can be witness by the annual gathering of its followers, biswa eztema (‘world eztema’ held at Tongi, near Dhaka), which is more moralistic than promoted by a desire for social justice.

On the night of 15 August 1975, the Mujib regime was brought to an unexpected end through his gruesome murder by a group of disgruntled officers of Bangladesh Army (Khan 2001). Nationalism in Bangladesh also took an explicit turn toward religion with the change of Mujib regime. The coup leaders wanted to use Islam to legitimise their position (Banu 1992; Riaz 2003).

Ziaur Rahman (1936-1981) was the first military ruler who came to power through a military coup d'état. Since then, he began the steady Islamisation of the polity (Karim 2004). The changes towards Islamisation were first apparent in the mass media. Increase in time allotted for Holy Quran recitals on radio and television and closing the programs with recitations from the Quran only. Moreover, quotations from the Quran and the Hadith were then frequently broadcast between programs (Maniruzzaman 1990). General education system also went through an Islamic orientation. Islamiyat (Islamic Studies taught at the primary and secondary school level) was introduced to class I to VIII as a compulsory paper for Muslim students only. For class IX to X it was selected as an elective subject. He also introduced Azan (call for Prayers) through radio and television. He also opened Ministry of Religious Affairs and set up Islamic University (Islam 2001).

Hossain Mohammad Ershad, Army Chief of Staff, came to power in a bloodless coup in March 1982. He also brought changes at some other levels, such as Friday was declared a full holiday. Political parties with Islamic affiliations proliferated during his rule. Ershad was using Islam to legitimate his rule (Islam 2001). During Ershad regime, changes also occurred in education sector of Bangladesh. He introduced Islamiyat as a compulsory subject from class I to VIII in schools. However, he kept the option for minority students to take similar religious courses of their own religion. He promoted Madrassa education and put it on equivalence with the corresponding level of general education (Mohsin 2006). Opposition against Ershad's rule regained momentum by the end of 1990. This agitation was marked with frequent general strikes, increased campus protests, public rallies, and a general disintegration of law and order leading him to resign on 6 December 1990.

During Khaleda Zia's rule (1991-1996 and 2001-2006) they allied with Islamic parties to form the government. Her period of rule was marked by the restoration citizenship of Golam Azam, compelled to order arrest of Taslima Nasrin, and balance in favour of Muslim majority during demolition of Babri Mosque in India (Islam 2001). During the general election of 1991, posters and slogans reflect the extent of use of Islamist idioms and political discourse. Among other, one of such slogan was "La ilaha illallah, Dhaner shishe Bismillah" (Riaz 2003: 312). Her second term (2001-2006) rule was marked by the continual denial of presence of Islamic militancy in the country in spite of having allegation from media and government in home and abroad. Thus since 2001, there was an excessive and frequent increase in militant operations.

Sheikh Hasina (1947-) regime (1996-2001) also marked by using religious symbols, such as it posted its electioneering campaign banners that read Allahu Akbar (God is the Greatest), using Qur'anic words in banner. Like other political party (BNP, Jamaat-e-Islam), election campaign slogans reflect the extent of Islamist idioms and political discourse.

Along with this proliferation of religious symbols and activism, return of collaborators, Golam Azam, and Jamaat-e-Islam is important hallmark in the rise of Islamic politics as they are very active and increasingly successful political party working towards the establishment of Islamic rule in Bangladesh (Kabir 2001).

However, it is important to understand the constitutional amendments and changes that legitimise religious politics in Bangladesh. Till date, there have been sixteen amendments made to the Bangladesh Constitution. Of these, the most important are the Fifth, Eighth, Thirteenth and Fifteenth. After the assassination of Sheikh Mujib and his family in 1975, Bangladesh entered into fifteen years of autocratic rule. During this time, President Zia used Parliament to pass the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution, which legitimised all the actions of the martial law authority between 1975 and 1979. By the proclamation of Order No. 1 of 1977, the ideal "Bismillah-ar-

Rahman-ar-Rahim” (in the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful) was inserted at the beginning of the constitution above the preamble. Through the same proclamation, Clause 1 of Article 8 was substituted by “the principles of absolute trust and faith in the Almighty Allah, nationalism, democracy and socialism meaning economic and social justice, together with the principles derived from them ... shall constitute the fundamental principles of state policy”. In similar fashion, the second military ruler Lt. General H. M. Ershad, used the Seventh Amendment to legitimise his regime and through the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution of Bangladesh on 7 June 1988. Through this amendment Islam became the state religion of Bangladesh (Clause A of Article 2) with the provision that other religions may be practiced in peace and harmony.

Most importantly, the 15th amendment of the constitution of Bangladesh has a substantial impact on the imminent course of democracy in Bangladesh. Bangladesh Parliament passed the 15th amendment of the constitution on June 30, 2011. Most importantly, this amendment shows a contradictory character regarding the issue of religion and secularism. Islam as the State religion was kept intact along with ‘Bismillah-Ar-Rahman-Ar-Rahim’ above the Preamble. ‘Absolute faith and trust in Allah’ was removed from the Constitution and Article 12 restore secularism and freedom of religion. The provision allowing religion-based politics was maintained. Therefore, it brings secularism and religion to live together which would further complicate the boundaries between religion, secularism and politics.

Politics of religion in the Bangladeshi politics and contested constitutional politics has implication for the participation of religious minority i.e. the Hindu politics and voting. The largest religious minority i.e. the Hindus constitute less than 10 per cent of the population. The Hindus have consistently remained under-represented in parliament. For example, in the fifth parliament the number of Hindu MPs was six, five in the seventh, three in the eighth and increased to 10 in the ninth parliament. Among all the political parties, AL has a better record of accomplishment in demonstrating diversity. For example, all but one of the Hindu MPs elected to

parliament since 1991 belongs mainly to the AL. It was evident in Bangladeshi electoral politics that Hindus tend to be nominated and elected from certain constituencies where the Hindus constitute a significant vote bank. Yet, it is important to note that most of the constituencies across Bangladesh where Hindus constitute a small fraction of the electorate which has an implication in the selection of the Hindu candidates in electoral politics.

Moreover, the recent issue of the trials of the war crime by the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) needs attention in this regard. ICT was set up in 2010 by the present government to try those who were involved in the war crime in 1971 during the independence struggle of Bangladesh. Subsequently, some of the top leaders of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami and BNP have been arrested for involvement in war crime and their trials were over and verdicts were executed, though Jamaat and BNP claimed that both of the ICT's verdicts are politically motivated.

Besides the intricate links between religion and politics, another important issue i.e. 'familocracy' needs sufficient attention to analyse the nature and future of democracy in Bangladesh. This particular focus would help us to understand how lineage turns democracy into 'familocracy' in Bangladesh. In the short history of Bangladeshi democracy, 'familocracy' has long established precedents. For example, the prime minister of Bangladesh is the daughter of the founding father of Bangladesh, while the former Prime Minister is the widow of the ex-president and military ruler. In both of the cases, their sons hold immense power and govern the politics of these two major political parties.

From the above discussion it has become explicit that the promotion of state-sponsored Islam is designed for electoral victory and to minimise any unexpected upheavals from the religious rights through convincing the masses that the political leadership (whether AL or BNP or any other major political parties) is in tune with the cultural and spiritual mood of the nation. Both Bangladesh Awami League (AL) and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) are fulfilling their role as guardian and

protector of the nation to promote and defend the nation's value system. Overwhelming, this value system is encapsulated in Islam. In this respect, Islam has become a pillar of legitimacy for the successive governments of Bangladesh and all the governments explicitly retain to their commitments not go or do anything against Islam. In such a context, the proposed study will analyse the problem of politicisation of Islam by the political leaders in general and two major political parties i.e. AL and BNP in particular during the period of 1991-2014.

1.3 : Literature Review

Religious politics in Bangladesh has become an important signifier in political public sphere in Bangladesh. The manifold uses of religion in general and Islam in particular by the major political parties (AL and BNP) need to be critically understood. Academic scholarship is required to engage in the analysis of the nexus between religion and politics in Bangladesh as religious politics pushed the Bangladesh state at a point of no return. In such a context, the section that follows, it will focus on some of the existing literature to understand the theoretical rigor as well as empirical evidence of the role of religion in politics in Bangladesh.

1.3.1 : Islam, State and Legitimacy

There are a good number of literatures on the relationship between Islam and politics in Bangladesh. Eminent writer on South Asia, Ali Riaz (2003:302) identified the issue of identity (language and religion based), '...incompatibility between secularism and the ethos of the newly formed nation...' and different domestic and external variables in analysing the causes and conditions responsible for the rise of Islamists in Bangladesh. He mentioned two key factors responsible for the rise of Islam as political ideology including the '...crisis of hegemony of the ruling block...' and the '...politics of expediency by the "secularist" parties'. Thus, the growth of Islam in Bangladeshi politics is the product of the crisis of legitimacy. In Bangladesh military rulers faced a crisis of legitimacy and used Islam to consolidate their position. Other experts (for example, Barkat 2007) include communalisation of Islam, failure in

punishing the 'war criminals' and legitimising communal politics by replacing 'secularism' with 'Islam as state religion' in the Constitution. Moreover, '...secularism in Bangladesh did not reflect Bangladesh's societal spirit and history', yet 'it arose as a utilitarian expediency in the political field' (Maniruzzaman 1990: 69). Several other factors were responsible to bring Islam into Bangladeshi national politics and legitimizing religious political parties' specially, for instance, Jamaat-e-Islam. One of such factors is a general amnesty proclaimed on 30 November 1973, which '...made it possible for the collaborators to return to Bangladesh's political life' (Karlekar 2005: 49).

Yet, what has been left out in the discussion of religion and politics is postcolonial state formation and the (trans)formation of religious sphere. Some authors, for example, van der Veer (2002), provided with a postcolonial critique of the very category of "religion" in the context of India. His emphasis on the state formation and its role on the manifold transformation of religion both in colonial and postcolonial public sphere, provide a crucial perspective to the study of religion in the context of South Asia. Using Habermas' conceptualisation of public sphere, he showed how transformation of public sphere in South Asia represents an increased importance of religious movements e.g. Tablighi Jama'at in Pakistan and Bangladesh, Visva Hindu Parishad in India. He identified the origin of these movements in the colonial period. The most important, as these movements are trying to unify and homogenizing the community nationally and transnationally. This effort and political use of religious images in the communication medium (e.g. internet) and 'digital religion' has become the powerful medium in transforming the public sphere in South Asian religion. Digital religion along with social movements socializes new generations at local as well as international level. Violent religious conflict as 'one of the defining elements in the politics of belonging and identity' in modern South Asia, is required to understand in the global context. There, a combination of colonial and pre-colonial history (archive), conceptual perspicacity and spatial mobility will lead to better understanding the dynamics of religion in the postcolonial South Asian states.

Moreover, Asad (2003), from a postcolonial view, sees secularism closely connected with the rise of modern nation-state. He supports the critics of modernity, and analysed the reasons behind the idea of “modernity” to become hegemonic. It is crucial to look at the politics of national progress and specially the politics of secularism as advocated by modernity and “the West”. Politics of binary was another important concern in his analysis because some tend not to be interested to divide into “modern” and “non-modern”, or “West” and “non-West”. Thus, a basic argument lies at the core of the debate to see whether there is significant binary in the world or dividing into overlapping culture and hybrid selves. At the same time, it is pertinent to look at the literature on the crisis of secularism and de-secularisation in the context of Bangladesh since politics in the name of secularism has been the crucial in religious politics.

1.3.2: Secularism, De-secularisation, Islam and Religion and Politics

Although the theorists of "secularisation" for the last two centuries have been saying that religion must inevitably decline in the modern world, much of the world today is as religious as ever. Recently Berger, an eminent scholar of sociology of religion, argues, “the assumption that we live in a secularised world is false. The world today, with some exceptions . . . is as furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places more so than ever. This means that a whole body of literature by historians and social scientists loosely labelled ‘secularisation theory’ is essentially mistaken” (Berger 1999:2). Berger’s (1999:2) argues that the assumption of living in a secular world is false and modernisation does not necessarily lead to a decline of religion in society and in individuals. He (1999:3) identifies three possible causes: first, modernisation does produce secularisation (in some places) and but also produces counter-secularisation movements; second, secularisation on societal level and individual level are different and they are not necessarily linked with each other, and third, religious institution can play social and political roles in spite of having a lot of people not believing/ practicing that religion.

In response to modernisation and secularisation people can make two choices (Berger 1999:3). First one is rejection which means people can reject any number modern ideas and values. Rejection requires two strategies: religious revolution (which is difficult endeavour in recent time that takes over the whole society and inflicts one's counter-modern religion compulsory to all) and religious subcultures (which is designed to keep out the influences of the outside society). Second strategy, for Berger (1999:4), is adaption which means if religion has to survive it has to adapt to the modern ideas and apparatus. But Berger found that adapting religion hardly survives while non-adapting religion commonly flourishes as it has not tried to adapt to the alleged requirements of a secularised world. Thus, in the internal scene non-adapting religious movements thrive in opposition to adapting religious movements. Thus, he falsifies the secularisation thesis with adaptation idea.

[Madan (1998) adopted Berger's (1973:111) conceptualisation of secularisation and gave an insightful discussion on secularisation debate in the context of India. For him, modernity defines secularisation (Madan: 1998:298). He (1998:297) defines modernity in terms of human freedom and broadening the horizon of choices. He criticizes the imposition of secularisation on India and argued that secularism cannot be simply "translated" to India's culture (Madan, 1998: 307-309). Therefore, in the existing context, the ongoing process of secularisation and the deliberate attempt to promote the ideology has failed in India (300).

Madan (1998:298) also argues that secularism as a generally shared philosophy of life is impossible in existing context of South Asia. Because a great majority of believers in South Asia think themselves as strong and active believers of some religious faith whether it is Hinduism or Islam or else. He also argues that secularism as a basis for state action in India is impracticable and as a blueprint for the anticipated future is impotent. For Madan (1998:298), secularism is the dream of a minority, not the majority of Indian people. In this context his argument is more or less similar to Berger (1999:9). Modernist minority usually wishes to shape the majority in its own image. But in Indian context this modernist minority fails due to lack of the power to

do so under a democratically organised polity. Madan (1998:306) also has the same position as Berger (1999) as he argues that secularity demolishes all moral values in the society. Madan (1998:298) thus considers secularism as a social myth. So Madan brings here the binary of tradition versus modernity and regards the attempt of the minority to “stigmatize the majority as primordially oriented” is “moral arrogance and worse...political folly” (Madan, 1998:299). He strongly argues that secularisation marginalizes religious faith and makes room for fundamentalists and thus secularists who deny the legitimacy of religion in individual and society and undermines non-secular believers, provoke reaction and subsequently contribute in fundamentalism (Madan, 1998:313). The problem of Madan’s understanding of religion and secularisation is that it has “no solutions to suggest” (Madan, 1998:314) about the fate of secularism in South Asia and particularly in India. Moreover, it is also important to shift our gaze to crisis of secularism in Bangladesh. This research hence will also look why the so called civil society who are also minority and represents the ‘globalised elite’ (as Berger termed it) failed with their secularism project.

The genesis of Islam reveals liberal and humanistic origin of Islam in East Bengal. But this liberal-humanistic Islam has turned in to ‘Political Islam’ mainly due to three major regressive transformations of "Communalisation of Islam" associated with the emergence of "religious doctrine-based Pakistan State" (in 1947), failure in punishing the 'war criminals' (in 1971 War of Independence) and legitimizing communal politics by replacing ‘secularism’ with ‘Islam as state religion’ in the Constitution (Barkat, 2007). These factors are considered responsible for the emergence of religion in politics in Bangladesh. Yet, in our view, these causes are incomplete in understanding the complexity of rise in religion in politics in the country. Because it is important to see why a country which ostensibly fought so hard to achieve a secular constitution did achieve so little in the way of substantive changes in the role of religion in society and politics in the next thirty-six years which is evident through the alliance of religious and secular electoral politics, rise of the Islamist and Jamaat in politics, increased presence of the veil and Islamic piety etc.

At the same time, it is important to know how would one explain the mass support for the assertive secularism of the Awami League in the late sixties followed by the subsequent fragmentation of this “secular coalition” in the Eighties? Why did support for an ostensibly secular party, admittedly a much more watered down secular party, re-emerge in the mid-nineties? Attempts should also be needing to see why and how development discourse dominated by donors and through NGOs claims that secular political parties and movements are necessarily “progressive” while parties using religious symbols are “reactionary” and at the same time why religious NGOs and institutions (Ulemas/Mullahs) see “secular” NGOs as the rival and hostile counterpart. This research is mainly concerned to examine the de-secularisation process and growth of religion in politics in light of the development discourse promoted by urban civil society and NGOs. For this research, de-secularisation, as we want to mean, is the process through which the failure of the secular politics, rejection of secular ethos, growth of religious fundamentalism and adoption of religious nationalism are occurred in a non-western state of Bangladesh.

Yet, secularism or Dhormo Niropekhota in Bengali was one of the four state principles of Bangladesh. Though, as some argues (e.g. Karim 2004:294), secularism in Bangladesh does not reflect majority of the people’s demand, rather it was a top down approach of the ‘secular’ political party and met the demand of the educated urban middleclass. However, secularism inscribed in Bangladesh does not correspond to the Anglo-American or French version of secularism. Rather, it was an indigenous construct. As Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the architect of independent Bangladesh, says,

“secularism does not mean the absence of religion. You are a Mussulman, you perform your religious rites. The Hindus, Christians, Buddhists all will freely perform their religious rites. There is no irreligiousness on the soil of Bangladesh but there is secularism. This sentence has a meaning and the meaning is that none would be allowed to exploit the people in the name of religion or to create such fascist organizations as the al-Badr, Razakaars [they were involved in war crime in 1971], etc. No communal politics will be allowed in the country. Have you understood my four pillars?” (O’Connell 2001: 188).

1.3.3 : Political Islam and Islamist Movement

Along with the crisis of secularism in Bangladesh, it is important to understand the rise of the Islamist and their nexus with the national politics and political party e.g. BNP. Roy (1994) wrote about Islamist movements (i.e. use of Islam as a political ideology) to see whether political Islam and the Islamist offers an alternative to the existing socio-political system of the Muslim societies. These Islamist movements posed challenged against the West and different regimes in the Middle East (1994: vii). He argues that “Islamism’ has failed and could not significantly ‘altered’ the political landscape of Middle East, except that of Iranian revolution in 1979 (1994: ix). Failure occurs historically and intellectually. Failure of political Islam does not mean to restrict these movements or gaining political power in a certain country. The failure implies to locate the failure in ‘establishing a new society’. Therefore, political Islam has turned to be a societal rather than a geostrategic phenomenon (1994: x).

Roy (1994: x) argues that ‘political Islam is no longer a geostrategic factor; it is most a societal phenomenon...It is inherent in population growth, the destitution of the middle classes, the unemployment of the educated, the growing ranks of the masses who live in the cities but poorly integrated there. The crisis is also a problem of models: secularism, Marxism, nationalism. Hence the popularity of illusion of the “return to Islam.” Islam is not a cause. The masses who follow the Islamists are not “traditional” or “traditionalist” either: they live with the values of the modern city—consumerism and upward mobility; they left behind the old forms of conviviality, respect for elders and for consensus, when they left their villages” (p. 3). Curiously, whereas the Marxist guerrillas were peasant, the Islamists were urban and thus sociologically more modern (p.6).

In the context of Bangladesh, Hashmi (2003: 104) explores the resurgence of Islam in Bangladesh in term of the failure of the ‘welfare state’. He identified a gap between people’s aspirations, attainment and the promise of ‘the liberal-democrat and secular-socialist and nationalist leaders’ to explain the complex dynamics of political Islam in

Bangladesh. Islamic movement in Bangladesh has dissimilarity with their counterpart around the world and thus 'primarily rural based, agrarian and reflect peasant culture and behavior.' He, thus, emphasize on the 'peasant factor' in understanding Islam and or broadly 'Islamic militancy' (fundamentalism) in Bangladesh. He identified not the peasants, but the 'lower middle class and the various lumpen elements in the society' (p.123) which termed as peripheral 'vernacular elite' who, due to their underdog position are forced to embrace Islamism as an alternative ideology in order to survive in the changing post-Cold war neo-liberal environment.

} On other dimension of political Islam and Islamist movement in Bangladesh Karim (2004) has focused on the democratizing process and its relationship with (militant) Islam, and NGOs. She has depicted that the state is promoting two contending ideologies in Bangladesh. One of these is women's full citizenship (ethos of democracy) and other is rearing Islamic politics and education which impede women's rights, accordingly, globalisation and democratisation ethos are found to be in a clash with the traditional religious authority in Bangladesh.

1.3.4 : Political use of Religion and Major Political Parties

The two main political parties i.e. Bangladesh Awami League (AL), a centre-left and so called secular political party and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), a centre-right party have extensively used religion and Islam in particular to achieve political victory over others. Ahmed (2010) shows that despite of efforts e.g. during non-party caretaker government (2007-08) to reform political parties, major political parties like BNP and AL still characterise by "over-concentration of power in the party chief, inter-party rivalry and suspicion, lack of mutual trust, dynastic domination of party leadership, and lack of democratic orientation of parties".

Both BNP and AL, as Riaz (2004) argues, have been using religion in their electoral victory. For example, during the 1991 general election, posters and slogans reflect the extent of use of Islamist idioms and political discourse. Among other, one of such slogan for BNP was "La ilaha illallah, Dhaner shishe Bismillah (There is no God but

Allah, vote for Paddy-sheaf saying God the merciful). AL also also used the same kind of slogan saying “La ilaha illallah, naukar malik tui Allah” (There is no God but Allah, the boat belongs to Allah). These two major party used same Islamic slogan as Jamaat-e-Islam who says, “Vote diley pallay, khushi hobe Allah” (Allah will be pleased with you if you vote for the scale) (Riaz, 2004).

Recent research argues that economic crisis and failure to deliver public goods such as education by both BNP and AL has resulted in to the rise of Islamist e.g. Hefazat-e-Islam in Bangladeshi politics. Therefore, Bangladesh provides an ideal context for the rise of the Islamist and to thrive since successive governments continue to evade their responsibility to provide sufficient basic services such as education, health (Lowe 2013: 673). As a result, the use of religion for political legitimacy is driven by a sceptical opportunism among the ruling elite including BNP and AL who could not provide with the real development for the country (Griffiths and Hasan, 2015) and rather exploit religious sentiments/ideals to govern as well as win political victory.

The literature surveyed here presents a clear picture of how religion and politics are interlocked. Although there are literatures on Islam and politics, there is a complete lack of empirically and theoretically sound work on religious politics of major political parties as well as in-depth analysis of the root causes of the rise and development of religion-oriented party and electoral politics in Bangladesh. Thus, it is left unexplored as to why and how the largest secular party AL and centrist BNP manipulate religion in general and Islam in particular in their political practice. Therefore, this research will help to fill up this gap of knowledge in this area of research.

1.4: Definition, Rationale and Scope of the Study

For the purpose of the research it is pertinent to define ‘religion oriented/religious politics’. In this research ‘religion-oriented politics’ is defined as the use of religion in political rhetoric and practices by the political parties and entities to gain support, legitimacy and electoral victory and consequently run the country on the same order

though their ultimate goal is not to establish a theocratic state. Religion is an integral part of politics whether it is developed or underdeveloped, democratic or undemocratic country of the world. Moreover, it is also a key factor in electoral politics. Therefore, the relationship is rather complicated and difficult to separate politics from religion.

Bangladesh emerged as a secular state in 1971 which professed its ideology as nationalism, socialism, democracy and secularism. But after the independence, the champion party of the liberation movement, Bangladesh Awami League gave importance to the religion, particularly on Islam. Yet, the emergence of religion in politics in Bangladesh especially after the assassination of the father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975 has gained prominence and become crucial in the changing nature of Bangladesh state. The subsequent military regimes of Major General Ziaur Rahman and Lieutenant General Hussain Muhammad Ershad turned Bangladeshi polity into a religio-centric polity. Language based Bengali nationalism turned into geographic and religion based Bangladeshi nationalism. Ziaur Rahman organised the vexed political leaders, the religious forces and founded a political party- Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). From the inception of this political party, Islam as a religion became the main political tool in legitimisation and electoral politics of the party. Proposed study will trace the Islamisation policy and practice of military rule during the period of 1975 to 1990.

From 1991 Bangladesh started a journey of parliamentary democracy and the parliament elections of 1991, 1996, 2001 and 2008 are more or less free and fair. But in the meantime, the major political party Bangladesh Awami League (the leader of the fourteen parties' alliance otherwise called Mahajot of the centre left and secular forces) and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (leader of the twenty parties alliance called Oikkojote of centre right) have been using religion in every national and local government elections as a political tool. Moreover, in many contexts, the secular forces formed alliance with the religious forces in the name of strategic partnership to manipulate Muslim majority for the electoral victory. Therefore, the proposed study

will make a significant contribution in understanding the nature and consequences of this type of strategic partnership between the secular and religious parties. This research is also crucial in filling up the gap in existing academic literature as it will systematically make a comparative analysis of both secular (center left)/Bengali nationalist and religious/ Bangladeshi nationalist political party on the political use of religion.

Although the proposed study will explore the factors and causes of the rise of religious ideals and practices in independent Bangladesh, its scope is rather broad. This study would include an in-depth exploration of the role of the two main political parties- AL and BNP in sustaining the religion in politics in Bangladesh during 1991-2014 and its effects on political system. Yet, it has the potential implication for social transformation of Bangladeshi society. The scope of the study is limited to two main political parties/ alliances which would help this research to focus on the bi-polar political or religious versus so called secular politics and its implication for future of religion in politics and development prospect of Bangladesh. As this study includes bi-polar political system (religious vs. secular) would help to unveil the crisis in democracy and rise of political/militant Islamist in Bangladesh.

1.5: Objectives

The main objective of the study is to explore the nature and extent of the use of religion in Bangladeshi politics in general and by the secular centre-left e.g. Bangladesh Awami League (AL) and centre-right Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) in particular. With these general objectives, this study also aims to:

- explore the origin and development of religious ideals and practices in Bangladeshi politics;
- explore the crisis in democracy, criminalisation of politics, vested interest, and political polarisation of the polity and use of religion in Bangladesh;

- analyze the issue of de-secularisation and identity politics its link to the use of religion in BNP politics;
- understand the causes of shifting the policy of ‘secularism’ of Awami League and befriending with religious political forces/parties; and
- explain the nature of minority politics and its implication in democratisation in Bangladesh.

1.6: Research Question

This aims to understand the interplay between religion and politics in Bangladesh to address the role and use of religion in politics of two major political parties e.g. AL and BNP. In line with this main object of the research, following research questions will be answered:

- What is the nature and extent of use of religion in politics in Bangladesh and what are the factors behind the adoption and use of religious political ideals by the major political parties e.g. AL and BNP?
- Why do the mainstream political parties of Bangladesh consider Islam and Islamic parties as an important factor in the political domain, despite the Islamic parties’ lack of success in electoral politics?
- Why and how major political parties (miss)use religious minority in electoral politics and what is the implication of such (miss)use in democratisation in Bangladesh.

1.7: Hypotheses

This research would attempt to address the following hypothesis

1. The rise of religious politics is the result of the crisis of legitimacy and electoral politics of the major political parties during 1991-2014.
2. Shifting from the policy of 'secularism' by Awami League and befriending with religious political forces/parties is the result of lack of intra-party democracy and eminence of 'familocracy' in party politics and electoral politics.
3. Religious politics of BNP is the result of anti-secular politics in Bangladesh and alliance with Islamists leading to sustain religious politics for majority votes, 'famiocracy' and lack of democracy in party politics.

1.8: Methodology

Data Collection and Analysis: In the present extensive survey of research documents, reports, books and journal, election manifestoes, party and election propaganda materials will be undertaken to determine the criteria to explore the nexus between religion and politics in Bangladesh. The study will use deductive method for analysis. The primary sources of data would be collected through using semi-structured schedule with purposively selected political leaders, educated elite, civil society members, and human rights activists. For the analysis and presentation of data various statistical tools will be used for quantitative data.

1.8.1: Structure of the Thesis

The first chapter introduces the research subject and the theoretical assumption and conceptual framework as well as research questions, hypothesis and methodology of the study. This chapter also provides with the background of Bangladesh, its politics, party system and contentious religious politics.

The second chapter of the thesis focuses on the State of Bangladesh and reflect on the inclusive and exclusive identity in post-colonial transformation through reviewing the relevant literature. In doing so, this chapter outline the formation of Bangladeshi state

and its nature in colonial and post-colonial context. It also links the ongoing debate on the religious politics of Bangladesh with the identity debates, syncretic Islam, colonial legacy and post-colonial transformation of Bangladeshi state.

Third chapter focuses on the religious politics of the so-called secular centre-left AL. It addresses the factors and consequences of religious politics of AL during 1971-1975 and 1991 to 2014. Particular attention was given towards political strategies in AL's election manifesto, election campaigns where AL has used religious rhetoric to manipulate the majority Muslim and has formed alliances with religious forces/parties for electoral victory.

Chapter four deals with the political strategies of BNP towards exploitation of religion in politics in Bangladesh under the leadership of Khaleda Zia (1945-) during the period of 1991-2014. It focuses on the factors that have led BNP to forge alliances with Islamists and unearthed the use of religious rhetoric in its political strategies and manifestations. It also shows that BNP's religious politics not only aims towards electoral victory but also turns Bangladesh into an Islamic state. It also shows that BNP's religion-oriented policies and practices are largely the legacy of its founder and military ruler General Zia.

Following an analysis of Awami League and BNP's role in religious politics in Bangladesh, the next chapter (chapter 5) focuses on the perception and the role of professionals, activists, religious and political elites in dealing with religion in politics in Bangladesh. This chapter shows how the political leadership of BNP and AL as well as professionals in Bangladesh are divided along the religious line with the so-called secular and Bangladeshi nationalism on the one end and the religious and Bangladeshi nationalist on the other. It discusses the serious implications of this polarisation of Bangladeshi polity.

The final chapter of the thesis summarises the results of the research and concludes with some recommendations for improving and providing with a better political space for strengthening democratic traditions in Bangladesh.

CHAPTER 2

*THE STATE OF BANGLADESH: INCLUSIVE AND
EXCLUSIVE IDENTITY IN POST-COLONIAL
TRANSFORMATION*

CHAPTER 2

The State of Bangladesh: Inclusive and Exclusive Identity in Post-Colonial Transformation

2.1 Introduction

Bangladesh has emerged as a modern nation state based on ethno-linguistic Benglai (also spelled as Bangalee) nationalism and it was un-problematic until a religion based Bangladeshi nationalism was propagated during the post-independent Bangladesh particularly after 1975. Since then an ideological and political struggle over identity in Bangladesh continues until now. While a segment of political leadership is the champion of Bangalee nationalism that is based on the idea that we are Bengalis first, and then Muslims. On the contrary, opposing segment of the political leadership campaign for the Muslims first, and Bengalis second identity in Bangladesh. It is therefore, pertinent to see how the state formation and national identity bears a colonial legacy and how it has been transformed in the post-colonial setting.

Therefore, this chapter will focus on the on the nature of Bangladeshi state, political use of religion and Islam in identity and nation building and crisis of legitimacy. In doing so, this chapter explores the postcolonial nature of Bangladesh state, colonialism and postcolonial Bangladesh influence in identity debates as well as syncretic Islam and political use of Islam during different regimes including the democratic governance. The chapter begins with a discussion on the identity formation and nation building during the colonial period and post-colonial settings followed by a discussion on the syncretic Islam, identity debate followed by use of Islam in during different regimes including military and democratic regimes in Bangladesh.

2.2 Nature of Bangladesh State and Society

Bangladesh, a comparatively new nation, is still a “state in the making” (Lewis 2011: 12). After a violent struggle with Pakistan, it became an independent state on 16

December 1971. As a result of the partition of British India in 1947, a homeland for Indian Muslims had been created with two wings, known as West Pakistan and East Pakistan. These two territories were separated by more than twelve hundred miles of Indian territory. Although the majority of Bangladesh (the then East Pakistan) population were Muslim, the physical separation coupled with the cultural distinctiveness or ethno-linguistic differences of Bengalis of East Pakistan. Although Bangladesh has been through a tumultuous episode in twentieth-century postcolonial history over the last four decades, Bangladesh has continued to evolve and change. The section that follows discuss the colonial legacy and the post-colonial transformation in the process of Bangladesh state making.

2.2.1 Colonial Legacy and Post-Colonial Transformation

Colonial rule in the Indian sub-continent started with British crown taking control of India from the East India Company in 1858 and it lasts until August 1947. Colonial rule in the Indian sub-continent has huge impact on the economy, society and the formation of the nationhood in the region of Bengal. Gupta (2007) has nicely depicted the formation of Bengalee nationalism in the colonial period through exploring the interplay between three main conceptual areas of identity construction¹—samaj, jati and desh. She explained how “samaj was deployed to mediate the fragmentations of jati and desh in the literati's agenda of recreating a collective self and approximating nationhood” in the late colonial Bengal. For her the notion of samajik (collective) unity “was not a sudden or emergent phenomenon in late colonial Bengal. But it was only during this period that there was a meaningful interplay between such ideas and the agenda of recreating a collective self (jati) linked to the related objective of apprehending the idea of India through debates about the nature of desh”. While samaj was seen to knot the communal fragmentation in the late colonial era, social insecurity as Bhardwaj (2010) noted, was due to the competition for scarce resources. This was a

¹ Samaj means social collectivity. Jati implies a multidimensional term related to birth, caste, race, tribe and nation. Desh usually mean a state or country. It could also mean sub-region/region/province/country.

sign of colonial underdevelopment and this has reinforced political competition between the Hindus and Muslims. This struggle was mainly to establish control over limited resources. It was also evident that during the colonial divide and rule policy and the consequent '1905 Partition of Bengal' in 1905 by the British in Bengal. Although Bengal divide into an overwhelmingly Hindu West (including present-day Bihar and Odisha) and a predominantly Muslim East (including Assam) was for seemingly for administrative purposes, it created the conflict between Bengal Hindu and Muslim much stronger. As result of the Bengal divide a fear of Hindu domination, as Bhardwaj (2010) argues, created among the Muslim. This fear of domination led the Muslim to build communal Islamic organisations to save them from the Hindu domination through unifying Bengali Muslims. Thus, two most significant during late colonial rule—1905 Bengal division and establishment of All India Muslim League in 1906—has huge impact on the political formation and state building in post-colonial Bengal.

In order to understand the nature of postcolonial Bangladesh state Hamza Alavi's (1973) analysis of the "relative autonomy of the state" in postcolonial societies of Bangladesh and Pakistan would provide us with very solid and comprehensive theoretical underpinnings. Although he refers specifically to postcolonial Pakistan, it has wider relevance for a many other post-colonial society. Post-colonial Pakistan, as Alavi (1973) points to, is a 'military-bureaucratic oligarchy'. In such oligarchic system, those who are at the top of the apparatus are not:

Simply the instrument of a single class; instead, this bureaucratic-military oligarchy mediates the interests of the three propertied classes. These propertied classes include the metropolitan bourgeoisies, the indigenous bourgeoisies, and the landed classes. While at the same time acting on behalf of all of them in order to preserve the social order in which their interests are embedded, namely, the institution of private property and the capitalist mode as the dominant mode of production (Alavi 1973:148).

In Alavi's analysis, the relationship between the politicians and political parties with the bureaucratic-military oligarchy found to be marked by both tension and accommodation. Hart (1988) argues that in Alavi's analysis it is evident that the political leadership are considered to be valuable for the bureaucratic-military oligarchy

as long as participates in the mediatory role. Yet when the political leadership plays otherwise i.e. challenge the mediatory role and the relative autonomy associated with it produces major conflicts. What is very interesting to observe that the bureaucratic-military oligarchy in case Pakistan has prevailed in such conflicts (Hart 1988).

2.2.2: Syncretic Islam in Bangladesh

Eaton (1996) nicely depicted the rise of Islam in the Bengal Delta. In the spread of Islam in this delta, Eaton identified four main threads. These are Immigration Theory, Religion of the Sword, Religion of Patronage and the Religion of Social Liberation, though these might not explain the emergence adequately. According to Immigration theory, Bengal Muslims are descendants of those who migrated to Bengal Delta mainly from the Persia or Iranian plateau or those Arabs who sailed across the Arabian Sea. Religion of the Sword theory emphasises on the forceful conversion of the adherents of the other religion mainly the Hindus. Mainly the Muslim rulers and their allies and soldiers forcefully converted the Hindus. On the contrary to the Religion of the Sword, Religion of Patronage theory explains the emergence and spread of Islam in this delta through patronage. Thus, the non-Muslims converted to Islam to receive non-religious favours from the ruling class. These favours include relief from taxes, promotion in the bureaucracy etc. Finally, The Religion of Social Liberation explains that lower caste Hindus were exploited by the rigid caste system in the Indian sub-continent. Therefore, liberation and equality principles of Islam attracted many lower caste Hindus to follow Islam (Islam and Islam 2018).

What is most important in this regard is that Islam in Bengal has a substantial influence from the Sufi culture. Hossain (2012) suggests that despite the arrival of Islam in the Bengal delta during the 12th century, expanded in the 17th and 18th century. This is the ruling period of the Mughal when some notable saints arrived in the Bengal Delta. These saints mainly came from North India who were the first Pirs (Sufis). They came to the delta, cleared up the forest, and sowed the first rice crop. In doing so, these saints received the Mughal state's support. With the Mughal support they received the

ownership of lands for revenue. The Pirs who used to provide the followers with Islamic teaching also hold power over nature and it makes many rural inhabitants to be attracted to Islam. After the death of these Pirs, they were remembered by the locals. To make these saints be remembered, the locals-built building and shrines in their memory. These were built in most cases along with the mosques. For example, shrines of Shahajalal and Sha Paran in Sylhet district of Bangladesh. As result, over the period, the shrines and mosques became the social and cultural hub in that particular areas. Moreover, as a result of building up shrines, some new communities grow around them. Islam and Islam (2018) argues that this Pir cult had substantial impact on the formation of popular Islam in Bengal. This pir cult or sufi Islam or popular Islam was non-political, mystical and ritualistic in nature and hence represents the syncretic Islam in Bangladesh. From a philosophical point, this form of Islam incorporated local culture through keeping the core concepts of religion of Islam (the five pillars of Islam) intact and hence producing a syncretic form Islam in the Bengal delta (Islam and Islam 2018).

This syncretic and inclusive Islam gave the Muslims in Bengal a sense of solidarity with other communities. Therefore, Islam or the Muslim community lived in peace and harmony in this dealt for centuries. Yet, the problem or religious conflict started in the colonial period. During this period religions in the Indian subcontinent including Islam were politicised. This politicisation of religion eventually led to the separation of Pakistan and India on the basis of religious divide. Since then, politicisation of Islam continued in the Bengal delta and did not stop even after the independence of Bangladesh 1971. This due to the fact that Sheikh Mujib's assassinated and the successive governments in the country abused religion for political expediency and legitimacy. Even today, religion is exploited manifestly by Jamaat-e-Islami and their allies in Bangladesh as well as by other major political parties. This syncretic version of Islam is still practiced by most Bangladeshi Muslims as it is practiced in Indonesia, Malaysia. However, the recent rise of Wahhabi practices in Bangladesh including intolerance and violence are not rooted in the syncretic Islam and Bangalee culture (Islam and Islam 2018).

2.2.3: Syncretic vs. Authentic Islam: A Conflicting schema?

At present Bangladesh, there is a diminishing tendency in syncretic Islam. Did it happen overnight? Islamic syncretism that flourished in rural Bengal over many centuries, came under a challenge, as Trottier (2000) argues, when a new development appeared on the scene of Bengali Islam a couple of centuries ago. It started during the British rule, when a sense of religious identity started to arise among the elite Muslim and the Hindus. With the emergence of the Ahsraf (Muslim upper classes of Bengal) in 19th century a movement towards Islamic purity. This particular class of Muslim who considered themselves connected to their immigrant roots mostly with the Arab/Persian (Turkish, Persian, Afghan) held an Arab self-image of ethnic and Islamic purity. Due to this concern of the purity, intentionally disconnected themselves from the ethnic and religious realities of the local populations. Therefore, they considered the people over which they ruled were extremely un-Islamic by their Quranic criteria. Hence, they made substantial efforts to remove the impure vernacular from Bengali Islam. Thus, their efforts to turn people towards authentic Islam or pure Islam were emerged with the efforts to develop the socioeconomic condition of the lower class in Bengal (Roy 1983; Sarkar 1972; Trottier 2000).

In contemporary Bangladesh, the above mention reformist endeavours are still active. Fatwas specifically against the Baul and Fakir, Pirs, Mazar become much evident when Jamaat-e-Islam become the partners of the ruling BNP. Jamaat has been trying to introduce a 'pure' or 'authentic' Islamic in Bangladesh through the spread of 'Salafism'. Many of the Islamic practices and syncretic Bangladeshi culture (or often ridiculed as 'Hindu' by most of the Islamic groups) has been declared as un-Islamic in majority Muslim state. Moreover, some of the so called Islamic practices such as 'Lailatul Barat' now becoming inappropriate in the wake of rise of 'authentic Islam'. Yet, it is important to see whether the conflicting schema of the pure vs. syncretic Islam has any implication on the identity debate in general and debate over secularism in particular in Bangladesh.

2.3: Identity Debate from 1947 to 1971

The separation of Pakistan in 1947 from India is based on two-nation theory i.e. Muslims and Hindus formed two different nations based on religious identity. Pakistan was divided into East (currently Bangladesh) and West Pakistan, though these two were geographically separated. However, the independence of Bangladesh from Pakistan in 1971 challenged the very notion of separation of Indian. As per this notion, majority religion formed two distinct countries i.e. Hindu dominated India and Muslim dominated Pakistan. Yet the new state of Pakistan faced a set of crises including cultural, linguistic, socio-political and economic contradictions. These contradictions reinforced East Pakistan's struggle for separation from the West (Bhardwaj 2010). It is still important to see the impact on two nation theory and religious identity throughout 1947-1971 to reflect upon the root or religious identity politics in independent Bangladesh.

2.3.1: Two Nation Theory and Bengali Muslim Identities

Although there appeared to have difference between the famous Pakistani poet and Philosopher Allama Muhammed Iqbal (1877-1938) and politician Mohammed Ali Jinnah (1876-1948) regarding the formation of Muslim homeland, the Lahore Resolution of 1940 seemed to find a balance between the ideas of Iqbal, and those expressed by Jinnah and other leaders of Muslim minority provinces in undivided India. While the Lahore Resolution seemed to talk about 'Muslim India' as a single whole, the operative part of the resolution makes a different sense. It makes clear "the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in the north-western and eastern zone of India, should be grouped to be constitute 'independent states' in which the continent units shall be autonomous and sovereign" (Sayeed 1968, 106 cited in Bhardwaj 2010)

However, in 1946, during the Muslim League Legislatures Convention in Delhi, Muslim League officially endorsed the concept of single state of Pakistan comprising both the North-Western and Eastern Muslim majority zones. Even at that time, there

were voices of dissent raised, principally by Abul Hashim (1905-1974), the then Secretary of the Bengal branch of the Muslim League (Ayoob 1973). Differences of opinion over the two-nation theory can also be traced back to two separate strands of Islamic thinking which took shape in the nineteenth century: one based around Aligarh, and another Deoband (Episoto 1986).

The Aligarhist strand was revisionist and liberal, committed to the reworking of the ideas of Islam and for them Islam did not stand in contradiction to the organisational principles of the nation-state or of parliamentary democracy (Piscatori 1986). On the contrary, the Deoband saw the Muslim community as a distinct whole, immune from other divisions and competing loyalties and from the artificial identities and symbols of the nation-state. Initially, many Deobandian scholars rejected the calls for a Pakistani state on the grounds that the ideas of national exclusiveness stood in contradiction to a pan-Islamic identity.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, a liberal Muslim who served in the government of independent India, noted in his biography that “it is one of the greatest frauds on the people to suggest that religious affinity can unite areas which are geographically, linguistically and culturally different” (Gandhi 1987). Having reluctantly accepted Partition of India, the Deobandian tradition came to dominate the Islamic political parties in the form of Jamaat-e-Islami and Jamait-ul-Ulema-i-Islam who with differing emphases and slightly differing policies, took up the task of creating a real ‘Islamic society’ based upon the codification of the Shari’a (Hewitt 1992).

The East Bengal (present Bangladesh) middle class soon realised that one could not live by religion alone and many other factors are responsible in uniting the public. As East Pakistani was economically exploited by the West Pakistani on the one hand and lack of space for political voice in Pakistani political sphere on the other led politically conscious Bengali felt an acute degree of political exclusion, exploitation and ill-treatment by the political elites. The East and West wings of Pakistan was geographically segregated by few thousands mile. Moreover, the linguistic and cultural

differences surpass the religious (Islamic) homogeneity between the East and the West wings. As a result, East Pakistanis (Banglaees) increasingly demanded a degree of autonomous existence for people of East Pakistan though were not acceptable to the central government of Pakistan. In the context of socio-cultural differences and economic discrimination towards East Pakistan, central leadership of Pakistan introduced measures that would consolidate its hold over Bengali Muslims. In these endeavours, West Pakistan tried to solidify the Muslim religious identity of Pakistan as they thought Muslim identity would supersede other primordial identities and hold the Muslims of East and West Pakistan together (Bhardwaj 2010).

However, this endeavour did not work and moreover, in 1948 Mohammed Ali Jinnah declared Urdu to be the only state language of Pakistan. This attempt denied that fact that the Bangalees are a distinct group of Muslims with different sociocultural background and traditions. What is in imperative here that is the West Pakistani political elites endeavour not build a bridge to work with Bengali Muslim political elites on the difficult cultural and economic issues. As a result, it became apparent that central leadership of Pakistan (predominantly Muslim League leaders) began redefining Pakistan's political culture through an authoritarian approach and an emphasis on Persianised and Arabised religion and culture (deVotta 2001).

Repression of the Language Movement by the Pakistani ruling elite on 21st February 1952, revived Bengali cultural nationalistic feelings leading to rise against the Pakistani ruling elite. Therefore, secular and democratic forces under the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman started revolting. Pakistan's minority communities, which made up 10 per cent of the total population, had also become a powerful critical force, since they also wanted to play a role in national politics (Siddiqi 2013).

The Awami League (AL) has already been gaining popularity among the public of East Pakistan. In 1955, secular forces within the AL revoked an earlier decision of the party so that it was now opened to all citizens of Pakistan irrespective of their creed, caste and religion. The name of the party was then changed from Awami Muslim League to

the Awami League. With grassroots support from both the main communities, the AL emerged as a mass political party. It was to become the first political party to make a major breakthrough in the communal politics of the State (Majumder 2010).

The most prominent issue for the people of East Pakistan was economic deprivation by the West Pakistani ruling elites. Discriminatory policies of West Pakistani elite towards the Eastern wing in many areas including resource allocations and hence, the economy of West Pakistan grew at a faster rate than the East during the 1949-50 and 1969-70 (Sobhan 2015). East Pakistan contributed heavily to foreign exchange earnings to Pakistan economy through the export of its raw jute and jute goods. Although the share of these export earnings constituted over 90 per cent of the total export earnings of Pakistan, the proportionated distribution and utilisation of such earnings were heavily skewed towards the West leading economic problems in the East (Jahan 1994).

To reduce the disparity between the two wings to stop the internal colonialism of West Pakistan Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared the Six Point Programme at Lahore. The programmes were:

- “1. The Constitution should provide for a Federation of Pakistan in its true sense on the Lahore Resolution, and the parliamentary form of government with supremacy of a Legislature directly elected on the basis of universal adult franchise;
2. The federal government should deal with only two subjects: Defence and Foreign Affairs, and all other residuary subjects shall be vested in the federating states;
3. Two separate, but freely convertible currencies for two wings should be introduced; or if this is not feasible, there should be one currency for the whole country, but effective constitutional provisions should be introduced to stop the flight of capital from East to West Pakistan. Furthermore, a separate Banking Reserve should be established, and separate fiscal and monetary policy be adopted for East Pakistan;
4. The power of taxation and revenue collection shall be vested in the federating units and the federal centre will have no such power on the

issue. The federation will be entitled to a share in the state taxes to meet its expenditures;

5. There should be two separate accounts for the foreign exchange earnings of the two wings; the foreign exchange requirements of the federal government should be met by the two wings equally or in a ratio to be fixed; indigenous products should move free of duty between the two wings, and the Constitution should empower the units to establish trade links with foreign countries;
6. East Pakistan should have a separate militia or paramilitary force.” (Islam 2003)

It was clearly showed that Awami League in the Six Point Programme had argued for the removal of this economic disparity. As the power was centralised with the West Pakistan political elite, they plunder resources from East Bengal, monopolised external aid, and channelled state resources to West Pakistan. As a result, in spite of an apparent efforts to make social equality, they suppressed democracy and denied autonomy East Bengal in reality.

After the Six Point Programme The student of East Pakistan declared 11 Point programme including the Six Point Programme. But the Pakistani ruling class emphasis on religious identity which was used as a disguise to conceal the Punjab-centric identity of the new Pakistani state. The struggles for democracy, regional autonomy, social justice, secularism and nationalism therefore coalesced within the broader struggle for self-rule for East Pakistan (Bhardwaj 2010). It was also evident in the Liberation War of Bangladesh that the religious nationalists were in favoured of Pakistani ruling class and they collaborated with the Pakistani occupational forces. On the other hand, the language and culture-based nationalists were in favour of Bangladesh and they fought for to establish a secular and exploitation free state which was establish in 1971.

2.4: Bangladesh as a Post-Colonial State

The ruling alliance of Bangladesh faced numerous problems in post-colonial period. Some of these include hostilities and fragmentation within the ruling party. Other

source of crisis includes economic policies that failed to provide with the necessary social and economic good to the public. However, the most significant crisis during the post-colonial Bangladesh was the break up in ideological hegemony among the ruling alliances that unified them during the anti-colonial struggle.

Thus, the hegemony of the intermediate classes during the colonial period was a fractured compromise among the social classes opposed to colonial exploitation. The discourse of Bengali nationalism subsumed all other discourses, including that of class exploitation, and a “unity” among the social classes was achieved through consensus. The unity, identity, and consensus were based on the objective conditions of colonial rule and were mapped out against the Pakistani colonial rulers (Riaz 2003). But the passing of colonial rule, especially the war of liberation, changed the objective conditions altogether. The “enemy,” against whom nationalism pitted, disappeared. The post-colonial society required fashioning a new social order. The emergent arrangements threatened the very basis of the social hierarchy created during the colonial rule. This created a tension. Such tension definitely undermined the so-called national cohesion. Unity was replaced with class conflict. Thus, the relevance of nationalism as the hegemonic ideology was lost and the hegemony of the intermediate classes was ruptured. The rising popularity of an alternative ideology bears out this fact (Riaz 2003).

Moreover, in the post-colonial state in Bangladesh none of the middle classes that were dominant delivered much in the way of positive economic or social change for the bulk of the population (Alam 1995). As the state was heavily dependent upon the foreign aid, and the older elite and new middle class could not utilize these aids properly, domestic economy i.e. capital formation, land reform, infrastructure development did not happen, and these did not led to market development in post-colonial period. Therefore, Bangladesh state evidently failed to build an indigenous industrial bourgeoisie until now and hence, the national and local economy has been controlled by the petti-bourgeois “rentier” class. Yet, more recently, a range of first-generation businesses have gained a national profile in the form of “business group” and CIP

(Commercially Important person) (Lewis 2011).

Soon after the independence, the government led by the Awami League made their commitment towards exploitation-free, and just society very explicit through declaring socialism in the constitution (in the sense of economic and social justice) as one of the four fundamental state principles. However, their idea of socialism was soon challenged by the radical elements of the party as well as by small leftist parties. As the radical faction of Awami League, mostly comprised of students and youth, claimed that the liberation struggle was an unfinished revolution and hence called for the establishment of “scientific socialism” under the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. But after being disenchanted with Sheikh Mujib and the party, the radical faction left the AL in April 1972. The student leaders who had played significant roles in the liberation struggle initiated the split and their move was followed by the peasants’ wing (May 1972) and the workers’ wing (June 1972). Finally, the radical faction launched their own party, the Jatiyo Samajtantrik Dal (JSD, National Socialist Party) in October 1972 under the leadership of two prominent freedom fighters (Riaz 2003).

What is significant here is that these leaders not only broke away from the ruling party but also took a position that was ideologically opposed to the ruling class and found revolution of the proletariat be the only way to transform Bangladesh into a socialist polity. During the same period, another underground radical left political group—the Sorbohara Party—under the leadership of Siraj Sikdar, gained considerable support in rural areas who considered the AL regime “a puppet of Soviet social imperialist and Indian expansionists” (Riaz 2004: 29-30). Unfortunately, the ruling classes seek, and of course, prefer active and voluntary consent of the subordinate masses. But when the masses “do not ‘consent’ actively or passively,” or the consent is not sufficient to reproduce capitalist relations, the apparatus of state coercive power “legally enforces discipline on those ... who do not consent” (Riaz 2004: 30).

As a result, ruling classes attempt to impose a general direction on social life through their ideology and ensure social conformity to it. In response to crises, the ruling classes

of Bangladesh made that attempt through devising a new ideology. In order to counter the growing popularity of the radical left and their ideology of “scientific socialism,” the ruling party evolved a new ideology of its own, Mujibbad (Mujibism). It was named after Sheikh Mujib and the ideology was essentially a combination of populism and a personal cult advocating “consensus” among the subjects as opposed to “class conflict.” The promoters insisted on the supra-class nature of this ideology, and integration and accommodation of the various elements of the social formations within a dominant party structure as its primary goal. The new “ism,” its advocates claimed, sought to correct the deficiencies of capitalism and socialism. In their view, it was the nationalist reaction against “foreign isms” and deeply embedded in the social, political and cultural traits of the country. The principal components of the new ideology were nationalism, democracy, socialism, and secularism. Sheikh Mujib said on one occasion:

If “Mujibism” is to be considered an ideology, then it ought to be explained by philosophers. I can give my own understanding of what has come to be known as “Mujibism.” In the first place, I believe in democracy—in the triumph of the will of the people, in freedom of thought, of speech and in other freedoms which ennoble mankind. Together with faith in democracy, I am convinced that the development of democracy is possible only in conditions of a society, which is free of exploitation. That is why in addition to democracy I speak of socialism. I also believe that all the religions that exist in Bangladesh should have equal rights. By this I mean secularism, the right to profess one’s faith. And last, but not least, is the necessity for people to derive inspiration from Bengali culture, language and folklore and from the entire Bengali environment. This inspiration will rouse the Bengalis to work better for the sake of Golden Bengal. This is how I understand nationalism (Riaz 2004: 31)

In spite of divergent interpretations, the state-controlled media began to propagate the ideology of Mujibism, the economic policies of the regime demonstrated what the ruling party meant by socialism. The socialism of the ruling party was only beneficial to the intermediate classes through the extension of state property. State enterprises were used by a small segment of the society to accumulate wealth at the expense of the larger section. The ideology of Bengali nationalism as envisaged and practiced by the ruling party was to marginalize the non-Bengali minority in general and tribal nationalities in particular.

However, the inherent self-contradiction of the ruling party in terms of its policy of secularism became more evident when Mujib joined the Islamic Summit held in Lahore in February 1974. Two months later Bangladesh took the lead at the Islamic Foreign Ministers' Conference held in Jeddah in establishing the Islamic Development Bank. Thus, the ideology that was invented and propagated by the ruling party to counter the growing popularity of the radical left and the ideology of "scientific socialism" proved itself inherently self-contradictory and essentially barren. These drawbacks hindered the ideology of Mujibism from making any appeal to the general masses, let alone becoming hegemonic. Hence emerged the possibility of a dangerous and violent solution. The regime itself took the first steps towards that end. Two steps, taken within a span of a month, demonstrated that the crisis of the ruling regime had reached its zenith. These were: the promulgation of a state of emergency in December 1974 and the introduction of the one-party system in January 1975. These steps gave authoritarianism—as a mode of governance—a constitutional facade. A spiral of coup d'état ensued on August 15, 1975 with the brutal killings of Sheikh Mujib and his family members by a small group of army officers. The "coup de main" was followed by eighty-four days of chaos and confusion, coups and counter-coups. These led to the advent of military rule in Bangladesh. The very first problem the new regime faced was the question of legitimacy and for this reason they try to change the mind of people and they put the question of identity i.e. Islamic identity.

2.5: Secular vs. Islamic Identities in Bangladesh State

In Bangladeshi politics, language and religion has always been a site for tension between the two. This site of struggle in Bangladeshi politics manifests itself as a clash between secularism and religion as the basis for state legitimacy (Kabir 2006; Rashiduzzaman 1994). Cultural nationalists in the Bengal delta emphasise the on pan-ethnic Bengalee identity as for the language (culture) is one of the most important determinants of identity. Therefore, for the cultural nationalists, Bengalees living in either side of Bengal (East and West) should form one single national identity. Contrary to this view, the religious nationalists, consider the Muslim identity should be the basis

for national identity of the Bangalees. For these nationalists, Bangladeshi Muslims must reject residual aspects of folk Islam and strictly follow pure or authentic Islam. These religious nationalists have recently gained prominence through state patronisation. Although Bangladesh has started its journey on a secular ethno-linguist nationalism shifted towards a religious nationalism otherwise termed as Bangladeshi nationalism (Khan 1985).

Therefore, in ideological debate in Bangladesh over national identity revolves around the whether Bangalees are Muslim first then Banglaee or they first Banglaees then Muslim (Karim, 2004). The question whether we should prioritize religion over language or language over religion. Alternatively, to be more optimistic, is a hyphenated identity possible where both sides are held in equilibrium by a cultural consensus. This leads to the crisis of identity for the ethnic and religious minority. Therefore, Karim (nd.) argues that

...the very foundation of the Bangladeshi nation-state is anchored in an internal contradiction, a contradiction that is perhaps irreconcilable. The challenge then is to keep it in equilibrium so no one side gets exacerbated. Let me tease it out a bit. If Bangladeshis assert their Bengality over their religious identification (Bangladesh is now ninety percent Muslim), then they have to also address the following question: what distinguishes us from the Bengalis of West Bengal (India)? If we are all Bengalis, then why not become reunified with West Bengal? What is the basis of a separate nation state for Bengalis unless there is another identity that is rooted elsewhere that can form the basis of that state? The answer to that question for many Bangladeshis is that they are Muslims and their culture, language, and religion is different from that of Bengali Hindus of West Bengal (Karim nd.).

In search of this elsewhere for example, many Bangladeshis speak in a de-Sanskritised Bengali language and use more Arabic and Persian words (Dil 2012). There is a slippage here between religion and culture, and religion and language, and religion becomes the privileged marker of identity. It must be mentioned here that Bangladeshi Muslims are also articulating a deep-rooted fear—the spectre of caste Hindu domination, which has a long history in Bengal— and this fear informs discussions in Bangladesh. But religious identity need not necessarily devolve into a hyper-nationalist identity, and perhaps an effective safeguard against it is the religious neutrality of the

state. This is an area of struggle in Bangladeshi cultural politics (Karim 2004).

For cultural nationalists, language/culture is the more important determinant of identity, and they seek a pan-ethnic Bengali identity with Bengalis living in West Bengal (India). For religious nationalists, Bangladeshi Muslims must reject residual aspects of folk Islam and strictly follow the Saudi Arabian interpretation of Islam and its codes. It is this group that has gained power in recent years because of state patronage (Griffith and Hasan 2015). In the third place are nationalists who advocate a national identity, which is rooted in the indigenous folk culture of Bangladesh, one that rejects the ultra-nationalism of both the Islamic and cultural nationalists and attempts to revive the folk Islam of the peasants in Bengal to the national level. (Uddin 2006).

What is significant although not surprising is that a country that was inaugurated on the basis of ethno-linguistic nationalism (we are Bengalis, we want a nation of Bengali-speaking people) very soon shifted toward a religiously-inflected nationalism, that is, the new nationalism known as Bangladeshi nationalism, which was introduced by the first military ruler, and now continues to define contemporary politics and culture. Bangladeshi nationalism was introduced after 1975 by the first military dictator (Ziaur Rahman) and overlay the older ethno-linguistic nationalism known as Bengali nationalism upon which the country was inaugurated in 1971. At the time of its inauguration Bangladeshi nationalism had two objectives: (a) to incorporate all Bangladeshi citizens, whether Bengali or not, under one national identity; and (b) to articulate a differentiated Bengali identity that was distinct from the identity of Bengalis living in West Bengal, India (Griffith and Hasan 2015).

Although the category “Bangladeshi” was supposed to be a more inclusive category that embraced all citizens, whether Bengali-speaking or not, it effectively narrowed the definition of what it meant to be a Bangladeshi and introduced an Islamic wedge into the national consciousness. Furthermore, in order to consolidate his power base, the first military dictator started his own political party, the Bangladesh National Party (BNP) that took as its founding principle Bangladeshi nationalism, which was the

commingling of religion with ethnicity. The creation of BNP also bifurcated electoral politics in Bangladesh along religious lines, it is believed that BNP supporters are overwhelmingly Muslim, and Awami League (AL) supporters are overwhelming Hindus and other religious and ethnic minorities.

The unfolding of Bangladeshi nationalism also led to increasing disenfranchisement of citizens who are not Bengali or Muslim (the Adivasis and Hindus for example, and the 250,000 Bihari Muslims who remain stateless people in UNHCR refugee camps), thereby, raising a whole range of questions about the nature of the Bangladeshi state, democracy, the rights of ethnic and religious minorities. It is not surprising then that Bangladeshi nationalism soon paved the way for a hyper Islam-identified nationalism and became a tool in the nation-making project of the military dictators. The second contradiction in the construction of the state was use of secularism in the Constitution in 1972. The 1972 Constitution extolled the virtues of secularism, which translated into dharmoniropekhota or the neutrality of the state toward all religions. But secularism as an ideal disintegrated with the assassination of the father of the nation Bangabondu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975.

2.6: Use of Islam During Military Period

The assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman marked a focal point in Bangladesh's history. The country's political power shifted away from democracy to a military authoritarian regime. This subsequent military coup had far-reaching implications for the future of Bangladesh. Major General Ziaur Rahman emerged as the new military dictator in Bangladesh after the assassination of Mujibur Rahman. Notwithstanding the chaos, coups and countercoups immediately after the assassination of Mujibur Rahman, General Zia consolidated his power over three sections of the military. Emergence of Zia as the first military dictator had redrawn the political as well as the socio-economic map of Bangladesh. By bringing a new nationalism Zia aimed at to develop a separate identity for Bangladesh in international level and keep off from the larger ethnic Bengali identities which consist of Indian state of West Bengal. Zia himself defined his

concept of Bangladeshi nationalism as something positive, intended to take advantage of emotions within the country to create institutions of self-help, self-reliance, the ability to stand on one's own feet, and a commitment to develop one's own resources. Zia's formulations are directed at international development agencies and the Arabs. He tried to satisfy foreigners that Bangladesh is doing something (Osmany 1992:17). In that sense, his Bangladeshi nationalism was a compromise with the nationalism as many other groups which were actively participated in the freedom struggle conceived it. After becoming the head of the state, Ziaur Rahman issued a proclamation order for amending the Constitution. Through this amendment, he included Bismillah-ir-Rahmanir Rahim (In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful) in the Preamble of the Constitution. Zia also added 'absolute trust and faith in the Almighty Allah' in Article 8(1) of the constitution. In Article 25(2), it has also been provided that "the state shall endeavour to consolidate, preserve and strengthen fraternal relations among Muslim countries based on Islamic solidarity" (Kamal 1994: 56).

As We discussed elsewhere in the thesis, the religious nationalists urged Bangladeshi Muslims to throwaway residual aspects of popular Islam and strictly follow the 'pure Islam' or a Salafist interpretation of Islam. It is surprising that a country that was liberated on the basis of ethno-linguistic Bengali nationalism very soon moved toward a religiously-coded nationalism i.e. Bangladeshi nationalism. Ziaur Rahman's regime built its own political support base and developed an ideology. In fact, in that stage the military authoritarian regime tried to use the dominant religion in a particular country as a pillar of its ideology. Bhuiyan (1999) argue that it is felt necessary because they want to give the system an ideological and political institutional shape that would sustain the reproduction of the system. It is also true for various Bangladeshi military-authoritarian regimes which used religion (Islam), in their attempts for political legitimisation (Bhuiyan,1999:23). In short, religion has become a tool for the army to stay in power by using it tactically. Later Bangladesh witnessed the use of religion to garner the mass support by the popular political parties.

General Zia made Islam the focal point of the regime's ideology (Riaz 2008). His

regime's institutionalisation of Islamisation included:

- (i) Removing the secular principle of the state. Inclusion of “absolute trust and faith in Almighty Allah” (Ahamed 1983);
- (ii) Introducing “Bangladeshi nationalism” instead of “Bengali nationalism” that provided an “idea of nationalism in post-colonial Bangladesh with an Islamic character by distinguishing the Bengali Muslims from the Bengali Hindus of neighbouring West Bengal” (Alam 1993: 100);
- (iii) Incorporating the Qur’anic phrase Bismillah-ar-Rahman-ar-Rahim (in the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful) before the preamble of the constitution (Ahamed 1983);
- (iv) Erasing Article 12 of the constitution that guaranteed to eliminate communalism, official promotion of religion, discrimination on religious ground, and the abuse of religion (Ahamed 1983);
- (v) Omitting Article 38 of the constitution that had imposed a ban on the formation and operation of religion-based political parties. This allowed Islam-based parties and groups to return to political arena in Bangladesh (Hakim 1998);
- (vi) Making a constitutional recognition of pro-Islamic foreign policy (Rashiduzzaman 1978);
- (vii) Providing generous support to the spread of Islamic education and cultural practices (Riaz 2008).

Like his predecessor, General Ershad also posited Islam as the basis of state ideology.

In a speech in the beginning of his regime, he declared:

Islam is our ideal and it is the only way to our emancipation. The existence of the country will be at stake if we fail to establish Islam in Bangladesh. We, the nine cores [ninety million] Muslims (of Bangladesh) will certainly speak about Islam, think about Islam and dream about Islam. This is our only way for emancipation (Cited in Rahman 1985: 2)

Some of the attempts in regard to the institutionalisation of Islam by Ershad regime included:

- (i) Islam became the state religion of Bangladesh through the eighth amendment of the constitution (Ahamed and Nazneen 1990);
- (ii) He founded a Zakat fund headed by the President (Ahamed 1983);
- (iii) Formulation of a new education policy that intended to introduce Arabic and Islamic Studies in the both elementary and secondary schools (Riaz 2004);
- (iv) Mandatory broadcasting of azan (call for prayer) five times a day and airing of Islamic programs in increasing numbers in state-run electronic media (Hakim 1998; Ahmed 2004);
- (v) Attempting to turn the Shaheed dibas (Martyrs' Day/21 February) into a religious occasion through prayers and recitations from the Qur'an, instead of the barefoot procession at dawn and the traditional colourful paintings known as alpana (Hakim 1998);
- (vi) Launching a separate directorate under the Ministry of Education for madrasa education. This ultimately made substantial impact on the growth of religious institutions including madrasas (Ahamed and Nazneen 1990);
- (vii) Sanction of liberal grants to shrines and mosques, especially in order for their repairs, reconstruction, and beautification (Ahamed and Nazneen 1990);
- (viii) Making Friday, instead of Sunday, the weekly holiday (Ahmad 2008), and changing the name of Red Cross to Red Crescent (Mohsin 2004).

During Ershad regime, Islam became the state religion which ultimately ignited the religious sentiments of the people and rejuvenated radical religious groups in the country. Although Islam was made state religion seemingly to bring authentic Islam in the polity, in reality the army was aimed to create a religious identity that can devolve into a hyper-national identity and perhaps it was an effective way to break the religious neutrality of the state on the one hand and legitimise their undemocratic rule in the country.

2.7: Use of Islam during Democratic period

As we have already mentioned the use of Islam by the military rulers in Bangladesh, the return of democracy in 1991 did not amend the trends in the use of Islam in politics. Rather, there was an increased incidence of terrorist activities, extremism and communalism in Bangladesh. This became more evident since 2001 with election of the BNP in the parliament. During BNP regime in 2001-2006, one of the significant incidences happened i.e. fundamentalist forces had increasingly begun to occupy legitimate political space as the ideals of the Liberation movement faded. As we already mentioned, BNP introduced a religious nationalist ideology coded with 'Bangladeshi nationalism' as opposed to ethno-linguistic 'Bengali Nationalism' advanced by the Bangladesh Awami League. Particularly after victory of BNP in the 2001 election, there was a tremendous rise in the attacks on minorities, moderate Muslims and liberal democratic forces including the opposition politicians mainly the Awami League.

Another significant aspect of the BNP regime is their alliance with Islamist political parties particularly Jamaat-e-Islami. Two of the Jamaat law makers (MP) were made minister during the BNP rule in 2001-2006. During their rule, groups such as the Islamic Chattria Shibir and HUJI-B gained legitimacy. Legitimation of Islamists by BNP has a substantial impact on the Islamisation of Bangladesh as the forces (jamaat and other Islamists) that had once been rejected as collaborators (Razakar) had now managed to inhabit mainstream political space of Bangladesh. The same period was also witnessed a rise in terrorist training camps, rise of Islamist militant groups such as Jamat-ul-Mujahideen, Bangladesh (JMJB) and Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami Bangladesh (HUJI) in Bangladesh have consolidated and expanded their institutional trans-border networks (Bhardwaj 2010).

With the rise of such Islamists in Bangladesh, some scholars for example (Karlekar 2006) suspect if 'Talibanisation' of Bangladesh was underway in the country. In fact, the characteristics of this change was perceived that the ethos and the ideology of the movement for autonomy and the Liberation struggle were no longer relevant in

Bangladeshi politics, and the re-emergence of Islam as a factor considered necessary to consolidate political power in Bangladesh. During the democratic period (1991-onwards) Khaleda Zia followed Zia's policy of Islamisation and stressed Islamic symbolism (Riaz 2004; Shehabuddin 2008). Sheikh Hasina also demonstrated her inclination to Islamic identity and symbolism. She began using Islamic idioms such as Bismillah, Khuda hafez, and Insha-Allah in her public speeches (Riaz, 2003). Party political posters displayed these idioms including Hasina's portrait with hijab and prayer beads in hands (Riaz 2004; Shehabuddin 2008; Bennett 2010). Mainstream secular and non-secular parties regardless of their ideologies and programs equally use Islamic idioms and phrases.

The factors beyond Islamic revivalism and intolerance in Bangladesh lie mainly within macro, meso and micro layers of within Bangladesh society and polity. At the macro level, the socio-political elites of the society have used Islamism for political purposes to hold state power and divert from problems of mass poverty and unemployment. In this process, external actors, using petro-dollars from Middle East countries, have imposed their version of Islamism through the work of charities to strengthen a Madrassa culture and patronise mosques. The dominance of Middle Eastern Islam (Hanabli) has contributed ideas of intolerance among the Muslims of Bangladesh (Hanafi). At the meso (intermediate) level, a decline of scholarship in the Islamic academic sector and inability of mainstream religious civil society, particularly mosque-based educated mullahs, to reveal the true version of Islam to the society, has led to confusion among some Muslims. At the micro level, increased migration of unskilled and semi-skilled workers to the Middle East has favoured efforts to impose an 'authentic' Middle Eastern version of Islam over Hanafi society, as migrants return home to predominantly poor and illiterate communities in Bangladesh (Salehin 2013).

2.8: Conclusion

This chapter set out on a journey to analyse the nature of Bangladeshi state its colonial formation and postcolonial transformation to shed out the rise of religion and Islam in

particular in politics and the crisis of secularism in Bangladeshi state. With the Partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 gave birth of two distinct state though based on the religious unity i.e. Hindu dominated India and Muslim dominated Pakistan. While Pakistan with its two wings East and West started economic polarisation and exploitation towards East Pakistan. East Pakistan a culturally and linguistically distinct from West Pakistan stated its struggle for independence from Pakistan on the basis of ethno-linguistic Bangladeshi nationalism. Soon after the independence, Bangladesh started as a secular state, though soon after secularism was replaced with Islamic idioms after the brutal murder of the father of the Nation. Subsequently, all the military rules use religion for their political ends. It has been not much different after the return of democracy in 1991. Therefore, all the major political parties including Awami League and BNP. What has become an emergency issues to be address is the rise of the militant Islam and extremist in Bangladesh politics, particularly through the patronage by BNP and its alliance. They want to replace the long standing syncretic Islam with the Authentic Islam of the Salafist Islam in the polity and often through the use of violence. Therefore, in the following chapters of this thesis address how major political parties i.e. BNP and AL use Islam for the political end during the period of 1991-2014.

CHAPTER 3
POLITICS OF SECULARISM AND BANGLADESH
AWAMI LEAGUE

CHAPTER 3

Politics of Secularism and Bangladesh Awami League

3.1: Introduction

One of the four fundamental principles of the state of Bangladesh is secularism. Bangladesh Awami League (AL) and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), two main political parties in Bangladesh (BNP), have significantly contributed in shaping and re-shaping secularisation in the polity. While Awami League has played the most significant role in the secularisation of the state, BNP has contributed the most in the de-secularisation process. Yet, secularism discourse and practice in Bangladesh is different from the French or English version of secularism and it is rather an indigenous form secularism. In present times, secularism coupled with religious freedom or non-preferential treatment to any religion. Whatever the form of secularism is being practiced in Bangladesh, major political parties use it in favour of their electoral victory. This chapter focuses on the politics of secularism through addressing the factors and consequences of religious politics of Awami League during 1971-1975 and 1991 to 2014. A particular attention has been paid towards political strategies in Awami League's election manifesto, election campaigns where Awami League has used religious rhetoric over the secular to manipulate the Majority Muslim and has formed alliance with religious forces/parties for the electoral victory. The chapter starts with the genesis of Bangladesh Awami League followed by AL's journey through secular politics. Then it discusses with the politics of secularism of AL during different phases (from 1971 to 2014) including the early independence and military ruled periods. This chapter also include a discussion on the trails of the war crime which is a long-cherished desire of people of Bangladesh and the election pledge of AL.

3.2: Genesis of Awami League

Bangladesh Awami League, the oldest mass based political party of Bangladesh. To discuss the politics of secularism and Bangladesh Awami League, it is important to examine the genesis of Awami League. In this regard, the formation of East Pakistan Awami Muslim League (EPML) should be consider as a major step in the formative days of Pakistan when the euphoria for the new state for the Muslims was in full swing. The progressive faction of Bengal Muslim League (BML), the branch of All India Muslim League (AIML) formed the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League in Rose Garden, Dhaka, and the Eastern wing of Pakistan on 23rd June 1949. The main argument was that only the similarity of religion cannot ensure the success of the nation building process in a new born state.

In the last decade of colonial rule All India Muslim League was successful to mass mobilize among the Muslim in favour of the idea that a separate state for the Muslim in this sub-continent would emancipate the Muslim from the possibilities of Hindu domination in the post-colonial era. This was one of the major issues which expedite the creation of two state – namely India and Pakistan in 1947

The BML played an important role in Bengal to mobilize the mass in favour of Pakistan. The BML leaders projected successfully the economic agenda of Pakistan Movement and they contended that the Muslims of Bengal would emancipate economically in the absence of Hindu Babus (elite) (Smith 1946: 176-77) and the peasantry would liberated from the tyranny of the Zamindars (Land lords) and Mahajans (rural bankers) who were mainly from Hindu community in rural Bengal (Umar, 2004). Moreover, the official demand of Pakistan of Muslim League, popularly known as ‘Lahore Resolution’ was proposed by A K Fazlul Haq, the then Chief Minister of Bengal and the most popular leader of the Muslim masses.

BML was in power in Bengal during the time of partition of India and Pakistan. But in the pre-partition days, there were acute conflict between the progressive and the conservative's fraction within BML. The central leadership supports the conservatives section and they systematically eliminate the progressive section in the final year of partition. By the intervention of the central leadership, the key position of the BML were given to the pro-central conservative section and the supporters of the progressive fraction were systematically blocked to become the primary members and the elected bodies were replaced by the ad-hoc committee (Nair 1990).

After the independence of Pakistan, AIML became Pakistan Muslim League (PML). But actually, it was not a democratic organisation and the progressive fraction of East Pakistan Muslim League (EPML) tried to transform PML into democratic organisation and open the membership to the people of all religion. In March 1948, H. S. Suhrawardi proposed a new party called Pakistan National League which membership would be open for all Pakistani nationals irrespective of religion (Lenin 2015). PML central leadership were reluctant to be democratic. They use religion i.e. Islam in a new way. In the time of pre-partition Islam was used by AIML for mass mobilisation in favour of Pakistan and in the post-independence period PML used Islam to neutralize all forms of opposition. In the first session of party council of PML on 20th January 1949, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Liaquat Ali Khan, stated that PML had the exclusive right to interpret Islam and to fix the principles of state. He also said that a strong Muslim League means a strong Pakistan. In reaction of this statement, the main leader of the progressive fraction H. S. Suhrawardi criticised the Prime Minister in the Constituent Assembly on 6th March 1949. He said,

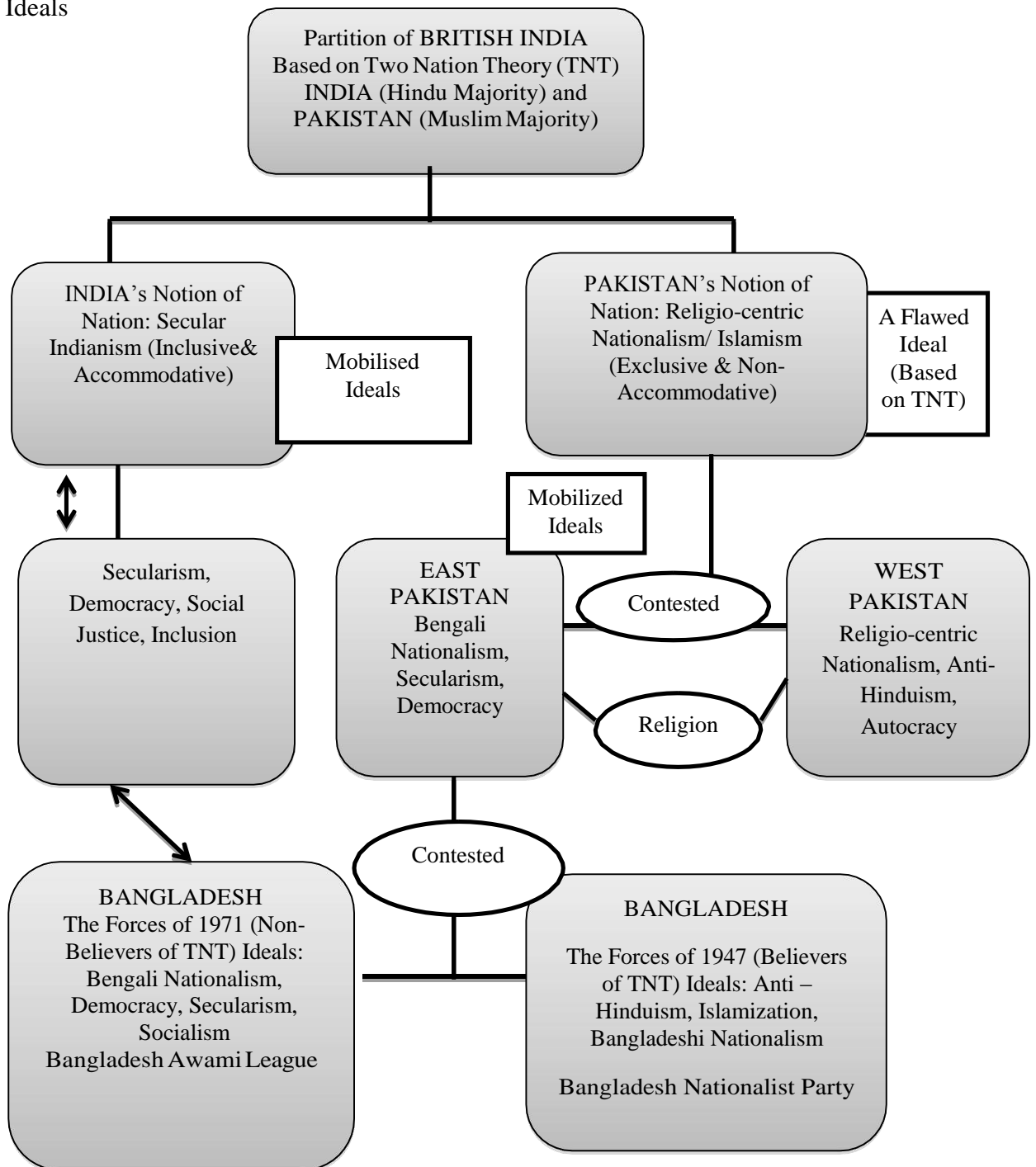
“You are establishing a corporation; you are appealing to religious sentiments; you are raising the cry which was raised at the time [Pakistan Movement]... that the rights of Muslim were in danger... Now you are raising the cry of Pakistan in danger for the purpose of arousing Muslim sentiments and building them together in order to maintain in power.” (Suhrawardi 1949: 336, Gov.PK 1949)

During the period of Pakistan Movement, the Muslim who did not support Muslim League were labelled as traitors to the Muslims and Islam (Murshid 1995). This situation also prevails in Pakistan after the independence as well. As a result, the leaders of the EPML were very cautious about the danger of being labelled as anti-Islamic because of anti-PML politics. So, in the draft of the Manifesto of EPML published on 23rd June, discuss a lot to establish this party as an Islam loving party. In the preface section of the manifesto there were lot of reference to Quran and Sunnah and an arch to establish a Darul Islam (True Islamic State) Pakistan. It is also argued that the activities of the PML were anti-Islamic in essence. It was declared that Pakistan never endorse any law which go against the Quran and Sunnah. In the Aim and Objective section of the draft manifesto of the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League it is stated that

‘to promote and maintain the religious, cultural, social, educational and economic interests of the Muslim of Pakistan...to strengthen the bonds of brotherhood amongst Muslims all over the world; to established and strengthen friendly and economic relationship with neighbouring countries as well as with the Muslim countries all over the world; and to disseminate true knowledge of Islam and its high moral and religious principals among the people’ (Lenin 2015).

Though, with a true Islamic flavour, this manifesto also provides some section in favour of non-communal politics in Pakistan. In the basic rights section of the manifesto it also demanded that irrespective of social status, ideological inclination and gender, equal rights and opportunities to perform own religion should be guaranteed to every individual in Pakistan. In the same section it also demanded that the state should give the opportunity to anybody to accept any religion according to their will and secure the basic rights of everyone to perform religion according to scriptures.

Figure-1: Historical Genealogy of Bangladesh Polity: Mobilised verses Contested Ideals



Source: Bhardwaj, S.K. (2015), "Contemporary South Asia" A Keynote Paper delivered in Dhaka, Bangladesh on the 66th Indian Republic Day on January 26, 2015: 6

3.3: Journey of Secular Politics by Awami League

As discussed elsewhere, the EPML was born as an Islamist Party. At that time it was not possible to form a secular political party in Pakistan in the formative days. As a result, the leaders of the party were bewareing of making anti-national and anti-Islamic by the PML. The founder General Secretary of EPML Mr. Shamsul Haq depicted the situation later on. He stated,

It is undeniable that at the time when Awami League was born, according to the requirements of the prevailing situation, our organization had to be constituted as a communal organization. The Muslim League, taking advantage of the religiosity of Pakistani people, continued its role using Islam as their weapon. The people also had not yet been able to free themselves completely from the confusion created the Muslim League. Under the circumstances, even though it was possible to make our organization secular, it would have failed to counteract the reactionary influence of the Muslim League (Afzal 1976: 49).

3.3.1 : The Language Movement

Within the short period of time the psychological changes appeared in the mind of the people of Bangladesh (then East Pakistan) when Urdu was declared as the only state language of Pakistan. The leaders of the West Pakistan contended that Urdu was an Islamic language and it will bond the people of two wings. But the Bengali students and intelligentsia demanded two state languages i.e. Bengali and Urdu and they vehemently opposed the decision of one state language. It is worthy to mention that the Urdu speaking people of Pakistan was 3.33 per cent and Bengali speaking people was 56.40 per cent (Population Census of Pakistan, 1951) at that time. The demand of Bengali as one of the state language was resisted by west Pakistani leaders and they considered this proposal a conspiracy against the unity of Pakistani state and was guided by India (Kabir 2014).

The people of Bangladesh (then East Pakistan) considered the West Pakistani decision of imposing Urdu as the only state language a stratagem against them and their mother

tongue. They also thought that establishing Urdu would fell them in a disadvantage position in education, culture, employment and so on. According to Gunner Myrdal

Bengalis saw this as not only a mortal blow to their culture but a threat to perpetuate their under representation and inferior status in the administrative services, especially in relation to Panjabis, by putting them at a disadvantage in all competitive examinations (Myrdal 1968: 318).

Therefore, to establish Bengali (their mother tongue) as one of the state languages, the people of East Pakistan started a movement from 1948. This movement was run mainly by the students and intelligentsia, but it gained support of the ordinary people of the then East Pakistan because of economic and cultural grounds.

On 21st February 1952, Language Movement reached its zenith when police forces open fire on the student's demonstration and killed students. After these students killing, people from all section of the society supported this movement. As a result, the ruling elite of Pakistan agreed to fulfil this demand of Bangali. During this movement from 1948-1952 a new Bengali nationalism based on language and culture was arose which is secular in nature and opposite to Pakistani nationalism. The leaders of the language movements are many from the student wing of EPML. In the language movements of 1948, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was one the first arrestee of 11th March movement. When the All-Party Action Committee was formed in 30 January 1952, Kazi Golam Mahbub was chosen as its president who was a leader of East Pakistan Student League. EPML leaders also actively participated in the Language Movement namely Mawlana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani (President), Shamsul Huq (General Secretary), Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (Joint Secretary) etc. This movement paved the way for secular politics in East Pakistan. The success of this movement inspired the EPML leaders to establish non- communal, pro-secular political party in East Pakistan.

3.3.2 : Change in Nomenclature and Membership Provision of EPML

Though the EPML was formed as a religious political party but its leaders always believe in non-communal politics. As discussed in the earlier section, in the formative period of Pakistan it was not easy to establish a secular political party. But after the Language Movement a new demand arose to take initiative to secularize the politics of EPML. To delete the word Muslim from the name of the party was first proposed in the subject committee meeting during the council session of EPML on 5th July 1953 (Majumdar 2010). The proposal raised debate in the meeting and the Suhrawardi group opposed the proposal. Their argument was that any vital change in the party would be exploited by the PML in the upcoming election of 1954. Among the fifty-five members of the central committee only twenty-seven opposed the proposal (Majumdar 2010, Nair 1990:78).

The issue of change of the word Muslim from the party name was discussed with great importance. Though about fifty per cent of the members opposed the move, the proposal was not rejected but the council adjourned the proposal and authorised Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani, the then party president to scrutinize the proposal and submit a report by reviewing the public opinion. In the process of changing the nomenclature of EPML, role of Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani was very significant. According to the demand of the party, Bhashani organised a series of meetings and discussion with the members of the party from top to bottom concerning the esteem effect of the change of nomenclature.

After the series of discussion and debate the section in favour of change proposed a resolution to delete the word 'Muslim' from the party name in the joint meeting of the working committee and district and sub division level leaders on 5th April 1954. The party finalised the proposal in their council meeting of 21-23 October 1955. Before the council meeting, the subject committee of the party council officially sent a

recommendation in favour of change of the party name and a suggestion to open the party to all religious communities. In the council meeting of 1955, the party president Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani emphasised the need of change of party name in his presidential address. He said,

I have found after discussion with party workers from different districts and sub-divisions that the majority of the population of this land, specially the party workers not only in favour of the secularization of the party, but also they have strongly put forward this as their demand (Bhashani, 1955: 21-22 October cited in Majumder 2010).

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the General Secretary of the party also accentuated the importance of secularizing the party in his General Secretary report. He stated that, due to the prevailing situation of Pakistan in the formative phase, Awami League had to form as a 'communal organisation' but now the situation has been changed and communal politics of Muslim League was ended. He also emphasised to unite the people of all communities, all race and all lingua under a common organisation and Awami Muslim League will unimpaired the liberal role by opening the party for all people irrespective of communities (Lenin 2015).

In the second day of the council meeting (22nd October 1955) the proposals were accepted and the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League (EPML) became the East Pakistan Awami League (EPAL) and the membership of the party was made open for all religious communities. Hussain Shahid Suhrawardi was the man who moved the proposal in the council (Nair, 1990). Only five councillor, out of six hundred voted against the proposal (Bangladesh Freedom War Documents, vol.1, 1979:451). This council also passed another resolution which urged the Constituent Assembly Members to relinquish the Separate Electoral System (SES) for the Muslim and Non-Muslim and to introduce a joint electoral system (Majumdar 2010). These initiatives of Awami League paved the

way for secular politics in East Bengal and strengthen the struggle of Bengali nationalism.

3.4: Politics of Awami League During the Pakistan Period

The military of Pakistan played an indispensable role since the formation of the state in 1947 (Ayesha 2007). Pakistan experienced its first coup on 27 October 1958 and their rule continued up to the collapse of Pakistan and the birth of Bangladesh in 1971. The Awami League politics and the use of religion in this era need to be analysed.

Iskandar Mirza, the then President of Pakistan staged a coup d'état on 7 October 1958 and repudiated the constitution of 1956. The then defence minister of Pakistan and the Chief of Army Staff General Muhammad Ayub Khan (popularly known as Ayub Khan) was appointed as the Chief Martial Law Administrator (CMLA) of Pakistan. But only after three weeks, on 27 October 1958 Ayub Khan was appointed Prime Minister and the same day he seized power of the President. He was in office till March 1969 and General Yahya Khan was in power up to the birth of Bangladesh. After capturing the power, the military government-imposed embargo on the political activities and dissolved the national and the provincial assemblies. Many politicians were thrown into jail including the top leaders of AL.

Ayub took some policy to remain in power. Though his rule was anti-democratic but he introduced a new method of democracy called 'The Basic Democracy'. The main objectives of this system were to bar the parties, politician and the public to participate in the political process. Hence, his rule was undemocratic, but he took a firm stand, up to the first half of his rule against the use of religion in the state affairs and the politics of Pakistan. By the Muslim Family Law Ordinance of 1961, registration of Muslim marriage became mandatory, outlawed polygamy and instant Talaq (three talaq). The government nationalised the Muslim Trust in West Pakistan by West Pakistan Waqf

Properties Ordinance of 1961, and also government took control of shrines and mosques. Besides, Ayub warned the Imams not to give political speeches in the Friday prayer. The main objectives of this policy of Ayub were to neutralize the pressure of the religious orthodoxy and it can be called a bold step by a military dictator in a conservative society like Pakistan.

Ayub proclaimed the new constitution of Pakistan on 1 March 1961. In this constitution there were many articles which consolidate the military power and many articles of anti-democratic flavours but there were also some provisions of secular ideas in the state affairs. The new constitution declared Pakistan as a Republic not as an Islamic Republic which was declared in the first constitution of Pakistan in 1956. Though there were some reference to the Quran and Sunnah in the new constitution but the supreme authority to enact law was conferred to the state organs. Because of this change in the constitution, the religious political parties of Pakistan had to face difficulties in their politics and that destroyed the power base of the Ulema of Pakistan (Blood 1994).

The prohibition on the political activities of the parties was lifted on 15 July 1962. On 4 October 1962, a coalition of anti-Ayub political parties was formed as the National Democratic Front (NDF) under the patronage of AL (Ghosh 1990). During the first web of military rule there were huge intra-party split between the revivalist and the anti-revivalist in the AL. Ultimately the party was rejuvenated in the working committee meeting on 25 and 26 January 1964 and it was reported in The Daily Ittefaq on 26 January 1964. So, it is necessary to examine the AL's policy to the use of religion by the military and their rule.

Before the revival of AL, when the new constitution was promulgated, nine renowned political leaders of East Pakistan from different political parties issued a joint statement and it was reported in The Daily Pakistan Observer on 25 June 1962. In this joint

statement, they criticised the constitution and demanded a new constitution which will be formulated by the people's representative of Pakistan. But the statement was absolutely implicit about the article of constitution which treated with the role of religion in state affairs and completely restrained for making any comments about the deletion of the word 'Islamic' from the name of the state. Aatur Rahman Khan and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman were among the signatories of the statement from AL, but it was more stunning that Yusuf Ali Chowdhury the Leader of Jamaat-e-Islam was one of signatories of the statement.

The religious extremists and the traditionalist of Pakistan created enormous pressure upon Ayub Khan for an Islamic Constitution (Binder 1961). Ayub Khan compromised with this demand and amended the constitution on 25 December 1963. In the amendment some significant changes were made regarding the religious attitudes of 1962 constitution. Regarding this change, the obsolete AL leadership remain unvoiced. AL Leadership also missed an opportunity to erode the most anti-secular religious political party from the political scene of Pakistan in 1964. Ayub Khan banned Jamaat-e-Islam because of that; the party was a threat to the security of the state and the central leadership of the party were imprisoned. Yet, the government official and the military personnel had to proclaim that they had no association with Jamaat (Ghazali 1996). But at that time, AL leadership supported the Jamaat. On Working Committee Meeting of AL of 25 and 26 January 1964, they passed a resolution demanding release of the leaders and workers of Jamaat and protested against the outlaw of Jamaat it was reported in The Daily Ittefaq on 27 January 1964.

AL also worked with anti-secular forces during the Pakistan period. When Combined Opposition Party (COP) was formed on 24 July 1964, the main political parties were the AL, the East Pakistan National Awami Party (EPNAP), the Nizam-e-Islam Party (NIP)

and Jamaat. Only the AL and EPNAP were secular and all other were religious political party.

After the second half of Ayub rule, he tried to play with the religious card for appease the growing popularity of COP. Fatima Jinnah, the sister of Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the father of the nation of Pakistan, became the President candidate from COP in the Presidential election of 1965. But, Ayub applied a fatwa (Islamic ruling) from the orthodox Ulema that, women's candidacy as head of the state was un-Islamic (Haqqani 2005). The AL led COP also played the same line of Ayub and they assembled two thousand Ulema on 18 December 1964 who announced that there was no bar to electing women as head of the state (Nair 1990).

Because of the prevailing situation of Pakistan during the military era, AL overlooks the use or abuse of religion. But this party rendered a great service during the communal riot in January 1964. On account of the assertion of stealing of the sacred hair of Prophet Hazrat Mohammad (S.M) from Hazratbal Mosque of Srinagar on 27 December 1963, communal riot broke out in Dhaka and other parts of East Pakistan. The AL leadership played a valiant role stopping the communal violence. They formed the 'Riot Resistance Committee' (RRC) and published a pamphlet title- Purbo Pakistan Rukhiya Darao (East Pakistan stand up in Resistance).

Sheikh Mujib, the General Secretary of the defunct AL, urged the people and specially to the student to stop violence. In a statement he also said, "Those who are trying to heighten communal feelings are enemies of East Pakistan" reported in the Daily Ittefaq on 14 January 1964.

Because of the legitimacy crisis of the military rule and the growing sensation of regionalism that influenced the autonomy movement in East Pakistan, the military ruler used religious sentiment. They banned the literature of Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941)

in 1964 as it was un-Islamic. They also declared the celebration of Pahela Boishak (First Day of Bangla New Year) as contradictory to Islam. The ruling elite with the help of Bengali literati tried to emphasize on the Muslim contribution in Bengali literature. Bangla Academy, Writers' Guild and Bengali Development Board were the institutions which were used in that scheme (Rashiduzzaman 1989). The Bengali people totally rejected all these anti-Bengali and anti-secular activities of the ruling class. But the AL participation in antagonizing the anti-Bengali and anti-secular activities of the ruling class was less than satisfactory at that time, though the party rendered implicit assistance to the secular politics and establish non-communal atmosphere in East Pakistan (Majumdar 2010).

The use of religion and anti-Bengali, anti-secular activities of the military ruler became boomerang for them. Because it had created a secular feelings and anti-Pakistani sentiment in East Pakistan in the sixties. At that time AL became successful to grub stacking the resentment of the Bengalis. AL introduced 'Joy Bangla' (Victory of Bangla) slogan instead of 'Pakistan Zindabad' (Victory of Pakistan) which became the catch word of the party. Inauguration of Joy Bangla as alternative of Pakistan Zindabad actually became the rejection of 'Two Nation Theory' which created Pakistan.

General Yahya Khan, the then Chief of Army Staff, came into power as Ayub Khan handed over to him due to the Mass Upsurge in East Pakistan in 1969. After assumed in power Yahya Khan imposed martial law and dissolved parliament and constitution. But he promised to arrange a general election which was the first and last election of Assembly and Provincial Assembly were held on 7 and 17 December 1970 respectively. Out of 313 seats of National Assembly, AL won 167 seats (including seven women seats) and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) won 88 seats (including five women seats). The election showed that both the largest party, i.e., the EPAL and PPP were the regional

party, because AL did not get any seat in West Pakistan and PPP did not secure any seat in East Pakistan (Baxter 1984).

The election manifesto of AL once more disclosed the antithetical composition of secular and non-secular scheme. AL mostly brought the (economic and social) disparity between the two wings of Pakistan in forefront and concentrated on the grievances of Bengalis to win the election. Not only had these, but also AL consciously introduced pro-religious abstraction into the election campaign. In their manifesto, it announced that no law repugnant to Islamic principles would be enacted and the party would enforce law and Sharia (Islamic Law) in the Batai (crop sharing) and lease system (Election Manifesto of AL, 6 June 1970). AL also established an allied organisation namely Awami Ulema Party (AUP) to secure support and influence the religious persons.

Awami League ensured a policy of checks and balance concerning the matter of religion in politics from the inception of the party because of the prevailing situation of Pakistan. This party countered the anti-secular Pakistani nationalism and promoted pro-secular Bengali nationalism in the military era. This party also created an atmosphere especially in East Pakistan the non-Muslim of doing politics to the non-Muslim in Islamic Pakistan. By this way this party became champion to spread communal harmony in Pakistan.

Though Awami League ensuring a secular line during the military era, but they did not earnestly come in the debate on the role of religion in state affairs, besides sometimes they used religion as a counter to the spread of religious rhetoric by the military rulers, and sometimes allied with the religious political parties.

3.5: Politics of Awami League During the First Government of Bangladesh (1971-75)

Bangladesh achieved its independence after a nine month long bloody freedom struggle in 16 December 1971. Bangladesh took a policy of secularism (in Bengali: Dharmonirapekhata) and made it as one of the four fundamental state principles after the independence. The preamble of the constitution of Bangladesh stated that,

We, the people of Bangladesh, having proclaimed our independence on 26th day of March 1971 and, through a historic struggle for national liberation, established the independent, sovereign People's Republic of Bangladesh; pledging that the high ideals of nationalism, socialism, democracy and secularism which inspired our heroic people to dedicate themselves to, and our brave martyrs to sacrifice their lives in, the national liberation struggle, shall be the fundamental principles of the constitution.(The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, (GoB, 1972)

The constitution elaborately described the idea of secularism in the first chapter, Article 12, Article 38 and Article 41 of the 1972 constitution.

In that period AL also introduced a new ideology, popularly known as Mujibbad (Mujibism), in the name of Sheikh Mujib, the architect of the nation and supreme leader of freedom struggle and the head of the state. Though AL took the policy of secularism, they also were aware of the negative impact of the use of religion in politics and state policy. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman stated in a speech that,

Muslim will observe their religion and nobody in this state has the power to prevent that. Hindus will observe their religion and nobody in this state has the power to prevent that. Buddhists and Christians will observe their respective religion, and nobody can prevent that. Our only objection is that nobody will be allowed to use religion as a political weapon (Rahman 1972: 3rd November cited Maniruzzaman 1994:9)

The ruling government took some policies to give equal opportunities to all religions. For example, the government gave direction for recitation from the holy books of the four major religions, i.e., Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity every day at the

opening and closing time of the government run radio and television. During the Pakistan era only the Quranic verse were recited in the radio and television (Upreti 2004). The government also took some initiative to separate religion from education. Government constituted a commission. The Commission suggested that the religious subjects will be elective subject in the humanities group in class ix and x. The Commission also recommended that there was no need to introduce religious education up to class v (GoB 1973 B: 8-24)) The first government also gave importance on equal treatment of all religions. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman rightly pointed out that all religions in Bangladesh must exist on equal footing (Rahman 1983).

It is pertinent to mention here that the inclusion of secularism in the constitution by the Awami League government received huge criticism and opposition from anti-secular forces, academicians and intellectuals. This inclusion has been described 'as a conspiracy against Islam' (Rahman 1978). The academicians rose questioned about the authority of AL government to form the constitution at that time and insertion of secularism as fundamental state principle (Osmany 1992). There was also some criticism that the AL ignored the socio-cultural spirit and history of Bangladesh by incorporated the secularism in the constitution (Maniruzzaman 1986). Moreover, the role of India, the big neighbour and the ally of liberation war has also been perceived as one of the rational beyond the anti-secular intensity in Bangladesh after independence (Ahmed 1983a).

There were also some opinions that the insertion of secularism in the constitution as one of the state principles after the independence was lawful and accordance with the will of the people of Bangladesh. Because the victory of the liberation war in 1971 was not only military victory but also a win of 24 years of pro-secular Bengali nationalistic movement over religio-centric Pakistani nationalism (Husain 1997). It is also noteworthy that AL's secularism had nothing against personal's religious belief and practices, preferably a sense of 'neutrality' of the state regarding the practicing religion of the country. The first constitution banned the religious political parties which also did not bar any individuals

to perform their religious rituals. Nevertheless, almost all the religious political parties supported the occupation army in the name of saving Islam and were purportedly involved in war crimes. The activities of these political parties during the war of independence and the vexation of the people against their heinous deeds evoked constitutional banning which can be contemplated as an echo of social spirit.

However, first AL government incorporated secularism in the constitution of Bangladesh as a fundamental principle of the state, but the ideals of secularism were not strictly followed by the AL government. There were also some affirmations that the AL government sometimes deviated from the commitment to secularism in their party manifesto and election manifesto. In the later part of their rule, the AL pursued some popular Islamic activities, such as Islamic academy was reopened and upgraded as a foundation in March 1975. Islamic academy was an institution in the Pakistan period which deals with propagate Islamic ideals in the society and it was banned in 1972. In February 1974, Bangladesh became the full member of Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC). Bangabondhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman participated in OIC conference at Lahore in 1974 as the head of the state. In 1975, with the efforts from the AL government, Bangladesh became the founder member of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB). It is important to note that the main objective of the OIC is “to promote Islamic solidarity among the members state” (Charter of OIC, Article 11(A)) and the focus of IDB is to promote the economic development and social progress of member states in accordance with the principles of Shariah law. Therefore, the aim and objectives of these organisations were against the core value of the ideals of secularism and the constitutional principles.

3.6: Politics of AL During the Military Era (1975-91)

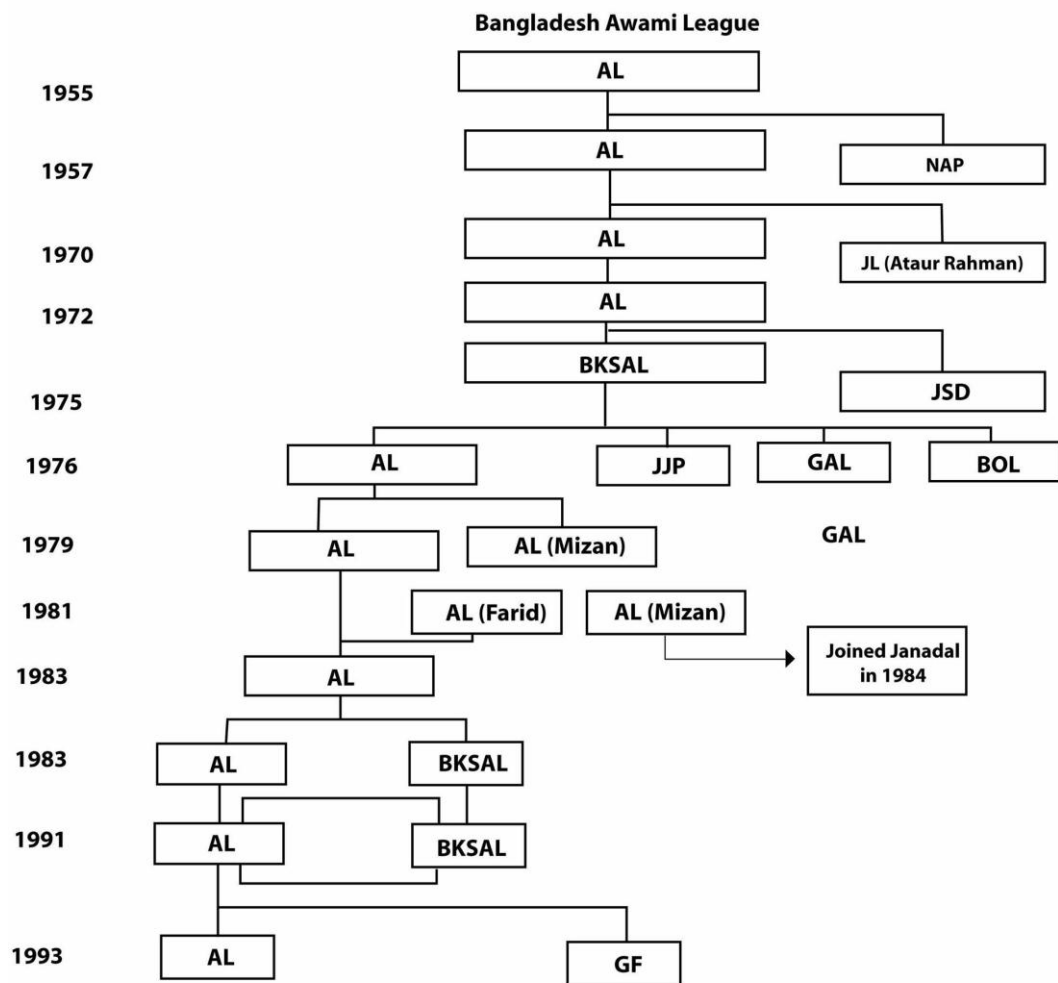
The first military coup d'état in the history of Bangladesh happened in 15 August 1975. Father of the nation Bonghabondhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and almost all his family

members, except two (Sheilk Hasian, the current Prime Minister and her sister Sheikh Rehana) were brutally killed and Awami League government was overthrown. After the fall of AL government, there was a civil government, but the ultimate power of the country went to the military. The quasi military government imposed banned upon political parties and activities. Major General Ziaur Rahman, the then Chief of Army Staff and Chief Martial Law Administrator (CMLA) assumed the power of the President of the Republic on 20 April 1977. For the legitimisation of his military dictatorial rule he arranged a referendum on 30 May 1977 and it was declared that he bagged 98.9 per cent of votes, though there were a popular belief that the election was heavily rigged. The military ruler Ziaur Rahman uplifted the ban on religious political parties whose activities were restricted during the AL rule (Franda 1982), because of making a support group from that group. Ziaur Rahman also arranged president election and parliamentary election in 1978 and 1979 respectively.

The anti-secular forces and some opportunist politicians from different political parties worked for the military ruler. The secular and pro-secular forces united under the banner of 'Gonotantik Oikko Jote' (GOJ) (Democratic United Front). In this alliance AL was the leading political party and active mover. The GOJ nominated M. A. G. Osmany, the military commander of Bangladesh Liberation war was as their candidate in the Presidential Election of 3 June 1978 against the Military ruler Ziaur Rahman. The military government was accused for the gross violation of 1972 constitution and its core value. In the manifesto of GOJ it was stated that the main aims of this alliance were to protect the basic principles of 1972 constitution, to persuade the right to perform self-religion for each and every individual and impose ban on communalism and use of religion for political purpose, reported in the Daily Sangbad on 14 and 15 May 1978. Military junta won the election and bagged 76.63 per cent votes (Khan and Zafarullah 1979). This election was also accused for huge rigging. During the election campaign thousands of AL members and GOJ leaders were in detention without any case. The

military junta used administration and media and also many martial rules and regulations against the opposition (Hasanuzzaman 1991).

Figure 2: Bangladesh Awami League Fragmentation



Source: Riaz, Ali (2016): 170

In the late 1978 there was a huge intra-party clash in the AL and party was split into two groups namely Awami League (Malek) and Awami League (Mizan). Some people believe that the military government used the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence

(DGFI) to divide the party. There were also some opinions that the party was divided due to absence of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the fight for crown post of the party (Majumdar 2010). The military government arranged Parliamentary Election in 1979. Awami League (Malek) criticised the military government for use of religion for political exploitation. This fraction of AL gave emphasis on their election Manifesto to re-establish 1972 constitution (Election Manifesto of AL 1979).

On 30 May 1981, Ziaur Rahman was murdered in a military coup in Chittagong. After the assassination of Ziaur Rahman, the Presidential election was held on 15 November 1981. Awami League nominated Dr. Kamal Hossain as their president candidate. Awami League promised to abolish communalism and establish religious freedom for every individual in their Election Manifesto. They also criticised the amendments of the constitutions, decrees and proclamation by the military ruler. They also blamed the junta for the use of religion in politics. Awami League gave commitment to repeal the enemy (vested) property Act which was enacted during the Pakistan era to suppress the religious minorities, i.e., Hindu community. In the Manifesto it also committed to uphold the spirit of liberation war and return to 1972 Constitution (Election Manifesto of Awami League 1979). Justice Abdus Sattar was the candidate of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and he won the election and got 66 per cent of votes (Ahmed 2004).

With a very short period of time, Bangladesh experienced the second military rule on 24 March 1982. In a bloodless coup, the elected President Justice Abdus Sattar was deposed and the military made Ahsanuddin Chowdhury as the president of the republic and Lt. General Hussain Muhammad Ershad became the chief Martial Law Administrator (CMLA). But, within a few days, on 11 December 1983 H M Ershad toppled the President and declared him as the President of Bangladesh. After becoming the president H M Ershad also had to face legitimacy crisis and he also followed the footsteps of his previous military ruler Ziaur Rahman. He organised the opportunist political leaders and

anti-secular forces and at last formed a political party namely Jatio Party (JP). After four years of his rule he declared the third Parliament election. The election was held on 7 May 1986. To contest the election, Awami League organised the pro-secular and leftist group and made an alliance of eight-party. In their election Manifesto Awami League promised to uphold the spirit of '71 and returned to the constitution of 1972 and the four fundamental principles of the state. Awami League also criticised the military rule and declared their rule illegal and undemocratic. Awami League urged the people to elect them to restore democracy (Awami League 1986). AL was defeated in the election and bagged only 76 seats out of 300 and JP got 183 seats (BEC).

During the military rule, Awami League's commitment to the secular politics and abolition of communal politics was officially clear. Because in their party constitution and manifesto of 1987 they clearly describe the four fundamental principles of the 1972 constitution were the prime objectives of the party. Awami League also gave commitment to assure religions freedom and eliminate all types of communalism. In their manifesto they gave the commitment not to give any special priority to any religion and they declared secularism as their basic principle (Awami League 1987).

3.7. Politics of Awami League During the Democratic Period (1991-2014)

With the tragic assassination of Banghabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Bangladesh state has been changed by the military ruler. The first military ruler Ziaur Rahman amended the constitution and the ideals of secularism were replaced with absolute trust and faith in the almighty Allah (GoB 1987). Through 8th amendment of the constitution in 1988, the second military ruler H M Earshad made Islam as the state religion. These efforts of de-secularisation of the polity of Bangladesh inspired the religious political parties to spread their political ideology in Bangladesh. The military ruler also tried to

make a support base by using religion. During this period, AL kept his promise to secular politics.

3.7.1 : Politics of Awami League as Opposition Party (1991-1996)

After fifteen years of long struggle, Bangladesh escaped from military rule in 1990. A non-partisan caretaker government headed by the chief Justice of Bangladesh arranged fifth parliamentary election. It is to mention that the major political parties including the AL boycotted forth parliamentary election held on 3 March 1988. During the election campaign, AL continued its commitment to secular politics including the other fundamental principles of 1972 constitution (Baxter 1992). In their election strategy, they condemned the military rulers for the use of religion in politics (Hasanuzzaman 1991). Awami League promised to build an exploitation free Bangladesh on essence of four fundamental principles of the state, i.e., nationalism, socialism, democracy and secularism in the election manifesto (AL 1991). In the election campaign, AL describes secularism as the ambience of Bangladesh polity. They depicted secularism as the individual rights to perform his own religion without any hurdle. AL also referred that state should ensure ideals of non-communalism, i.e., ‘no one would be discriminated by the state due to his/her religion, race, nationality or tribal identity’ (Majumdar 2010: 114). In their manifesto, AL construed that the declaration of secularism as one of the state principles in the first constitution of Bangladesh (in 1972), because of the desire of the common people. The manifesto also heavily condoned the military intervention of state and the use of religion in politics and also committed to restore the constitution of 1972. The election was held on 27 February 1991 and the result was very frustrating for AL. AL won only 88 seats though they got 30.08 per cent of votes and BNP secured 140 seats and formed the government though they got 30.81 per cent votes (BEC).

The pro-secular forces supported AL, but the anti-secular forces made the difference and their propaganda was successful in the election. They branded AL as a pro-Hindu, pro-India and anti-Muslim political party (Majumder 2010). After the astonishing debacle in the parliamentary election of 1991, AL organised its council on 19-20 September 1992. In this council they modified and approved its constitution (AL, 1992). But there were not any major changes in the policy of the party about the religion in politics. It declared that like before their long-cherished desire was to establish a secular state along with other fundamental principal of 1972 constitution. Party also promised to defend the religious right of every individuals and annihilation of communalism. Thus, it clearly shows that after the election, AL still in the way to secular politics and trying to establish the core value of 1972 constitution.

During the period of BNP rule (1991-96) especially after the by-election of Magura, AL organised mass movement against that government. The opposition political parties led by AL demanded the neutral caretaker government during parliamentary election time. BNP opposed this demand and arranged the sixth Parliamentary election on 15 February 1996. AL and all other major political parties did not participate in that election. The parliament was short lived only 11 days (19 March to 30 March) because of the mass support of that movement by political parties, civil society organisation and even the government officials.

The non-party neutral caretaker government was established after a long struggle and they declared the seventh parliamentary election. The election was held on 12 June 1996. AL published its election manifesto on 10 May 1996. In this manifesto AL first used religious rhetoric in their party document. The cover page of the manifesto enunciates that Allah Sorbosktiman (Allah is Almighty) and in top of the first page started with 'Parom karunamouy Allaher name shuru korchi (begin in the name of Allah, the most merciful). Furthermore, all the pages of the manifesto started with Allah Sorbosoktiman

(AL 1996). This clearly shows that these religious sentences in the party document were contradictory to the ideals of secularism and spirit of non-communal politics of AL (Majumdar 2010).

In the election manifesto the word secularism was used only once in the introduction section along with nationalism, democracy and the ideals of the liberation. But there was no amplification or discussion of secularism. The Education and Human Resource section of the manifesto stated that the commitment of AL is to ‘develop the standards and modernize the religion and madrasa education in Bangladesh’ (AL 1996: 7). In this section they also promised to change the education system of Bangladesh according to the Kudrat-e-Khuda Education committee report which was prepared during the time of Sheikh Mujib era (1972-75). This commission report suggested to establish a science and technology-based education policy and unitary education system. But there was no explanation in the manifesto how they adapted two different type of education system i.e. modern science and technology based and religions-based Madrasa education in unitary education system.

From the inception of Bangladesh by the leadership of AL, the party tried to establish the ideals of secularism in the state level and Bangladesh polity. But the 1996 election manifesto of AL clearly indicate that the party was ardent to create an image of Islam loving party and they had no thrust of the spirit of 1972 constitution. And even in the manifesto they did not mentioned anywhere to return to that spirit. Therefore, it is easy to say that the debacle in the parliamentary election of 1991, AL compelled to re-evaluate its party policy and its stand on secular politics in Bangladesh.

3.7.2 : Politics of Awami League During the First Government Under Sheikh Hasina (1996-2001)

The AL won the election of 1996 and formed the government after twenty years. But the position of AL regarding the secular ideas and religion in politics in the state level has some significance changes. Because if we analyse some party document from the parliamentary election of 1996 to the present time it will show us clearly that AL slowly depart from the policy of secularism and tried to be an Islam loving political party.

After coming to power in 1996, AL modified its party constitution by the council on 6-7 May 1997 (AL 1997). Same as the 1992 constitution of the party, it used the word secularism in aims and objective section without any explanation and elaboration. Though the other component of the secular politics like abolition of communalism, establishment of religious freedom, basic human right were similar to the previous constitutions. Like the election manifesto of 1996, there were no promise to return to the original constitution i.e. the 1972 constitution.

During the AL government they published a booklet in 1999 to aware the people about the success of the AL government. The booklet heighted that the AL government spent two thousand core taka (BDT) to develop the Madrasa education. This money was spent for 1741 private and three governments Madrasa (AL 1999: 20). To become an Islam loving party AL compromised with the Khuda Commission Report and highlighted the Madrasa education.

AL published a book title 'Awami Leaguer Panchas Bochor: Songramer ek Gaurabojjal Itihash (Fifty years of Awami League: A Glorious History of Straggle) to celebrate the 50 years of the party. In this publication, it emphasised on non-communal politics, democracy and to re-establish the ideals of liberation war (Lenin 2001). But the term

secularism was carefully missed and there was no commitment of return to the 1972 constitution which banned the religious political parties and use of religion in politics.

The 8th National election of the parliament was held on 1 October 2001. Before the election, AL published its election manifesto in September. Like the seventh parliament elections manifesto, AL this time also avoided the term secularism, though in the introduction section of the manifesto it highlighted “to establish a secular, democratic, exploitation free and prosperous Bangladesh” as a dream of Bangabandhu (AL 2001: 1). The manifesto focused that the AL government spent lot of money for the “restoration, development and maintenance of places of worship such as mosques, temples, churches and pagodas” (AL 2001: 9). The manifesto also revealed that AL government established a Welfare Trust for the Imams and Muazzens. The manifesto promised “no laws repugnant to the holy Quran and Sunnah shall be enacted. Due honours shall be shown to the teaching and values propagated by all religions” (AL 2001: 19). It showed that the AL will not enact any law which is against the teaching of religious majority, but it was not clear how the party show ‘due honors’ to all religious. Like the 1996 manifesto, this time also they made no commitment to return to the 1972 constitution.

As like as the 1996 election manifesto ‘Allah Sarbosoktiman (Allah is Almighty) and Parom Karunamoy Allaher name Shuru Korchi (In the name of Allah, the most merciful) were used in the manifesto of 2001 election. But in the election AL crashed devastatingly and won only 62 seats.

3.7.3 : Politics of Awami League as Opposition Party (2001-2006)

After the heavily defeat in the national election of 2001 the AL changed and ratified its party constitution and manifesto in 2002 in its party council. In the aims and objective section of the manifesto AL promised to establish “non-communal, democratic society and state in the spirit of liberation war” (AL 2002: 3). But the word secularism was

removed from the aims and objective section which were used in 1987 and 1997 constitution. Though the word secularism once used as one of basic principles but means as religions freedom. The new constitution of the party created a new post of secretary for religion. Not only this, this is the first time AL used the word Allah Sorbosaktiman (Allah is Almighty in their membership form which was included in party constitution (AL 2002). In the manifesto of 2002 AL criticised the military government for changing the secular, democratic nature of the state. But there was no commitment or promise to return to the first constitution of Bangladesh which banned the use of religion in politics.

The AL published a book to celebrate their fifty-five years in 2004. This book published the article of party President, General Secretary, Presidium members, some Executive and Advisory council members and also some pro-AL intellectuals (Lenin 2004). This publication mainly criticised the military rule (1975-1990) and the BNP rule (1991-1996 and 2001-2006). This publication argued that AL always fights to resist communalism and the military rule demolished the non-communal characteristics of the Bangladesh state (Rashid 2004). In this publication no author argued for the return to the ideals of secularism which was introduced by this party, instead of this ideal the authors tried to create an image of AL as a non-communal party.

In 2007 army again intervened in the political scenario of Bangladesh and the country was ruled by military backed caretaker government for two years. The military was compelled to declare the national election and the election was held in 29 December 2008. Before the election AL published its manifesto on 12 December 2008. In this manifesto AL gave importance on non-communal politics and fighting religious extremism but importantly missing the demand of secular politics.

The manifesto criticised the military government and also the political party which were evolved from military for exterminating the spirit of liberation war and independence

(AL 2008). The manifesto condemned BNP Jamaat alliance government (2001-2006) for promoting religious extremist group and for the brutality against the religions minority i.e., Hindus and the supporters of AL. The manifesto promised to establish 'non-communal progressive, liberal democratic welfare state' (AL 2008: 4) and also gave the commitment to an end of violence, unequal treatment and violation of human rights against the minorities (AL 2008: 11). As like as 2001 election manifesto AL gave extra privilege to the religious majority group i.e. Muslim. The manifesto promised not to enact laws repugnant to the Quran and Sunnah [p.12]. It also pledged to 'strengthen relationship with the Muslim state and work for consolidation for Muslim Ummah (nations) and enhancing co-operation within the structure of OIC' [p. 13]. In the manifesto, AL used many Islamic word like Inshallah (God willing) [p.13], Allah Amader Sahai hone (May Allah help us) [p. 14] etc. Therefore, the use of these religious word and rhetoric in the manifesto clearly shows that AL deviated its policy of secularism, even policy of non-communalism.

Though there were some deviations to the politics of secularism of AL, there were also some bold steps in their manifesto to uproot the religious politics from Bangladesh. In the 'Good governance section' of the manifesto AL set five priority works to do and the no five was the trial of war criminals (AL 2008: 5). This is very important issue for the religions politics of Bangladesh because almost all the religions political parties of Pakistan were involved in war crime during the liberation war. Thus, the trail of war criminals was a real desire of the people of Bangladesh and they want to stop the use of religion in politics.

3.7.4 : Politics of Awami League during the Second Government Under Sheikh Hasina (2008-2014)

In the general election of 2008 AL achieved a landslide victory and scored 230 seats alone and their grand alliance wins 262 seats (BEC 2008). After the election the AL hold its council on 24 July 2009 and modified and approved its party constitution and manifesto. In this council and the party documents of AL clear its position regarding the secular ideals and the role of religion in Bangladesh politics. In the preamble section of the party manifesto AL pledged to build a non-communal democratic society and state. Secularism was declared as one of the fundamental principle of the party in the 'Basic Principles' section of the manifesto (AL 2009). Not only this, party manifesto elaborates the meaning of secularism. In the "Aims, objectives, Principles and Development Ideals" section of the party constitution AL promised to reintroduce secularism, ensure equal right and freedom of all religions, and establish politics of non-communalism. AL gave commitment to restrain the use of religion in politics and political activities in religious places. Awami League also promised to prohibit abuse of religion in politics, combat religious hatred and religious antagonism and assured the security of the minorities in the "Democracy and Effective Parliament" section of the manifesto (AL 2009).

The party documents of 2009 of AL clearly revealed the position of AL regarding the religion in politics and a shift of party position which they were taking after the re-introduction of democracy in Bangladesh in 1991. It is true that there were some changes in its party position but there was also some previous policy which were followed by this document similar to the membership form of 2002. The new Constitution approved that form where it was written in the top that Allah Sarboshoktiman (Allah is Almighty), party will enhance bondage with the Muslim States and co-operation with OIC and consolidate the Muslim Ummah.

During the AL rule (2008--) appellate division of the supreme court of Bangladesh declared the 5th Amendment of the constitution illegal. It also was repealed on 2 February 2010. (5th Amendment of the constitution was done by the military ruler Ziaur Rahman and it changed the fundamental principles of the state). According to the court order, AL government amended the constitution (15th Amendment) on 3 July 2011 and fundamental principles of the state become- nationalism, socialism, democracy and secularism like the constitution of 1972. In the fifteen amendment of the constitution AL made some changes in the article 2A of the constitution. But, Islam as the state religion was unchanged. The constitution guaranteed that “the state shall ensure equal status and equal right in the practice of the Hindu, Buddhist, Christian and other religions” (GoB 2014). After the fifteen amendment of the constitution, the constitution became very peculiar because there is state religion i.e. Islam and the fundamental principles of state is secularism. So, this is a very big question how the state follows the secular ideals with state religion.

AL holds its 19th National Council of the party on 29 December 2012. The council updates and approved its manifesto but there was no change in the party constitution. In the introduction section of the manifesto it stated that the party adopted secularism as a principle of the party in 1955 (AL 2012: 1). In the ‘Aims Objectives, Basic Principles and Development philosophy’ section of the manifesto AL promised to establish Bengali nationalism, Democracy, secularism and socialism and secure equal right to all religion, cast and ethnic minorities and also ensure secular politics, equality and social Justice (AL 2012: 23). AL published vision 2021 as ‘Which Bangladesh We Want to See in 2021’. There are eight points and many sub-points in the vision, but no point was for secular politics and the role of religion in politics.

AL government arranged tenth national parliamentary election in 2014. The election was not an inclusive election and many political parties including BNP did not participate in that election. 153 members of parliaments were elected without opposition. Before the

election the AL published its election manifesto on 28 December 2013. In the election manifesto AL heavily criticised BNP and Army back caretaker government. There was no commitment of secular politics even they did not use the word secularism in anywhere of the manifesto. Though in ‘the National Charter for Peace, Democracy, Development and Prosperity’ section of the manifesto and in the sub-section of ‘our priorities for this term: Good Governance, Democratisation and Decentralisation of power’, AL promised to complete the trial of the war criminals. In the same section, party committed to ensure the right to practice of religion of all citizen and also vowed to ensure equal rights and opportunities for all the citizens disregarding religion, caste, ethnicity, gender and social status (AL 2013: 22-24). Like the election manifesto of 2008 AL tried to use the majority religious group i.e. Muslim. In the sub section ‘Freedom of culture and religion’, AL promises not to enact any law contradicting the Quran and Sunnah. They promised to build a modern mosque in every Districts and Upazilas. Though the manifesto promised to show due respect to all creed and doctrines of different religion and other religious institution will be renovated and developed (AL 2013: 42). But there were no elaboration how they will ensure equal respect and equal opportunities to all religions.

3.8: The Trial of the War Criminals

One of the not contested issue between the two political forces of Bangladesh i.e. Awami League and BNP is the trial of the war criminals of 1971. During the nine-month long liberation war the Pakistani occupational forces and their collaborators committed genocide in Bangladesh which resulted killings of three million people and raping of quarter million girls and women. Due to war ten million Bengalis migrated as refugee to India and thirty million people were internally displaced (Mascarenhas, 1971; Ayoob and Subrhmanyam, 1972; O’Donnell, 1984)

The Pakistani army were the prime accused of the genocide committed in Bangladesh. After the liberation war, Bangladesh government affirmed its intent to hold war crimes trials against the Pakistani army and they made specific charges against 193 officers of Pakistani army. However, after the negotiation with Pakistan and their assurance of holding trial in Pakistan, Bangladesh government gave up the idea of war crimes trial of Pakistani forces. There were also a huge number of Bengalis who collaborated with Pakistani forces. The Pakistani forces recruited Bengali collaborators mainly from Islamist political groups i.e. Muslim league and Jamaat-e-Islami. The collaborators formed peace committees in different cities and localities. The Pakistani forces gave arms to the committee members called razakars (armed volunteers) to fight against the freedom fighters. Two prominent groups of collaborators—Al-Badr and Al-Shams were trained by the Pakistani and hence they lead the killing of intellectuals during 12-14 December 1971. After the birth of Bangladesh in 16 December 1971, some Mukti Bahini (Freedom Fighter) groups carried out few summary executions of the collaborators. But the government took the firm position to trail the collaborators in accordance with the due process of law. To trial the war criminals' government passed the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973 in the parliament on 20 July 1973. The act stipulated that,

By this act the Tribunal was empowered to trail and punish any individuals, group, or any member of any armed forces or auxiliary forces, irrespective of his nationality, who commits crimes in Bangladesh territory. It is said in the act that the following crimes would be trial by the Tribunals:

- “a. Crimes against humanity: namely, murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation, imprisonment, abduction, confinement, torture, rape or other inhuman acts committed against any civilian population or persecutions on political, racial, ethnic or religious grounds, whether or not in violation of the domestic law of the country where perpetrated;
- b. Crime against peace: namely, planning, preparation, initiation or waging of a war of aggression or a war in violation of international treaties, agreements or assurances;

- c. Genocide: meaning and including any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, religious or political group, such as: (i) killing members of the group; (ii) causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (iii) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (iv) imposing measure intended to prevent birth within the group; (v) forcibly transferring children of the group to another group;
- d. War crimes: namely violation of law or customs of war which include but are not limited to murder, ill-treatment or deportation to slave labour or for any other purpose of civilian population in the territory of Bangladesh; murder or ill-treatment of prisoners of war on the seas, killing of hostages and detenues, plunder of public or private property. Wanton destruction of cities, towns or villages or devastation not justified by military necessity;
- e. Violation of any humanitarian rules applicable in armed conflicts laid down in the Geneva Conventions of 1949;
- f. Any other crimes under international law;
- g. Attempt, abetment or conspiracy to commit any such crimes;
- h. Complicity in or failure to prevent commission of any such crime'' (GoB 1973).

After the liberation war, a huge number of accused persons were in Jail. By enacting this act their trail was started and many received the sentences from the court. By the end of 1973 government decided to grant a general amnesty to those being prosecuted because government considered that it would advance the interests of national reconciliation (Hossain 2013). But it was clearly stated that amnesty was not given to them who were punished or accused of rape, murders, attempted murder, arson, or genocide.

The whole scenario has been changed after the brutal killing of Bangabondhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on 15 August 1975. The military captured power and they tried to change the philosophy of the state. General Ziaur Rahman released the war criminals and he re-instead them in politics. Not only these, he also gave permission to reopen the religious political parties. From that time the issue of the trail of the war criminals were

gone into cold storage. But, it was kept alive on the public agenda primarily by citizen's group. This issue re-emerges in 1991 when Ghulam Azam was elected the Ameer (Chief) of Jamaat 29 December 1991. This issue created discontents among the citizen group.

Ghulam Azam return to Bangladesh in 1978 with a Pakistani passport and whose citizenship was aborted in 1972. This issue provoked the huge protests among the cultural and social activists and also the political parties. The opposition party in parliament protested this incident and demanded the trial of Ghulam Azam as war criminal, reported in The Daily Star on 8 January 1992. A Citizen Committee was formed with 101 members on 19 January 1992. In a statement this committee declared that if government do not expel Ghulam Azam from the country before next 26 March, they will form a Gono Adalat (People's Court) and will trail Gulam Azam as war criminal in Sarwardi Uddan. The signatories of this statement were- Begum Sufia Kamal, Lt. Col (Rtd.) Kazi Nuruzzaman, Barrister Istiaq Ahmed, Major General (Rtd.) C R Datta, Air vice Marshal (Rtd.) Sadruddin, Jahanara Imam, Sardar Fazlul Karim, Samsur Rahman, etc. (Firoj 2012). On 24 March 1992, Government arrested Ghulam Azam and sent him to the Dhaka Central Jail (Rahman 2013). The Citizen Committee namely Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee arranged public trial of Ghulam Azam as war criminal in Sarwardi Uddyan on 26 March and Jahanara Imam as a Chief of Gono Adalat found him (Ghulam Azam) guilty and declared death sentenced (Jahan 2015). Sheikh Hasina, the leader of the opposition declared it as 'people's victory' reported in The Daily Azker Kagoj on 27 March 1992. Ghulam Azam filled a write petition to the High Court against the cancelation of his citizenship. High Court gave a split verdict and second court declared the government decision was illegal (reported in The Bangladesh Observer, 23 April 1993). Finally, the Appellate Division also sustained the High Court Order, reported in The Daily Star on 23 June 1993. It is said that the Ghulam Azam issue endowed the AL

to define itself as a party with a mission to restore Mukti Juddher Chetona (Spirit of Liberation War) (Jahan, 2015: 43).

Following Ghulam Azam issue, the demand of the trial of the war criminal came into forefront and the social and cultural group lunched many programmes. The Awami League as a political party supported these movement. It is worthwhile to note that Jamaat-e-Islami supported the Awami League led non-party caretaker government movement against BNP in 1993. Jamaat supported Awami League led movement because they wanted to restore their image as anti-liberation force and by working with a pro- liberation force they tried to establish them as a main stream political party. But the demand of the war crimes was still alive in the general mind.

By the victory of the seventh parliamentary election of 1996 Awami League formed the government. During that government Jamaat-e-Islami made alliance with BNP which called the four-party alliance (along with Islami Oikkya Jote and Jatiya party). This alliance was successful to form the government in 2001 and Begum Khaleda Zia became the Prime Minister. Begum Khaleda Zia gave two importer portfolios to two veteran Jamaat Leaders Motiur Rahman Nizami and Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid those who were directly opposed the liberation of Bangladesh and who were actively participated as collaborators. This issue created protest among the civil society, cultural and social groups along with political parties.

After the reintroduction of democracy in 1991, Awami League first declared its commitment to do trial of the war criminals in their election manifesto of 2008. In the 'Good Governance' section of manifesto it was declared that 'the trial of the war criminals will be held' (AL 2008:08). This issue became one of the major pledges of Awami League in their election campaign. Awami League won a landslide victory in the ninth parliamentary election. AL led Grand Party Alliance passed a resolution

unanimously in the parliament on 29 January 2009 that they will prosecute the war criminals, reported in The Daily Star on 30 January 2009. By the recommendation of the Law Commission on the technical aspects of the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973 government amended the law to incorporate the other nations experience. This amendment paved the way for the trial of the individual and political parties those who committed war crime during the liberation war. This amendment also creates the opportunity to appeal the decision of the tribunals to the High Court.

The government set up the three-member tribunal on 25 March 2010. They also set up a twelve-member prosecution team and seven-member investigation team to lead the trials under the ICT Act 1973. The BNP did not manifest any reverse position against the war criminal trials. Though there were some senior leader of BNP were accused of war crimes. BNP did not take overt position because it was a popular demand of the country. But BNP always called for fair trial and accused the trials as politically motivated.

3.8.1 : Shahabagh Movement

The first formal charge was filed against Abdul Quader Mollah, the Assistant Secretary General of Jamaat-e-Islami on 18 December 2011. On 5 February 2013 ICT granted him life imprisonment for his guilty of crimes against humanity. But this verdict created huge dissatisfaction among the young citizen of Bangladesh. The students, youth groups and online activists led a street mobilisation in support of the war crime trials under the banner of Shahabagh Movements. Firstly, they demanded the death penalty of Quader Mollah. During their movement they demanded the capital punishments for war criminals; ban of Jamaat from Bangladesh politics and boycott of Jamaat Institutions, it was reported in The Daily Star on 9 February 2013.

During the first few days of Shahabagh Movement BNP was silent, and they first reacted on 11 February by sending a press release. The National Standing Committee (NSC) of

BNP welcome the movement reported in The Daily Prothom Alo, 13 February 2013. But within two weeks BNP changed its position regarding the Shahabagh Movement and they criticised the activities of the movements. On 15 March 2013 Begum Khaleda Zia in a mass meeting at Munshiganj called that this movement was created by atheist and urged the government to stop this movement. During this time the leaders of the BNP reassured that they were not against the war crimes trial, but they want free and fair trial with international standard. But they never revealed their demand how the international standard will maintain (Ahmed 2016).

3.8.2 : Counter of Shahabagh Movement (Hefazat-e- Islam)

The Shahabagh Movement was quickly countered by an Islamist fundamentalist mobilisation on 5th May 2013 at Shapla Chattor, Motigheel lead by Hefazat-i-Ialam. This movement was originated from Hathazari Madrassa of Chattagram. A group of Madrassa educated people and student emerging in political arena of Bangladesh on 19 January 2010 in protest of the Government's National Women Development Policy and the National Education Policy which they called un-Islamic. On 6th April 2013 in a mass gathering at Motijheel they demanded 13 points demand-

- “1. Reinstate the phrase “Absolute trust and faith in the Almighty Allah” in the constitution as one of the fundamental principles of state policy;
2. Pass a law providing for capital punishment for maligning Allah, Islam and Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and smear campaigns against Muslims;
3. Stop all propaganda and “derogatory comments” about Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) by the “atheist leaders” of the Shahbagh movement, bloggers and other anti-Islamists; arrest them and ensure stern punishment to them;
4. Stop attacking, shooting, killing and persecuting the Prophet-loving Islamic scholars, madrasa students and people united by belief in Allah;
5. Release all the arrested Islamic scholars and madrasa students;
6. Lift restrictions on mosques and remove obstacles to holding religious programmes;

7. Declare “Qadianis” non-Muslim and stop their publicity and conspiracies;
8. Stop foreign cultural intrusions including free-mixing of men and women and candlelit vigils, and put an end to adultery, injustice, shamelessness, etc in the name of freedom of expression and individual;
9. Stop turning Dhaka, the city of mosques, into a city of idols, and stop setting up sculptures at intersections, colleges and universities;
10. Scrap anti-Islam women policy and education policy and make Islamic education mandatory from primary to higher secondary levels;
11. Stop threatening and intimidating teachers and students of Qawmi madrasas, Islamic scholars, imams and khatibs;
12. Stop creating hatred among young generations against the Muslims by misrepresentation of Islamic culture in the media;
13. Stop anti-Islam activities by NGOs, evil attempts by Qadianis and conversion by Christian missionaries at Chittagong Hill Tracts and elsewhere in the country” this was reported in The Daily Star on 6 April 2013.

Hefajat-e-Islam organised a huge protest demonstration and sit in programme at Shapla square Motijheel on 5th May 2013. The destroyed the public properties in Mitijheel area. BNP gave the full support to the Hefazat-e-Islam. But the Awami League government was very strict about their demonstration. On the night of 5th May security forces launched operation flash out and clean the Shapla square during night. Human Rights Watch and other human rights organisation claimed above fifty were death during the operation (reported in the BD News 24.com, 11 May 2013). BNP claimed that thousands of Hefazat activist were dead. Hefazat also claimed that their 1000 activist were dead. But the government rejected all the claims and they reveal that only 11 was casualties including a few law enforcement members (reported in the BD News 24.com, 11 May 2013).

After the Hefazat incident the government were more careful about the trials of the war criminals. In the election manifesto of the 10th Parliamentary election of Awami League they reaffirm the pledge of the trial of the war criminals. In ‘the Priority: Good Governance, Democratisation and Decentralisation of Power’ section of the manifesto

Awami League declared that the trails of the war criminals will be completed and punishment would be implemented. It also declared that those who want to destroy the public properties to stop the trails would also face the trails. (AL 2014:24)

The issue of the trail of the war criminals is a burning issue of Bangladesh politics. This demand is a much-cherished desire of the citizen group of Bangladesh. But, the right-wing Islamist political parties and main stream opposition party BNP were clearly against this trail. Though BNP always claimed that they are in favours of the trail of the war criminals. They want free, fair trail and all kind of political motivation free. They also demand the trail with international standard. But BNP never gave any idea how the government will maintain the international standard. There are many some shortcoming of the trail of the war criminals, but the secular force and young generation are with this trail.

3.10: Conclusion

Although it is unequivocal that Awami League is a centre-left political party being a major player in the shaping of the secular discourse in the polity, it is also compromised with the religious politics. This is mainly because of the electoral politics of the party to gain in or retain the state power. This has made huge dilemma whether to call them a secular political party as they lean towards the use of religious politics. Although Awami League bring back secularism in the constitution (as of the 1972 original constitution), state religion is still Islam and Awami League promised not to bring anything in the state affairs that contradicts with the Quran and Sunnah. This could pose a question whether and to what extent Awami League is different from other major political parties in terms of (ab)use of religion and secularism in Bangladesh politics. The chapter that follows (chapter 4) discusses the role of BNP in religious politics and secularism which would shed some light on the comparative positionality of both parties.

CHAPTER 4
RELIGIOUS POLITICS AND BANGLADESH
NATIONALIST PARTY (BNP)

CHAPTER 4

Religious Politics and Bangladesh Nationalist Party

4.1: Introduction

The essence of the Islam about the political nature of a state is neglected in most of the Muslim country of the world. Rather, the Muslim countries are using religion for the political purposes and they are exploiting the real meaning of Islam. Lack of democracy, lack of good governance and corruption make these states very weak. According to Abusulayman “[the Muslim world] internally weak, relatively backward, frustrated, conflict ridden, suffering from internal tension, and often controlled and abuse by foreign powers, the Muslim world is in a state of crisis. For Muslims all of modern history is a tragedy.” (Abusulayman 1994: 1) Bangladesh also a real example of this nature.

In an Islamic sense, the relations between Islam and politics are co-related and they are integrated. According to the opinion of John Esposito, “The traditional Islamic world view provided a holistic approach towards life, a life in which religion was intimately and organically related to politics, law and society.” (Esposito 1983:5) In real Islamic sense, the state will implement the basic principles of Islam as an institution and it has no power to make laws. In the Holy Quran it is said, “The authority rests with none but Allah. He commands you not to surrender you to anyone to save him. This is the right way.” (12. 40) and also “They ask: have we also got some authority? Say: all authority belongs to Allah alone.” (3: 154). According to the Islamic believes that Allah created the men to satisfy him– by obeying his order and implementing his religion. So, in a Muslim country it is very difficult to ignore religion.

The use of religion in politics is not a new phenomenon for Bangladesh as elsewhere. Bangladesh is not officially declared as an Islamic state, but majority of its population is Muslim. That is why to separate religion from politics is very difficult task. Not only this but also it is true for the south Asian countries and even the developed countries also. Religion are so deeply rooted in South Asian countries that constitutionally secular countries also promote religious politics. Religion has been exploited in many countries as a means of authoritarian rule and for earning legitimacy. Bangladesh emerged a new country in South Asia with a hope of secular and socialistic values. But within few years of independence Bangladesh experienced its first military coup and the hope and aspiration of Bangladesh started going back. The military ruler pictured the rule of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was darkened period and the inclination of secularism was not befitting with the ethos of Bengali culture. The military ruler gave a new explanation of Bengali nationalism and they found the religious elements in Bengali culture. They used the religion as a tool for their legitimacy crisis and to establish their hegemonic role for political expediency.

This chapter examines the role of BNP how to Islamise the politics and society of Bangladesh how they turned the country into a breeding centre of Islamist fundamentalist. For this purpose, the genesis of BNP and their politics will be discussing, and some light will be reflected how they established the religious political parties in Bangladesh as their partner in power which was constitutionally banned after the independence. Finally, this chapter will conclude how and why BNP use religion in politics. and how they contributed the rise of militancy in Bangladesh.

4.2: Genesis of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)

To discuss the political philosophy of BNP and the use of religion in politics in Bangladesh under the leadership of Begum Khalede Zia (1945-) during the period of 1991—2014, it is important to discuss the genesis of BNP. It is also significant to analyse

the birth of BNP to revile the factors behind the political strategies and the causes of alliance with the Islamist. In addition to that the genes of BNP will help to interpret the use of religious in politics for electoral victory and the adoption of religious oriented policies and practices by this political party.

After the brutal murder of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his family in 15 August 1975 the military were the prime stager of politics up to 1990. Following the coup d'état Khondoker Mostaq Ahmed (1918-1996) became the President by the military. The military intervention in politics is not a new phenomenon in south Asia especially in Pakistan. From 1958 to the birth of Bangladesh Pakistan was ruled by military. It is important to note that during the united Pakistan the armed forces were highly politicised (Hossain 1988). But within the structure of Pakistan armed forces Bengali soldiers and officers were deprived because of the internal disparity between East Pakistan and West Pakistan. The East Bengal Regiment (EBR) in the Pakistan Army that's why had a weakness for the liberation of East Pakistan. After the independence of Bangladesh, the freedom fighters were recruited in the armed forces. Bangladesh armed forces were formed with the freedom fighters and non-freedom fighter's soldiers and officers of Pakistan army who were East Pakistani. Therefore, from the inception of Bangladesh armed forces there were internal feud among the freedom fighter and non-freedom fighter (Ahmed 2016).

The coup of 1975 was staged by a small number of officers around 30 and six majors were in command. Those who were the leaders of the coup all were not in service at that time, some were retired, and some lost their jobs on the ground of corruptions and disciplinary actions. After the takeover, the army officials declared Bangladesh an Islamic state. However, Khondoker Mostaq himself did not refer to anything regarding the state policy of his short time (Riaz 2016). He declared martial law on 20 August 1975 (the Bangladesh Gazette Extraordinary, 20 August 1975 p. 2413-14) Major General Ziaur Rahman became the Chief of Army Staff on 24 August. But, Mostaq introduced a new

post in Armed forces as Chief of Défense Staff and Major General Khalilur Rahman appointed in that post. General Osmani became the Defence Advisor. On 26 September Khondoker Mostaq passed an ordinance to protect him and associates including the killer of the father of Nation from the future punishment (GoB 1975 B).

On 3 November, Bangladesh experienced second political killing and four National Leader Tajuddin Ahmed, Syed Nazrul Islam, Captain Mansur Ali and A H M Qamruzzman were brutally killed in Dhaka Central Jail. In a counter coup Ziaur Rahman was house arrested and Major General Khaled Mosharraf became Chief of Army. On 6 November Justice Abu Sadat Mohammad Sayem, the then Chief Justice of Bangladesh became the President. In another coup on 7 November Zia became free and resisted as Chief of Army and become Deputy Chief Martial Law Administrator.

From 7 November Zia became the main mover of Bangladesh state though his post was Deputy Chief Martial Law Administrator. President Sayem followed the direction of Zia and worked according to his will (Kabir 2010). Zia captured the power of Chief Martial Law Administration on 29 November 1976 (GoB 1975: 3493-94). Finally, Zia toppled the president Sayem and became the President of the republic on 21 April 1977.

4.3: Politics of Ziaur Rahman and Formation of Bangladesh

Nationalist Party (BNP)

Zia came to the forefront after the coup of 7 November 1975. On November 11, he declared that, 'I am not a Politician. I am a soldier. ... I have no connection with politics and our government totally non-party and non-political,' reported in The Bangladesh Observer on 12 November 1975. However, after some time Zia had a desire to be political and he capture all the powers of the government. i.e., President, CNMLA and Chief of Army staff. On 22 April 1977 Zia declared that a referendum will be held on 30 May this year. On the same day Zia changed the constitution of Bangladesh which paved

the way for religious politics in Bangladesh. He inserted 'Bismillah-ar-Rahman-ar-Rahim' above the preamble of the constitution. Some changes were occurred in the second para of the preamble. The Article 12 of the Constitution of 1972 where stated the secularism and freedom of religion and it declared,

'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 favor of any religion;
- (c) The abuse of religion for political purposes;
- (d) Any discrimination against, or presumption of, persons practicing a particular religion' (GoB 1972)

This article (12) was totally abolished from the constitution. In the same proclamation, Zia changed the fundamental principles of the constitution. Nationalism, socialism, Democracy and Secularism were the fundamental principles of the 1972 Constitution, but Zia changed it as "The principles of absolute trust and faith in the Almighty Allah, Nationalism, Democracy and Socialism meaning economic and social justice" (GoB 1977: 5379-5403). Zia also brought some changes in the Article 25 of the constitution. He added a sub section in article 25 that, "The state shall endeavour to consolidate, preserve and strengthen fraternal relations among Muslim countries based on Islamic solidarity" (GoB 1979)

Zia also abolished the sub section (2)(e) of article 66 of the Constitution of 1972 where declared the disqualification for election as or for being a member of parliament "has been convicted of any offence under the Bangladesh Collaborations (Special Tribunals) order 1972" (GoB 1972) This abolition helps the collaborators to participate in politics those who use religion directly in the politics.

Zia not only changed the constitution but also introduced some rules and regulation which also expedited the use of religion in the politics. He changed the Political Party Regulation (PPR) and gave the permission to form the religion political party which was

banned by the Constitution of 1972. The most important features of this changes were Islamisation of the constitution and the polity (Riaz 2016).

Before the referendum Zia declared 19 points programme to build modern Bangladesh.

This 9 Points Programme is-

1. To preserve the independence, integrity and sovereignty of the state at all cost.
2. To reflect in all spheres of our national life the four fundamental principles of the Constitution, i.e. Complete faith in and reliance on the Almighty Allah, Democracy, Nationalism, and Socialism meaning economic and social justice.
3. To build ourselves into a self-reliant nation through all possible means.
4. To ensure people's participation at all levels of administration, development programmes and in the maintenance of law and order
5. To strengthen rural economy and thus the national economy by according priority to agricultural development.
6. To make the country self-sufficient in food and ensure that nobody has to starve.
7. To set up cloth production so as to ensure supply of at least coarse cloth for everybody.
8. To take all possible measures so that no one remains homeless
9. To rid the country of the curse of illiteracy.
10. To ensure minimum medical care for everybody.
11. To place women at their rightful position in the society and to organize and inspire the youths for nation building.
12. To give necessary incentives to the private sector for the economic development of the country.
13. To improve the condition of the workers and develop healthy employer-worker relations in the interest of increased production.
14. To create an urge for public service and nation-building among the government employees and improve their financial condition.

15. To check population explosion.
16. To build up friendship based on equality with all countries and especially strengthen the relations with the Muslim nations.
17. To decentralize the system of administration and development and strengthen local Government.
18. To establish a social system based on Justice and fair play and free from corruption.
19. To safeguard the right of all citizen irrespective of religion, colour and sect and consolidate national unity and solidarity'' it was published in The Daily Bangla on 23 May 1977.

This 19 points considered as the election manifesto of General Zia and the followers of Zia considered this 19 points as the political philosophy of Ziaur Rahman.

Ziaur Rahman arranged the referendum on 30 May 1977. Election Commission declared the result that 88.50 per cent voter cast their vote and President Zia got 98.9 per cent yes vote (Miah 1993). It is widely believed that this election was heavily rigged, and the high per centage of casting vote was unbelievable (Ahmed 2016).

By changing the constitution and promulgation some rules Zia tried to legitimise his rule. For this, legitimisation he needed a certificate of political recognition. The referendum gives that certificate to Zia (Milam 2009). After the election Zia tried to give a picture of his administration to the people that his administration is going to more civil. For that reason, he appointed more civilian to his advisory council. Thought there were coups and counter-coups, killings and counter-killings and conspiracies, Zia was adamant to be in the power. For that reason, he uplifts the ban on politics under the PPR (Political Party Regulation) he gave the permission to the political parties to receive license for political activities. NAP-Bhasani led by Maulana Bhasani, Bangladesh Jatiya League led by Aaur Rahman Khan, Bangladesh People's League led by Dr. Aleem Al Razee, Jatiaya Janata Party led by General Osmany (Rtd.), Bangladesh Islamic Democratic league led by Maulana Siddiq Ahmed and Maulana Abdur Rahim, CPB led by Moni Singh, Samyabadi

Dal led by Mohammad Toaha, JSD led by M. A Awal, Bangladesh Muslim League led by Abdus Sabur Khan etc. were the main political parties who received the license under PPR. On 4 November 1975 AL got the license and the number of registered party were 17 at that time and 29 parties were waiting for registration (Ullah, Mahfuz 2016).

For making a mass based political support to be in power Zia declared 19 points programme before the referendum. For that reason, he followed the path of Ayub Khan. Zia arranged local government elections of Union Parishad and Municipalities for making a support based. Before formation of a political party Zia tried to organize a front of political parties. The main objectives of that front were to counter the support base of AL. On 15 December 1977 Zia declared his will on the radio and television by an address to the Nation that he will organize a political front. He urged the Bangladeshi people who believe in Bangladeshi Nationalism irrespective of religion, caste and creed to join this proposed front, reported in The Daily Ittefaq on 19 December 1977.

To organize political support Zia was very pragmatic. He approached both the leftist and rightist and he did not identify him in any particular group. He had a strategy so split the political party and received support from factions. It is said that Zia followed a 'carrot and stick' policy to recruit political support (Jahan 2015; 26). The carrot was the declaration of parliamentary election for the parties those who wanted to participate. The AL and the JSD were the main contested party of the regime and they were the stick of that government because main leaders and workers of this two parties were imprisoned. From the very beginning of Zia's rule, he received the support from NAP (Bhasani). But the election strength of this party was not enough for Zia. Zia not only received the support from leftist and rightist, but also received the support from the Islamist opposed the independence of Bangladesh. With support from Zia the main collaborators were rehabilitated in the politics of Bangladesh. In this connection the religion-based political parties were became active again. The ML was revived. The JI and the NI together

formed IDL. In 1978 professor Ghulam Azam, Former Ameer of JI returned to Bangladesh on a Pakistani passport.

Before December 1977 was not pretty sure to form political party of his own or going some other party. On 10 June 1977 in a press conference in London during the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) he said, Bangladesh Army had no political ambition and he had no desire to contest in the general election of 1978 nor he had any plan to form a political party (Ullah 2016), But in December 1977 he declared his will to form a political party. To control the front, he need a political party of his own, that's why on 22 February 1978 he launched a new political party called Jatiyatabadi Gonotantik Dal (JAGODAL). But Zia was behind the scene, he did not himself going to the JAGODAL. Some members of his Advisory Council joined in the new party and Justice Abdus Sattar became the Convener of the party. But the new party was not able to create wave in the political field of Bangladesh because the members of the convening committee were new face of politics (Ahmaed 2016).

On 28 April 1978 Election Commission declared the Presidential Election schedule which was to be held on 3 June. On 1 May 1978 JAGODAL made an election alliance with the Muslim League, NAP (B), the United People's Party (UPP), The Bangladesh Labour Party (BLP) and the Bangladesh Scheduled Casts Federation. Zia contested the Presidential Election as a candidate of this alliance.

The main opposition party AL also participated in the Presidential Election. They also formed an election alliance called Gonotantik Oikko Jote (GOJ) with the NAP (Muzaffor), the People's League, the Jatiya Janata Party (JJP) and Gono Azadi League (GAL). GOJ nominated General M A G Osmany as their Presidential Election candidate (Haq and Alam 2014). The GOJ published its election manifesto on 13 May 1978. They demanded the parliamentary form of government and president should be constitutional head according to the constitution of 1972. They also called for the release of the political

prisoners and the trail of the killer of Bangabondhu and national leaders who were killed in Jail, reported in The Daily Sanghbad on 14 May 1978.

The JF published their election manifesto on 31 May 1978 and heavily criticised the rule of sheikh Mujib. It criticised that, “the expectation of the millions of people of this country were totally betrayed by the Awami-BAKSALites. They unleashed a reign of terror, unlimited corruption; killing, looting and innumerable acts of vandalism and crimes pervaded the nation scene,” reported in The Bangladesh Observer on 1 June 1978. Presidential Election was held in 3 June 1978 and Zia won the election. Zia bagged 76.33 per cent of votes and Osmany got only 21.70 per cent of casting votes. (BEC 1978, Jahan 2005: 238)

After the presidential election victory Zia wanted to bring more coherence and unity in his political front. Zia decided to form a political party of his own. On 28 August Justice Sattar declared the dissolution of JAGODAL. On 30 August Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) applied for registration and got the permission on the next day. On 1 September 1978 Zia declared the new party and 76 members Convening Committee and he became the Convener. To form the BNP Zia took an ‘anti-AL position and wanted to bring all anti-AL forces under one umbrella’ (Ullah 2016). Zia tried to accommodate in his party from the leftist, rightist, centrists and all types of people. According to Justice T H Khan, “Zia accommodated such diverse elements in the BNP was mainly because of his determination to unite the country, bring the warring factions together. He wanted to bring the freedom fighter and the non-freedom fighters under one umbrella. ... He did not want to divide the country the way AL did. He did not hate anyone for the role in 1971” (Ullah, 2016).

4.4: Politics of Ziaur Rahman and the Role of Religion

The BNP was formed with heterogeneous political parties and workers and their ideological beliefs were very weak. But the prevailing situation promoted the people to join BNP. Golam Hossain explains the causes of the joining of the people to BNP. He said,

Most of those who joined the BNP did not do so because they were attracted by the ideology and the political, social and economic programme of the party, but for the sake of power, office and patronage. Others joined to secure governmental facilities or to increase their social status and prestige in the company of Ministers and MPs. Many radical politicians and Islam-pasand (Islamist) persons, who had been imprisoned during the Mujib regime, had been released and almost all of them supported the BNP. In addition, people from other professions also joined there were, among them, retired Military Officers, Bureaucrats, Academician Journalists, Lawyers, Businessman, industrialize, Doctors, Engineers, Landowners as well as peasants, worker, youth, and students, (Hossain 1988: 26-27)

Zia organised the party with the desperate groups those who had strong antipathy to the AL. Though the BNP was called a quasi-democratic party. But the main bodies of the party such as- the National Executive Committee (NEC), the National Standing Committee (NSC) and the Parliamentary Board were not elected by the party members, however they are nominated by the party chairman. Though the BNP was a conglomeration of different groups, faction and individuals with widely different political ideologies, beliefs and motives but Zia put them together with some new explanation of some ideologies like Nationalism of Bangladeshi and some new interpretation of religion in politics. Zia introduced 'Bangladeshi Nationalism' instead of Bangalee Nationalism. He criticised the Bangalee nationalism and according to him all Bangladeshi people are not Bengla speaking. Therefore, Bangalee nationalism is partial nationalism. On the contrary, Bangladeshi nationalism is based on geographical boundaries. So Bangladeshi nationalism is total nationalism. He referred that some people criticised the Bangladeshi nationalism is based on religion, but this is not totally true. The Bangladeshi people are

very affectionate with religion. So Bangladeshi nationalism is not apathetic of religion. Zia pronounced that there are three-fold philosophical aspects of Bangladeshi nationalism- a. call for the more production of food; b. inspiration for self-reliant sponge and c. attempts to preparation for the spiritual peace in the other world (Rahman 1978).

Zia wanted to use the religious feelings of the majority people for his political will. In the first manifesto of BNP it is said that, “Islam is the religion and philosophy of life of the overwhelming majority of the people of this country. We shall put in all-out efforts so that the reacting of Islam is reflected fully in the life of the Muslims” (Ullah 2016: 521). Also, in the foreign policy section of the party emphasised on the friendship with brotherly countries of the Muslim world and extended full support to the Palestinian and Arab brethren. (Ullah 2016: 522). For using the religious sentiment Zia took some measures like – he introduced Azan (Call for prayers) on the radio and television. He gave message to the Nation on the religious days specially Eid i Miladunabi, Sab-e-barat, Sab-e-kadar and Ashura and these days were celebrated with great honor. In the Pakistan period there was an institution ‘Islamic Academy’ which was banned in 1972 and Bangabondhu Shikh Mujibur Rahman re-introduced it in 28 March 1975, Zia made this institution more active. Zia introduced a separate Ministry for Religious Affairs. The numbers of Madrassa were drastically increased during the Zia’s rule. In 1975 there were 1830 Madrassa and 291,191 Students in the country but in 1978 the numbers of Madrassa were 2386 and students were 441200 (Ahmed (ed.) 1989). Zia used to use ‘Bismillaha-ar-Rahman-ar-Rahim in the beginning of his speech. By these measures and activities Zia spread Islam in the social fabric of Bangladesh.

Zia not only formed and organised the BNP. He also formed many front organisations of the party. He created Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (Student wing), Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal (Youth wing), Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal (Workers wing) and Jatiyatabadi Mohila Dal (Women wing). After formation of the party and front organisation Zia declared on 30 November 1978 that the second Parliamentary Election would be held on 27 January

1979 in an address to the nation over radio and television (Ullah 2016). There were some political party like IDL who welcome the announcement of second parliamentary election, but the main political parties criticised this decision. On 7 December 1979 twelve political parties enunciated that they would not participate in the election unless their demand would not fulfil. They demanded- lifting of the martial law; restoration of the 1972 constitution and sovereignty of parliament; release of all political prisoners detain without trail and convicted under the martial law; repeal of the Press and Publication Ordinance; freedom of the press and speech; resignation of president Zia from the active service of the Armed Forces; dissolution of the present cabinet; repeal of the emergency rule and special power act and other laws, reported in The Bangladesh Observer on 8 December 1978). Among the twelve political parties, nine issued a joined statement, they were- Jatiya League, Jatiya Janata Party, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, Gono Azadi League, Democratic League, NAP (Naser), Gonotantrik Andolon, Sramik Krishak Samabadi Dal and National Front for Democracy. Other three parties- AL (Malek), AL (Mizan), and UPP made separate statement, reported in The Bangladesh Observer on 8 December 1978.

Before the election President and CMLA Zia tried to meet some demand of the opposition political parties. On 24 December 1978 he announced some appeasing measures. Zia suspended some provision of the martial Law relating to the political activities, he took a liberal policy on the release of political prisoners. He also withdrew some provisions of the Press and Publication Ordinance in connection with prior permission to held public meeting and using microphone by the political parties (Ullah 2016). On 25 December 1978, a delegation of opposition party met Zia at Bangabhaban. The following day of the meeting Election Commission declared that the election date had been shifted on 12 February 1979 on the demand of the various political parties. Zia addressed to the nation on 26 December 1978 and promised to lift martial law after election, but the opposition alliance did not satisfy with this declaration. In a statement

they said that, the address of Zia frosted the opposition and confused the people (Ullah 2016). Zia and his Ministers had a series of meeting with the political parties and at last most of the political parties agreed to participate in the election and the date of the election had been shifted on 18 February 1979. On February 1979 BNP announced its election manifesto. The manifesto presented that the party will established People's democracy by consolidating people's unity based on Bangladesh Nationalism. The party also promised to develop the education sector and will established a technical and an agricultural school in every Thana. The party committed to establish at least one government college in every sub-division. The party also pledge to introduce technical education in Madrassa (BNP 1979). On 4 February AL (Malek) announced the 11-point election manifesto. The party promised to establish a socialist society and reinstate the constitution of 1972 (AL 1979).

The election was held on 18 February 1979 and BNP won the two third majority in the parliament. (Table 4.1). AL (Malek) won 39 seats and AL (Mizan) won only two seats and it's proved that AL (Malek) was the main steam AL. The political identity of the elected parliament member of BNP was very interesting. Among them 40 per cent of non-political person, previous affiliated with different political party were 16 per cent from Muslim League, 15 per cent from NAP (Bhasani) and 9 per cent from AL (Haq and Alam 2014).

Table 4.1: Results of the Second National Parliamentary Election, 1979

Political Party	Candidates	Percentage (%) of votes	Seats
BNP	298	41.16	207
AL	295	24.55	39
AL (Mizan)	183	2.78	2
Bangladesh Muslim League and Islamic Democratic League (Rahim)	265	10.8	20
JSD	240	4.48	8
NAP (Mujaffar)	89	2.25	1
Bangladesh Gono Front	46	0.6	2
Bangladesh Sanmajbadi Dal	19	0.39	1
Bangladesh Jatiya League	14	0.36	2
Jatiya Ekota Party, Samajbadi Dal	7	0.23	1
Bangladesh Gonotrantrik Andolon	18	0.17	1
Independents	425	10.10	16
Total	2125	100	300

Source: Ahmed (2010): 28-29, Jahan (2015): 30, Ullah (2016): 131, Hossain (1988): 85

It was claimed from different political parties that the election was heavily rigged and there were lot of irregularities and act of terrorizing voters during the election. In a press conference Abdul Malek Ukil, the President of AL called it was an election of blue-print, reported in The Daily Sanghbad on 4 February 1979. Kazi Zafor Ahmed, Mizan Chowdhury also claimed the irregularities in the election, reported in The Bangladesh Observer on 25 February 1979. The first session of the second parliament was started on 2 April 1979 and the Martial law was uplifted on 6 April 1979 (GoB 1979). Zia re-organised his civil administration. The retired bureaucrats were the predominant in the administration of Zia. According to a study it was revealed that among the Advisors and Ministers of Zia from 1976 to 1981, 13 were officers from Armed forces, 8 were civil

servant, 18 were industrialist and 31 were political leaders from different political party who joined in BNP (Ahmed 1988)

After the parliamentary election in 1979, a new chapter was open for religious politics in Bangladesh. The religious political party 'Jamaat-i-Islam was received on 24 December and their first Majlis-i-Shura (Central Committee) meeting was held and before the meeting they elected Maulana AKM Yusuf as their Amir (Chief). The meeting of Central Committee took some decisions that declaring the Quran and Sunnah as the Source of laws, restoration of the citizenship of Jamat's former Amir Golam Azam (this has been discuss earlier). During the period of Ziaur Rahman earlier Jamat was organised under the banner of IDL under the leadership of Maulana Abdur Rahim but after the election Jamat left the party and revived their original organisation. Because of the anti-role of Jamat during the liberation war it was banned, and the revival of the party hurt the sentinel of many people of Bangladesh.

Zia took an appeasement policy for the freedom fighter and non-freedom fighter officer in the armed forces and the tried to balance within these groups. But for his appeasement policy some freedom fighter officers were not happy with Zia. The appointment of H M Ershad as Chief of Army Staff also made unhappy to the freedom fighter officers (Ershad was a non-freedom fighter). Major General Manzur who was a freedom fighter and one of the contenders to be Army Chief, but Zia refused to make him Army Chief because of his political ambition (Novak 1994). In the armed forces the fight between freedom fighter and repatriated officer were open secret in the Armed forces from the inception. During the period of Zia there were coup attempted, protests and troop movements against Zia was common phenomena in the Armed Forces. The war-time S force, and K force went against Zia and joined some actions (Lt. Col. Khan 2012). Col. Oli Ahmed BB (Rtd.), the private Secretary of Zia revealed that, Zia had to confront 19 coup attempts during his tenure (2014). It is also said that there had been more than twenty attempts on Zia's life before his killing on 30 May 1981, reported in The Times on 28 July 1981.

It was a speculation that the Zia's Government was pro-Pakistan (anti-liberation). Akbar Kabir, a member of Zia's advisory council wrote a personal letter to Zia and said, "I told you that people think this Government is pro-Pakistan. Somehow, the impression is getting firmer that we are fast shipping into Pakistan's pocket after managing to jump out of India's." (Kabir 2010: 226). This apprehension became stronger because of some act of Zia and for the rehabilitation in the important position of some individuals who were known as anti-Bangladeshi. Because of these acts of Zia and for some international conspiracy the freedom fighter officer's retired and in service get some grounds and used it against Zia. For these reason the mid-level offices staged a coup on 30 May 1981 and killed Zia in Chittagong (Ahmed 2010)

4.5: Politics of BNP During the Post Zia Period

After the murder of Zia, Deputy President Justice Abdus Sattar became the President. He declared that the Presidential Election would be held within next 180 days and it was announced later that the election would be held on 15 September 1981. But the opposition parties demanded the shifted of election date. The main opposition AL now led by Sheikh Hasina Wazed the daughter of the Banghabondhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, demanded four-point demand: 1. Shift of election date to the third week of November 1981; 2. The assurance of free and fair election; 3. Withdrawal of emergency and open trial of the accused killers of President Zia, reported in The Daily Ittafaq on 20 June 1981. The new government full filed some of demands and the election date was shifted to October and finally to 15 November 1981. The state of emergency also withdrawn before election.

According to the opening of the expert it is said that BNP was not an ideologically committee party and was dominated by vested interests (Hussain 1988). So that post Zia period, the situation became worsen. Finally, they nominated Abdur Sattar as their Presidential candidate. AL nominated Dr. Kamal Hussain. There were 31 Presidential

candidates among them Major General M A G Osmany of Citizen Committee, Mohammad Ullah (Hafizzi Huzur) of Ulem Front, Professor Muzzaffar Ahmed of Progression Democratic Front, Major M. A. Jalil of Triparti Okkiojate and Mohammad Toaha of Patriotic Front were prominent. Chief of Army Staff H M Ershad openly supported Abdus Satter, reported in the weekly Holiday on 18 October 1981. AL published its 17-point election manifesto and promised to return to parliamentary form of government and return to the Constitution of 1972 etc. (Lenin 2015). BNP did not publish any election manifesto, but the strategies of BNP's election propaganda were the glorification of Zia's rule, 19 Points Programme of Zia and the criticism of Awami-BAKSAL (Hussain 1988). Justice Sattar won the election and got 65.80 percent votes and Dr. Kamal Hossain of AL got 36.35 percent votes (Ahmad 2016). But it was open secret that the Presidential Election was engineered by securities agencies (Jahan 2015). On 27 November 1981 Justice Abdus Sattar hold the office of the President as an elected president but the de facto power resided with Army chief General H. M. Ershad.

Ershad seized power on 24 March 1982 and declared him as CMLA and appointed Justice Abul Fazal Mohammad Ahsanuddin Chowdhury as President. He said that he responded to the people and there was no option to the Nation, reported in The Daily Ittefaq on 25 March 1982. Finally, Ershad assumed the power of the President on 10 December 1983. In his political vision Ershad followed the footprint of Ayub Khan and Zia. After assuming power Ershad imposed ban on political parties and activities but he tried to form political party using the power of security agencies. Within the martial law period Ershad formed the Janadal and President AFM Ahsanuddin Chowdhury became Convener of the party on November 1983. The renowned politician from the BNP, the JSD, the NAP (Bhashani) and some few from AL and also large number of civil-military bureaucrats joined in that party. Ershad formed another party name Jatiya Front with Janadal but it was dissolved within six months. Finally, on 1 January 1986 Ershad declared his political party called the Jatiya Party (JP) and he became the Chairman of the

party. During the rule of Ershad, he also faced the legitimacy crisis as like as Zia. For overcoming that crisis, he again followed the path of Zia and he arranged referendum (1985), Presidential election (1986) and Parliamentary election (1986). Ershad also used religious card for vanquishing the legitimacy crisis. He took some measures to use religion in politics. Ershad established the Zakat fund headed by President. His government proposed an education policy to introduce Arabic and Islamiyat (Islamic religious education) in the school from class 1 (Khan 1982). Ershad tried to use Islam in his political gain. He openly declared that he wants to incorporate Islam in the constitution of Bangladesh, reported in The Daily Ittefaq on 19 December 1982. He also emphasis in a meeting that ‘the cultural life of the Bangladeshi would be firmly based on Islamic principles,’ reported in The Bangladesh Observer on 21 January 1981. Ershad declared that the aim of his struggle is to make Bangladesh as an Islamic Country, reported in The Daily Ittefaq on 15 January 1983. The Islamisation process of Ershad and to use religion in politics Ershad received supports from the Pirs (Saints) and he often visited their Urs (annual congregation). Finally, Ershad amended the constitution of Bangladesh and declared Islam as the state religion (GoB. 1988). Both the secular and the Islamist reacted on this amendment. The Secularist though that by this amendment the non-Muslim citizen would be second class citizen in Bangladesh. The Islamist also recounted this as a ‘hypocritical move’ to resist a ‘genuine’ Islamic movement (Riaz 2003). The use of the religious card to solve the legitimacy crisis and staying in power had not saved him for a long. All type of political parties united against him and he has to resign in 1990 by a people uprising.

4.6: Politics of Begum Khaleda Zia and the Use of Religion in Politics

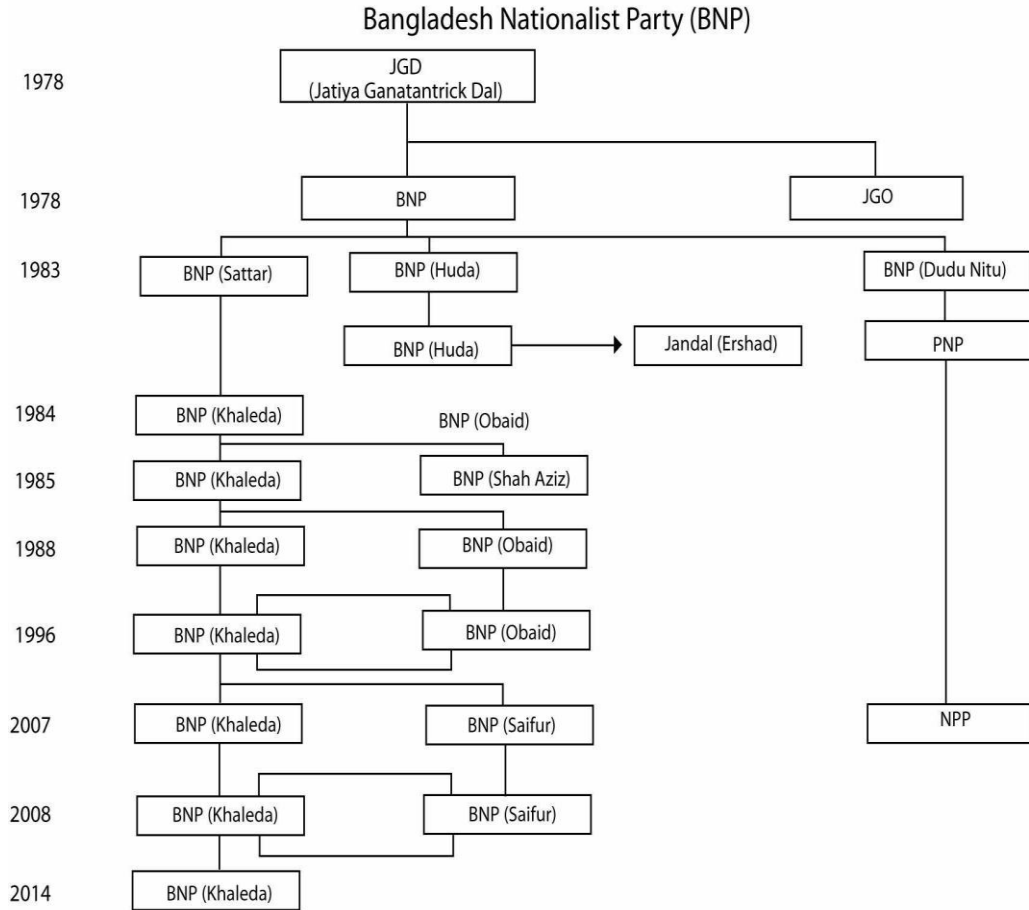
After the killing of Ziaur Rahman Justice Sattar became the Chairman of BNP. Begum Khaleda Zia, the widow of Zia became the senior Vice President of BNP after a long persuasion on 1 April 1983 (BNP 2014). BNP experienced the first split between Sattar group and Huda-Matin group on 2 April 1983. Later the Huda-Matin group joined with

Ershad. Khaleda Zia became the chairperson of BNP on 10 May 1984. BNP was splited second time in mid of June 1985 with the leadership of Shah Azizur Rahman and third time under the leadership of K M Obidur Rahman in mid-June 1988. But Khaleda Zia took the control of the main fraction of BNP and since 10 May 1984 she is the chairperson of BNP.

In her political philosophy Khaleda Zia following Ziaur Rahman. Khaleda Zia emphasised the 19 Points Programme of Ziaur Rahman in her maiden speech (BNP 2014: 1 April 1983). Khaleda Zia understood that to make a strong movement against Ershad BNP needed a political alliance. After a series of discussion, she was able to make a seven parties alliance on August 1983 with United People's Party (UPP), Jatiya League (JL), Jatiya Gonotantrik Mukti Union (JGMU), National Awami Party (NAP, Nurur Rahman), Biplobi Communist League (BCL) and Democratic League (Rouf). These political parties had different political ideology but commonly they believe in Bangladesh nationalism.

After the formation of state sponsored JP Ershad needed election victory for overcoming legitimacy crisis. Ershad arranged third and fourth National Parliamentary Election in 1986 and 1988 and also Presidential election in 1986. During the Ershad period under the leadership of Khaleda Zia BNP did not participate any election. To prevent the splintering of the party and to stop the contestation for party leadership AL joined the third Parliamentary Election of 1986 (Jahan 2015).

Figure 3: Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) Fragmentation



Source: Riaz, Ali (2016): 171

In the Presidential election of 1986 Ershad did not find any credible opposition candidates. But in the fourth National Parliamentary election both the BNP and the AL boycotted the election. The President and Parliamentary elections were apprehended heavily rigged and it was also believed that the intelligence agencies played important role as the played during Zia's era (Jahan 2015).

Khaleda Zia was successful to reconstruct BNP from state-sponsored sarkari (government) party to opposition party in the movement by boycotting all the elections

under military ruler Ershad (Jahan 2015). Under the leadership of Khaleda Zia BNP committed to mass mobilisation to restore democracy. During the anti-Ershad movement JI also participated. All the opposition political parties participated in pro-democracy movement and the country was frequently blocked by hartals (General strike). Finally Ershad had to resign on 4 December 1990. According to the consensus of the opposition alliances a Non-Party Caretaker Government (NCG) headed by chief Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed took over on 6 December and had a mandate to organize fifth parliamentary election within 90 days.

The election date was declared to be held on 27 February 1991. The alliance of AL was very losing because of the 'go it alone' policy of AL (Maniruzzaman 1992). But BNP was in advantageous position because they had made a secret alliance with JI. Though JI wanted open alliance, but BNP was not willing to do in (Hossain and Imam 1992). BNP published its election manifesto on 28 January 1991 and gave importance on the 19 Points Programme of Ziaur Rahman. In the manifesto BNP discuss the background of the Bangladesh politics and highlighted the role of Ziaur Rahman in the liberation war and darken the period of Sheikh Mujibur Rhaman (1972-75). The period of Ziaur Rahman was called the golden era of Bangladesh. According to the 19 Point Programme of Ziaur Rahman BNP promised its election manifesto of 1991 that they will establish special relation with Muslim countries; they will change the education system and will incorporate the Madrassa education with mainstream; they will establish the four fundamental principles i.e., absolute trust and faith in Almighty Allah, democracy, nationalism and social and economic Justice in the society etc. (BNP 1991). Before the election, Khaleda Zia visited the whole country and gave around eighteen hundred speeches (BNP 2014). Like as Ziaur Rahman, Khaleda Zia started her speech with Bismillah-Ar-Rahman-Ar-Rahim (in the name of Allah, the Beneficent and the Merciful). Most of her speeches Khaleda Zia endorsed the Islamic provision that were incorporate in the constitution by Ziaur Rahman. In her speeches, Khaleda Zia criticised the rule of

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (1972-75) and called it were the years of darkness (Maniruzzaman 1992). She also revealed the negative aspects of Ershad's rule. Khaleda Zia promised to establish the 19 Points Programme of Zia and gave commitment to safeguarding the independence of Bangladesh. Khaleda Zia also gave pledge to waiving of agricultural loans upto Tk. 5000/-, improving the economic situation of the country, development of the condition of women and children, improving law and order situation, stopping smuggling and corruption and building modern army etc. (Maniruzzaman 1992, BNP 1991). Nevertheless, in the election manifesto there was no reference to the system of governance, though it was decided in the three jote (three party alliance) amity that parliamentary form of government will be establish. During the election campaign Khaleda Zia responded to a reporter that the system of government will be decided in the parliament (Riaz 2016)

AL published its election manifesto on 6 February 1991. The main theme of the election manifesto was the dream of sonar Bangla (Golden Bengal) by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. AL promised to establish the constitution of 1972 and committed to reintroduce the parliamentary system of government. Sheikh Hasina also visited the main districts and towns and gave many speeches. In her speeches Sheikh Hasina illustrate the rule of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as the golden period of Bangladesh and pledge to punish the killer of Banghabondhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Sheikh Hasina also brought to light the negative aspect of military rule of Zia and Ershad. She criticised the military government for rigging the elections and using Islam in politics to increase support for legitimacy crises (Maniruzzaman 1992)

The fifth parliament election (held in 27 February 1991) was considered as the first 'free and fair' election of Bangladesh (Jahan 2015, Maniruzzaman 1992). But the result was very devastating for AL. AL though that they will have a great victory because BNP was not organisationally good position (Ahmed 2016). AL got 88 seats and BNP got 140 seats. Though the percentage of vote received by both the parties almost equal (BNP-

30.8, AL 30.1 percent). BNP formed the government on 20 March 1991 with tacit support of JI and Begum Khaleda Zia became the first women Prime Minister of Bangladesh. This election result reveal that the two were the major political party in Bangladesh i. e. BNP and AL.

Table 4.2: Result of the Fifth Parliamentary Election, 1991

Political Party	Percentage (%)	Seats
BNP	30.8	140
AL	30.1	88
JP	11.9	35
JI	12.1	18
BAKSAL	1.8	5
CPB	1.2	5
NAP (Muzaffar)	0.8	1
Bangladesh Warker' Party (BWP)	0.2	1
Jatiya Samajtatrik Dal (JSD, Siraj)	0.2	1
Ganatartrik Party	0.4	1
Islami Oikkyo Jote (IOJ)	0.8	1
National Democratic Party	0.4	1
Gonotantrik Party	0.4	1
Independents	4.4	3
Total	--	300

Source: Bangladesh Election Commission

4.6.1. First Government of Begum Khaleda Zia (1991-1996)

After the formation of the government BNP was hesitated to change the form of government from Presidential to Parliamentary system. Some BNP leaders openly argue for presidential form of government (Ahmed 2016). Finally, on 1 July 1992 Khaleda Zia declared in her speech to the nation by radio and television that her government decided

to return to the parliamentary form of government because of the demand of the time, reported in The Daily Bangla on 2 July 1992. The constitution was amended accordingly (12th Amendment) and this was the unique history of the parliamentary history of Bangladesh that government and opposition party members vote for the same issue.

One major incident made a difference between AL and BNP in the political arena and that was Ghulam Azam issue. Gulam Azam was made Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami on 29th December 1991 this episode creates huge protest among the political party, the civil society, cultural and social activist. The demand was raised to trail Gulam Azam as war criminal. The Citizen Committee formed Gono Adalat (Peoples Court) to trail him. (this issue has been discussed detail in chapter three).

The other major issue that created distance between government and opposition were by-elections. First by election was held in Mirpur, Dhaka on 2 February 1993. The AL accused government for vote rigging and on protested they walked out from the Parliament (Ahmed 2016), the second by-election was held in Magura on 20 March 1994. This election created tension both the political parties i.e., AL and BNP because both the party head visited several times in the constituency during the election camping.

The election was heavily rigged and even the Chief Election Commissioner openly express his dissatisfaction and leave the constituency, reported in The Daily Bhorer Kagoj on 20 March 1994. This by-election provoked AL-led opposition to start boycotting parliament and strengthen the demand of NCG which they proposed in the parliament on 23 September 1993. To fulfil their demand AL initiated street agitation and called several hartals (strikes). In the meantime, the JI joined with AL to support the movement of NCG. This issue makes JI to restore its image to work with pro-liberation forces which ultimately paved the way for use of religion in politics.

All the major opposition political parties – AL, the JP and the JI resigned from parliament which caused the fall of government. On 15th February 1996, BNP arranged sixth parliamentary election. All major political parties boycotted the election and the voter turnout was exceptionally low. The parliament was short lived and finally fulfilled the demand of the opposition and passed thirteen amendments of constitution to establish NCG. The constitution stipulated that the immediate–past retired Chief Justice would be the Chief Advisor (CA) who enjoys the powers of PM and whose tenure to be 90 days (GoB 1996). In the constitution, there were other four options for appointing the CA and the President of the republic will be the last option to be CA in addition to his duties. The president appointed Justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman as Chief Advisor (CA) on 30 March 1996, reported in The Daily Star on 31 March 1996. The seventh Parliament Election date was declared to be held 12 June 1996.

Before the election BNP published its election manifesto and the manifesto emphasised on majority religion i.e., Islam. In the second para of the first page of the manifesto in the ‘Law and Order’ section, it was written that ‘By the grace of Allah if we will be able to form the government, we will do....’ (BNP 1996:1). In the ‘Administration and Justice’ section of the manifesto BNP gave importance on the constitution of Bangladesh and highlighted the changes made in the fundamental principles by General Ziaur Rahman. In this section BNP declared not to enact any law repugnant to Islam [page 2]. In the ‘State Security and Foreign Policy’ section of the manifesto they emphasised the special relations with Muslim countries, though they declared to establish profitable relations with neighbours [page 3]. In the ‘Education’ section of the manifesto BNP gave importance to the Madrassa education and they declared that they will change the Madrassa education according to the modern education system. In the same section they promised that they will make similar salary of the government primary school teachers to the Abdeyaye (Primary section of Madrassa) teachers. In the manifesto it was also promised that they will give emphasis on religious education in the Schools, Colleges and Madrassa [page

7]. In the ‘Minorities Community and Tribal People’ section of the manifesto BNP gave importance on communal harmony and religious freedom. They gave assurance that BNP will not create any discrimination for the appointment of the important position of the state to the minorities and the tribal people [page 11]. BNP concludes its manifesto with Allah Hafiz and Bangladesh Zindabad. Bangladesh Nationalist Party used Zindabad in the first time in their manifesto. During the election campaign BNP also used religious rhetoric and pictured AL as a stooge of Hindu-India and if AL come to power Islam will be in danger (Ahmed 2016).

The Caretaker Government arranged the election peacefully though there was a coup attempted by the Army. But the CTG controlled it strictly and the Army Chief was sacked with his ally’s. Despite this circumstance the election was free and fair, and it was recognised by domestic and international observers. The result of the election was very frustrating for BNP they got only 33 percent of votes. AL got 37 percent of votes and 146 seats. BNP refused to accept this result as AL refused the election result in 1991(Schaffer 2002).

Table: 4.3: Result of the Seventh National Parliament Election, 1996

Political Party	Percentage of Votes (%)	Number of Seats
AL	37.44	146
BNP	33.60	116
JP	16.40	32
Jl	8.61	3
Islami Oikkya Jote	1.09	1
JSD (Rab)	0.23	1
Indipendents	1.06	1
Total	--	300

Source: FEMA (1996)

4.6.2 : BNP is in Opposition (1996-2001)

AL formed the government with the unconditional support of JP after 21 years. However, the relation between government party and the opposition became very worst. BNP declared hartals (strike) in many issues. They called hartals for more than 244 days from 1996 to 1999, reported in The Daily Star on 26 January 2000) and from 1999 to 2000 there were more than 100 days hartals, reported in The Daily Star on 24 February 2009. In the parliamentary politics, BNP was less interested. In the seventh Parliament (1996-2001) there were 383 working days and Begum Khaleda Zia, the Chairperson of BNP presented only 28 days (7 percent of total working days) (Firoz 2012: 196). BNP as opposition party boycotted parliament 163 days (43 percent of working days) (Firoz 2012: 210).

JP gave the unconditional support to AL to form the government but 29 June 1998 Ershad, the President of JP declared that they were not the part of the government and they were in opposition. After this declaration one segment of JP under the leadership of Anwar Hossain Monju splinted the JP and they became the part of the government. The main opposition party BNP tried to unite main opposition parties. In this regards Begum Khaleda Zia use religious card to unite the opposition forces and Begum Zia was successful to use this card.

A four party's alliance with JI, Islami Oikkya Jote (a conglomeration of seven radical Islamist Parties) and JP (Ershad) was made under the leadership of Begum Khaleda Zia on 6 January 1999, reported in The Daily Ittefaq on 7 January 1999. The leaders of four party alliance, Begum Khaleda Zia, JP Chairman H M Ershad, Ameer of JI Ghulam Azam and Chairman of Islami Oikkya Jote Shaikh-ul-Hadit Azizul Haq in a joint statement demanded four point demand- a) Resignation of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC); b) Reorganisation of Election Commission and appointment of CEC and other Commissioners with the consensus from all political parties who were elected in

parliament; c) Providing voter ID card to the voter of City Corporation and Municipalities and d) Release of the workers and leaders of the opposition parties from jail and withdrawal of fake case against the opposition, reported in The Daily Bhorer Kagoj on 7 January 1999). The leaders of the four party's alliance declared that this is the political force of the believers of the nationalist Islamic values (Khan and Zafarullah 1979). Before the election of 2001 Ershad quit the four-party alliance but another segment of JP under the leadership of Naziur Rahman Monjur be with four party's alliance.

Table 4.4: Ideological Orientation of Political Parties of Bangladesh

Name of the Party	Ideological Orientation
Bangladesh Awami League (AL)	Centrist, believers in role of government in economy, considers limited role of religion in politics, espouses liberal social values, proponent of Bengali nationalism
Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)	Centre-right, proponent of open market economy, views Islam as a central element of social and political life, espouses liberal social values, proponent of Bangladeshi nationalism
Jatiya Party (JP)	Centre-right, proponent of open market economy, believers in significant role of Islam in politics, espouses liberal social values, advocates Bangladeshi nationalism
Jamaat-e-Islami (JI)	Islamist, right wing, supporter of open market economy with certain restrictions due to religious factors, espouses conservatives' social values, supports Muslim nationalism
Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB)	Socialist, secularist, believes in command economy, highly liberal on social issues
Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ)	Orthodox Islamist, supporter of restricted market economy, espouses highly conservative social values, supports Bangladeshi nationalism
Bangladesh Islami Andolon (BIA)	Orthodox Islamist, supporter of restricted market economy, espouses highly conservative social values, supports Bangladeshi nationalism
Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD)	Centre-left, secularist, believes in role of government in economy, espouses liberal social values, supports Bengali nationalism
Socialist Party of Bangladesh (SPB)	Socialist, secularist, believes in command economy, highly liberal on social issues

Source: Riaz, Ali (2016):153

After the expiry of the tenure of five years of Sheikh Hasina, she handed over power to the Chief Advisor Justice Latifur Rahman. For the first time Bangladesh history, the Parliament fulfil its tenure and an elected government handed over power to another government peacefully. NCG declared the Eight National Parliament Election to be held on 1 October 2001.

BNP published its election manifesto before the election. In the introduction part of manifesto, it discussed the history of Bangladesh and highlighted the role of Ziaur Rahman during the liberation war of Bangladesh. This manifesto also pictured the role of AL Government (1972-75) after the independence as darken period of Bangladesh. The manifesto also called the golden period of Bangladesh during the rule of Ziaur Rahman (November 1975-May 1981) (BNP 2001: 1.5). The manifesto highlighted the period of Begum Khaleda Zia (1991-1996). The manifesto described the achievement of Begum Zia's period in details in every sectors. In the sub-section of 'Islamic Religious Matters' the manifesto described that Begum Zia's government established Hazi Camp in Dhaka; provided 300 acres of land to Tabliq Zamat; established Teachers' Training Institute for Madrassa teachers; provided fund for the development of Masjid, Idgah (place of Eid prayers) and others religious institutions [1.6]. Also, in the sub-section of 'Religious Minority Matters' the manifesto described that Begum Zia's government increased the government fund for The Hindu Welfare Trust, Buddhist Welfare Trust and Christian Welfare Trust [1.6].

In the third section of the manifesto, BNP mentioned its commitments towards the constitution of Bangladesh and highlighted the fundamental principles changed by Ziaur Rahman. They promised not to enact any law repugnant to Islam [3.4]. In the sub-section 'State Security and Foreign Policy' the manifesto promised to follow the non-allied foreign policy and special relations with Muslim countries and they also promised to establish profitable relations with neighbours [3.5]. In the 'Education' sub-section of the manifesto BNP promised to change the Madrassa education according to the practical

life, they promised to inspire the Mosque-centric Non-formal education and adult education. The manifesto also promised to give importance to the religious education in the schools and colleges to build the moral character of the students [3.10]. In the sub-section of ‘Minority Communities and Tribal People’ BNP declared that they believe in the religious freedom and equal rights of the all religious believers. They promised that they will not discriminate the religious minorities to the appointment of important positions of the government and state [3.26]. In the whole manifesto of BNP, they used Islamic rhetoric and they used many times “By the grace of Allah if we will be able to form the government” and “By the will of Allah”. In the last of the manifesto they used ‘Allah Hafiz, Bangladesh Zindabad, and Bangladesh Nationalist Party Zindabad’.

Table 4.5: Result of the Eight National Parliamentary Election, 2001

Political Parties	Percentage (%) Votes	Seats
BNP	41.4	193
AL	40.02	62
JP (Ershad)	7.22	14
JI	4.28	17
Independents	4.06	6
Bangladesh Jatiya Party (N-F)	0.94	4
Islami Oikya Jote	0.56	2
Krishak Sramik Janata League	0.47	1
JP (Monju)	0.44	1
Total	--	300

Source: Bangladesh Election Commission

4.6.3 : Second Term Government of Begum Khaleda Zia

The BNP led four party alliance won the election and got 47 percent of votes and 216 seats which was clearly two third majority in the parliament. This election was also free and fair, and the national and international observer certified its credential (ANFREL and Forum Asia 2002). As a result, BNP formed the government in which Begum Khaleda Zia became the Prime Minister. Begum Zia gave two important portfolios to the JI leader Motiur Rahman Nizami and Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid. It is reminded that Jamaat opposed the independence of Bangladesh and was banned after independence. It is a great regret that the country, which was emerged as a secular, socialist values and constitutionally imposed ban on use of religion in politics, but after thirty years two major religious political party came to power as partner of BNP. During the election campaign JI professes for 'Islamic Revolution' and call for the establishment of an 'Islamic State' in Bangladesh and the other political party IOJ was more radical. Some leaders of this party express their solidarity with the Taliban rule in Afghanistan in public meeting (Riaz 2016).

After the election, the widespread violence occurred in the whole country. The members of the victorious four party alliance attacked the supporters and leaders of AL in many areas of the country. They targeted the minority voters specially the Hindu voters (Riaz 2004). It was perceived that the Hindu voters were the vote Bank of AL (AI 2001). The victories party tortured, looted and fired on the Hindu community and raped the women. The members of the four-party alliance took control overnight to all the key institutions by ousting the AL supporters. They also took control over from the bus and railway terminal to radio TV channels (Jahan 2015). BNP even ousted their elected President Badrudoza Chowdhury within few months because of simply not mention Zia as declarer of independence in his speech of Zia's death anniversary and unwilling to go Zia's Mazar, reported in the Daily Star on 21 June 2002.

The relation and confrontation between two political forces i.e., BNP and AL turn to be worst during the whole period of the BNP led four party alliance government (2001-2006). During this tenure, the Islamist political forces gain patronage and the JI spread their activities by using state sponsorship. One incidence proved that BNP government not only supported anti liberation forces but also supported the extremist groups of neighbor countries. On 1 April 2004 ten truck arms and ammunitions were seised in Chittagong by the police and Coast Guard. In this incidence the top officials of four party alliance government were involved including the than Minister for Industrial Motiur Rahman Nizami (the Chief of JI), State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfuzzaman Babur and high officials of DGFI and NSI. During the investigation, it was revealed that this arms and ammunition made in China and was going for the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), reported in The Daily Star on 8 March 2009. In a statement in the Court the then Director General of DGFI Major General Sadik Hasan Rumi stated that, he informed Begum Zia about the incidence, but she did not show any reaction (Ahmed 2016).

Another incidence affirmed the worse relation between AL and BNP led four party alliance government. On 21 August 2004 a grenade and bomb attacked was held in a AL rally in front of Central party office in Dhaka targeted Sheikh Hasina, the Chief of AL. in this attack 24 people were died including Ivy Rahman, the Women Affairs Secretary of AL and injured many others AL stalwarts (Jahan 2015). Sheikh Hasina was injured but narrowly saved. During the four-party alliance regime this incidence was not properly investigated and even the government agencies misdirected the case and frame charges against those who were not involved in this incidence. But the leaders of AL including Sheikh Hasina claimed that the high ranked BNP leaders and the son of Begum Khaleda Zia Tarique Rahman was involved in this incidence, reported in The Daily Star on 24 July 2013. In a confessional statement Mufti Abdul Hannan, one of the accused of 21 August grenade attack and the leader of Harkat-ul-Jihad Islami (HUJI) stated that former

State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfuzzaman Babar and Tarique Rahman made this plot. Though later he retracted his statement (Jahan 2015).

Because of the election victory of the four-party alliance in 2001. Awami League also sought to form electoral alliance for the next election of 2006. In this endeavoured AL successful to form election alliance with ten political parties in 2005. Later the alliance became Grand Alliance with fourteen parties. The main parties of this alliance were the Jatiya Party (Ershad), the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (Inu), Bangladesh Workers Party (BWP) etc. The continuous conflict between BNP and Awami League over the issue of Election Commission and Neutral Caretaker Government were strengthen after the constitution of Grand Alliance. BNP tried to influence the EC and NCG. In the 14th amendment of the constitution in May 2004 BNP extended the retirement age of the Supreme Court judges from 65 to 67. But AL rejected this moved of the government because this amendment ensure the appointment of the appointment of Justice KM Hossain as Chief Advisor of the next Caretaker Government. AL led opposition opposed K M Hassan because Justice K M Hassan was International Affairs Secretary of BNP during the Zia's period. AL led opposition also opposed the newly appointed Chief Election Commissioner Justice M A Aziz because he refused to correct the flawed voter's list where there was 12.2 million bogus voters (NDI 2006)

In the last period of Begum Zia's government, the situation become worsen. The opposition parties started street violence and on 28 October 2006 started street battle between the government forces, government supporter and the opposition activities. This situation collapses the law and order situation in Dhaka, the country also faced general striker, transport blockades and damaging of the public properties. Because of the leashes between the political activities of the two forces and the law enforcing agencies innocent peoples also died. At last, Justice K M Hassan declined to take the charge of Chief Advisor of the Neutral Caretaker Government. But, with this situation government chose to the President who was a BNP man to take the responsibilities of Chief Advisor in

addition to his president duty, which was clearly violation of the 13th amendment of the constitution because there were another some options to choose Chief Advisor.

However, AL accept this appointment and tried to work with him, but the Chief Advisor behaved in a partisan manner. Because of his partisan behaviour four advisor had to resign. On 3 January 2007, AL led opposition took the decision not to participate in the upcoming election and demanded the resignation of Chief Advisor, reported in The Daily Prothom Alo on 4 January 2007. Finally, the military intervened on 11 January 2007 and President compelled to declare the state of emergency (Jahan 2015).

4.6.4 : Recent Trend of Politics of Begum Khaleda Zia (2008-2014)

After a series of incidences in the political scenario of Bangladesh, the Army backed Caretaker Government declared the ninth parliamentary election to be held in 29 December 2008. BNP was not fully prepared to participate in the election (Ahmed 2016). Finally, BNP led four parties' alliance decided to contest in the election and declared in 36 points manifesto on 13 December 2008 and the title of the manifesto was 'Save country, save people', reported in The Daily Prothom Alo on 14 December 2008.

Like the previous manifesto BNP gave emphasis on the religion rhetoric like 'by the grace of Almighty Allah; 'Insha Allah' many times used in the manifesto. In the Foreign Policy and Security sub section of the manifesto BNP gave emphasis on 'Friendship to all malice to none' and it is important to mention here that, they promised to established friendly relation with neighbours with a reciprocal relation of mutual respect (BNP manifesto 2008 points 7). They also promised to give special treatment to the relation with Muslim countries. BNP also gave some promise to the religious minorities like they promised to increase the stipend to the scheduled casts (BNP 2008; 13). But the election result was very devastating for BNP and its alliance.

Table 4.6: The Result of the Ninth National Parliamentary Election, 2008

Political Party	Percentage (%) votes	Seats
AL	48.04	230
BNP	32.50	30
JP	7.04	27
JSD	0.72	3
JI	4.70	2
Bangladesh Warker's Party	0.37	2
LDP	0.27	1
Bangladesh Jatiya Party (BJP)	0.25	1
Independents	2.94	4
Total		300

Source: Bangladesh Election Commission, 2008

BNP got only 30 seats and other three parties of their alliance got only 3 seats (two JI and one BJP). Islami Oiko Jote did not secure any seats. But this is the unique in the history of the parliamentary election of Bangladesh that opposition defeated so largely after the parliamentary election of 1973 (Haq and Alam 2014). After the election, Khaleda Zia became the leader of the opposition in the parliament. BNP and AL both the political parties pledged in their election manifesto that they will abandon the practice of boycotting parliament and established the rule of law. AL also pledge one-step higher that they will 'inculcate courtesy and tolerance in political culture' and also take initiatives to formulate a 'Charter of consensual political behaviour' (AL 2008). But, after the election the situation remain same and both the political parties chose their old path of political confrontation. BNP led opposition boycotted the parliament session more than 80 percent of the Ninth Parliament (TIB 2013).

BNP led four party alliance was extended as 18 party alliance in 18 April 2012. The parties of the alliance were JI, IOJ, BJP, Khelafat Majlish, Jamayat-e-Ulamaye Islam, Liberal Democratic Party, Bangladesh kallyan (Welfare) Party, Jatiya Gonotantrik Party, National Party, Bangladesh Labour Party, National Democratic Party, Bangladesh NAP, Muslim League, Islamic Party, NAP (Bhashani), Democratic League and Peoples League. But most of the parties were unknown in the politics of Bangladesh. So the main mover of the alliance was BNP and JI (Ahmed 2016). The aims of the extension was to show the number against Grand Alliance (they were 16).

Some serious issues create more differences between AL and BNP. The abolition of NCG and the Trail of the War Criminals of 1971 (which has discussed in the chapter three). In May 2011, the Supreme Court declared that the system of NCG in the constitution is illegal. But the court observed that though the system is unconstitutional 'for sake of safety of the state and its people' the next two parliamentary elections could be organised under an NCG, if the parliament approves (Jahan 2015). But the parliament amended the constitution (15th amendment) and abolished the system of NCG on 30 June 2011. This contested issue between the AL and BNP still alive in the political scene in Bangladesh. AL is very adamant not to give power to any unelected government during the election time. But BNP still demanded the restoration of neutral government during the election time. Before the election of 2014 BNP led alliance lunched an aggressive political programe in the street. Finally, the demand was not met by the government and they did not participate in the election of 2014. As a result, 153 MPs of AL led Grand Alliance were elected unopposed. The election was held for the rest 147 seats but the voters' turnout ware very low.

Table 4.7: Results of the Tenth National Parliamentary Election, 2014

Political Parties	Uncontested Seats	Contested Seats	Total
AL	127	107	234
JP	20	14	34
JP (Monju)	1	1	2
BWP	2	4	6
JSD	3	2	5
Bangladesh Tarikat Federation	0	1	1
Bangladesh National Front (BNF)	0	1	1
Independents	0	16	16
Total			300

Source: Bangladesh Election Commission, 2014

After the election of 5 January 2014 BNP started a street fight against the government in 5 January 2015. During the three months long continuous blocked, repeated hartals, firing in the public buses and bomb charged lots of ordinary people were burned and died. Still the election time government was the main confrontational issue between BNP and Awami League.

Two major things should be disuses to understand the intense of the use of religion in politics in Bangladesh, one is the rise of religious extremism in Bangladesh and other one is the growth of religious education (Madrassa) in Bangladesh during the period of BNP.

4.7. Rise of Religious Extremism in Bangladesh

There is a close co-relation between the use of religion in politics and the growth of religious extremism in Bangladesh. After the murder of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975 and hereafter the country experienced the military rule and the military turn the country in back. They open the door for religions politics and gave permission to the religions political parties, those who were banned under the constitution of 1972. During the military rule, the ruler use religion for political purpose. But, from the democratic period (from 1991) the political parties also use religion for electoral victory. Because of electoral victory the main political parties were ‘disengaging themselves from ideological engagement’ and that’s why the fundamentalist Islamist parties started more active (Jahan 2015; 51)

The appearance of religions extremist groups were found during the decade of 1990’s. Firstly they declared fatwa against the writer and NGO activists as Murtads (apostates). The prominent writer and secular activists received death threats from this group. During the last time of AL government (1995-2001) they also appeared as bomb attackers. A series of bomb attacked in Ramna Botamul on 14 April 2001 a cultural programme of the Pahela Baishak (celebrating the Bengale New year). But during the period of AL government in January 2001 the High Court gave a verdict that fatwa is illegal according to constitution. This issue created huge. Backlash among the Islamic political parties. Some of them declared in a open meeting that, ‘Amra Sabi Taliban, Bangla hobe Afghan’ (we are all Taliban and Bangladesh will turn in to another Afghanistan), reported in The Daily Prothom Alo on 6 February 2001.

During the four party alliance government (2001-2006), the Islamist extremist ‘found a hospitable environment ... and began to engage in violent activities’ (Riaz 2016: 81). In 2004 an extremist militant group namely – Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB, the Awakened Muslim Masses of Bangladesh) under the leadership of Siddiqur Rahman

(Known as Bangla Bhai) started a 'reign of terror' in the north western district of Rajshahi. The national and International media gave news about the existence of the militant groups in Bangladesh, but Four Party Alliance government refused to acknowledge their existence. Motiur Rahman Nizami, the minister for Industries and Ameer of JI told that the existence of militants in Bangladesh was a creation of media (the Daily star 23 July 2004). One Member of Parliament (MP) from JI, Riasat Ali Biswas stated in the parliament that 'in order to identify Bangladesh as an Islamic country a vested political group and India are always blaming Bangladesh for providing military training to JMP and Huji. These are all false and baseless propaganda' (The Daily star 18 October 2005). So, it is one of the proved that there was some link with this militant group with the four-party alliance government. From many news reporting it we revealed that some leader of this militant group has close link with JI. Though JI always refused that they have no relation/connection with this group. In a press conference, Motiur Rahman Nizami, chief of JI said that "Jamaat does not have any relation with so called JMJB of Bangla Bhai. Jamaat does have any relation with Hijbut Tahrir, Hajbut Tawheed, JM or Similar organisations", reported in The Daily Janakantha on 25 May 2004.

From the newspaper reporting it was established that Bangla Bhai got support from the Four Party Alliance government. In an interview with newspaper one of the main leader of JMB stated that, in the seven-sub district of greater Rajshahi area there was active presence of 'sarbohara' (the extremist group of left party) and to suppress the sarbahara group, they have received the support from Post and Tele-Communication minister Barrister Aminul Haq, Housing and PWD Deputy Minister Alamgir Kabir, Land Minister Ruhul Quddus Talukder Dulu and MP Nadim Mustafa. They also received active cooperation form the local administration. They also received cooperation from the ordinary people of that area, reported in The Daily Ajker Kagoj on 13 May 2004). This militant group was successful in short time to arrest fifty people and seised huge arms

and ammunition from sorbohara and more than five thousand sorbohara had surrendered. The local leaders of BNP gave a reception to Bangla Bhai (Ahmed 2016).

The reports of the killings, touchier and terrorist activities by the JMB in the Rajshahi region compelled government to take measures against this extremist group. The government banned JMB and JMJB on 9 February 2005. It is mentionable that BNP government also banned 'Shahadat-al Hiqma' based on northern part of Bangladesh on 9 February 2002. The biggest blow of the extremist group came on 17 August 2005. On that day JMB and Harkat ul-Jihad al Islami Bangladesh (HUJIB) exploded 500 bombs in 63 districts (out of 64 districts in Bangladesh only exception in Munshiganj district) at a time and demanding the sharia law instead of constitutional law (Ahmed 2016). Some sources suggested that at that time there were 30 militant religions extremist organisation were active in Bangladesh. The militant groups were- Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami, Jamaat-ul-Mujahiden Bangladesh, Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh, Islami Bipbbi Parishad, Shahadat al-Hiqma, Hizbut Towhid, Hizbul Tahrir, Ahle Hadit Andolon, Towhidi Janata, Bishwa Islami Front, Juma'atul Sadat, Al Jomiatul Islamia, Iqra Islami Jote, Allahr Dal, Al Mujahid, Jama'ati Yahia Al Turag, Jihadi Party, Al Harkat al Islamia, Al Mahfuz Al Islami, Jama'atul Faladia, Shahadat-e- Nabuwat, Joish-e-Mostafa, Tahfize Haramaine Parishad, Hizubl Mujahideen, Duranta Kafela and Muslim Guerrilla reported in the Daily Star on 21 August 2005). One point is common in the aims and objectives of all the militant groups in Bangladesh and that intend to turn Bangladesh an Islamic State, reported in The Daily Star on 21 August 2005.

Bangladesh is a Muslim majority country but not an Islamic country. It is mention worthy that one of the result of the use of religion in politics in Bangladesh is the declaration of Islam as a state religion by military ruler Ershad. According to the court verdict, the military rule was declared illegal and their constitutional amendment also declared unlawful. The court also gave direction to government to return to the constitution of 1972. According to this verdict the constitution was amended (15th Amendment) but the

state religion is remaining in the constitution as before. So, these religious extremist groups tried to turn Bangladesh into a proper Islamic state and run the country with sharia law.

After the bombs blasts in 63 district, government fell pressure from national and international organisation. Government banned HUIB on 16 October 2005. The then Head of the government Begum Khaleda Zia also ordered to arrest Siddiqui Islam. At last the security forces arrested Siddiqui Islam on 6 March 2006 and in a speedy trial court he received a death sentence. This verdict was executed in 2007 during caretaker government. The second in command of HUIB Sheikh Abdur Rahman also received death sentence by court and that was also executed.

During the army backed caretaker government (2007-2008), the presence of religious extremist was limited. During the AL government (2008-2014 and 2014-present) the religious extremist groups were active, and they alert their presence by creating some incidence. One of the major incidence was the attacked of Holy Artisan on 1 July 2016. Present government showing zero tolerance against this militant activity. But still the religious political parties gave support to their activities and even some time the statement of BNP inspired their activities. To erode the presence of militant groups it is very necessary to make a consensus with all political parties to stop use religion in politics.

4.8. Conclusion

As discussed above it is undeniable that BNP had made a concession to religion and hence introduced a religious Bangladeshi nationalism. Since the inception of the party and it the then supreme leader used Islam to exploit the majority Muslim sentiment to legitimise and civilize his military rule. Over the time, BNP and it leaders emerged to be so called defender of Islam. This process continued throughout the years while they were

in power and made alliances the major Islamic political parties. Personal piety of the BNP leaders is not important consideration as their religious rhetoric. Thus, their rule as defender of Islam and ant-secular role helped them gain in political power though massive corruption and rise Zia dynasty though his elder son (also most corrupted) made BNPs political position very flimsy. Still, BNP is trying to use their religious card to regain power through different activities, for example non-participation in the so call Shahabag movement, softer attitude towards Hefazat-e-Islam and others Islamist. What unequivocal from this trend, if BNP retina in the same political direction and capture the state power at some point, will definite threaten the very existence of the secular Bangladesh, modernity and progress.

CHAPTER 5

SECULAR-RELIGIOUS INTERFACE: FROM 1991-2014

CHAPTER 5

Secular-Religious Interface: From 1991 to 2014

5.1: Introduction

In Bangladeshi politics religion has never been strayed away. Rather religion has been used in many different forms, purposes: sometimes for political legitimation, electoral victory. Sometimes religion was used overtly in policies and public sphere and sometimes in the disguise of secularism. Therefore, it is evident that although initially Bangladesh chosen a secular nationalist ideology which reflected in the original constitution of 1972. However, the principle of secularism was subsequently replaced with the Islamic way of life. It was done through a series of constitutional amendments and government proclamations during the period of 1977 and 1988. Article 38 of Bangladesh constitution prohibited politics based on religion and consequently religious political party like Jamaat was banned. However, secular politics was invaded by the religious politics in many times since independence. Even the founder of the Bangladeshi state Sheikh Mujibur Rahman offered an indigenous form of secularism as he believed that it possible to retain religious ideology of Islam within a spirit of secularism and thus combine religion and secularism to offer an indigenous form of secularism (Maniruzzaman 1990).

Much has been written about the prominence of secular ideologies in the post-independent Bangladesh as well as use of religion in politics during the military rule until 1990. Yet, it is pertinent to see what happens to secular, democratic ethos and what role religion plays since the return of democracy in 1991. Based on the empirical data collected during the fieldwork in Bangladesh, this chapter presents the secular and religious frontiers in Bangladeshi political space. The chapter that follows will explore the current and recurring issues of religion in politics, secularism and Bangladeshi state with empirical evidences political leadership of BNP and Awami

League through analysing their discourse and practices during the period of 1991-2014. Along with the discussion on the contested ideas and perception of secularism, political usages of religion by the major political parties, it is indispensable to focus on the rise and growth of madrassah education as it has huge impact on shaping the further course of political Islam in Bangladesh. At the same time, it undeniable that the rise of political Islam and Islamisation of Bangladeshi state has marginalised the other minorities including ethnic and religious minority in Bangladesh. Thus, they have been marginalised in social, political and economic spheres in the disguise of democracy and majority (Muslim) rule in Bangladesh. Therefore, in this chapter we will discuss the growth of madrassah education as well as the state of minorities to unpack the complex interplay of religion and politics in Bangladesh particularly with the return of democracy in Bangladesh in 1991.

5.2: Contested Ideas of Secularism in Contemporary Bangladesh

Secularism has multiple meanings, as scholars offer diverse meanings of secularism. For Tschannen (1991), secularisation paradigm is based on three concepts: differentiation, rationalisation and worldliness in which ‘differentiation’ means separation of religion and state. This section intends to explain that secularism in Bangladesh is different from the European counterpart and it is rather indigenous kind of secularism where religious freedom for every religion is constitutionally guaranteed. Yet, it is getting harder to find, in principles, two models of secularism (no religion vs. religious pluralism) into politics in Bangladesh. To explain this scenario, this section that follows would depict non-secular social trends captured by Gallup and Pew Research (these are some of the globally accepted surveys on religion and public life). According to these reports Bangladesh hosts a highly conservative Muslim society. For example, a large number of people offer their support in favour of the political role of Islam in Bangladesh meaning that majority of the people want infusion of Islam and religious culture in their state and politics. For example, according to a Gallup polls 2009 (Naurath 2009) over 98 per cent of Bangladeshi Muslims surveyed claimed that ‘religion plays a very important role in their lives’. A

similar result was found in A Pew Survey in 2012. This survey found that 71 per cent of Bangladeshi Muslim exhibit Quranic verses in their homes. They do this to highlight the importance of Islam in their lives (Bell 2012). In addition, 82 per cent of Bangladeshi Muslims intend to make Sharia as the official law of the state. In the same survey, 71 per cent claimed that they want to have religious judges over the case of family and property disputes in Bangladesh. Moreover, the Muslim those who said they want sharia law around half of them supported corporal punishment, while 55 per cent supported stoning as punishments for adultery and about 44 per cent favoured the death penalty for converts (Bell 2012).

What is significant here is that a large majority of the Bangladeshi Muslim believe that not following the sharia in state law is bad thing. For example, 83 per cent of Bangladeshi Muslim, according Gallup poll, agreed that not following Sharia law in Bangladesh is a bad thing (Mogahed 2006). As Gallup poll suggests, in 2006, 91 per cent of Bangladeshi Muslim wanted sharia law though the extent of it may differ. For example, 52 per cent wanted sharia to be the ‘only source’ of state legislation and 39 per cent claimed sharia to be ‘a source’ of state legislation. It first became apparent that many Bangladeshis wanted Sharia as the state’s legal framework in a 2006 Gallup poll, which found that 52 per cent of the surveyed Bangladeshis wanted to see Sharia as the ‘only source’ of legislation and 39 per cent said they wanted to see Sharia as ‘a source’ of legislation (Griffiths and Hasan 2015).

From the survey it implies that the large majority of the Bangladeshi Muslim, though the extent of use of sharia may differ, want Islamic religion and cultural practices to be include in the legislation and policies the state, though officially Bangladesh opts for secular policies. This also indicates the contradiction between secular and non-secular interplay in the state policies as the state of Bangladesh in many instances, as this thesis argues, promotes many policies that reflect religious biasness and consecutive governments efforts to fulfilling the Muslim majority’s attitude, which has definite implication for the religious minority of the country.

Therefore, the conditions of the minorities, especially the Hindus, are not encouraging as the number of Hindus are decreasing in number indicating the problematic in the Majority Muslim state. For example, Barkat et al. (2008) claim that a total of 1.8 million Hindus left during the period of 1964–71. Yet, another 1.9 million Hindus left the country during 1971 and 1981 and in the following decade the number was 1.6 million. Moreover, the following decade (1991–2001) another 2.8 million Hindus left the country. What even more alarming, during the democratic period (2001-2011) around one million (0.9 million to be precise) (Morol 2000). One of the reason behind the mass migration or missing of the Hindus in Bangladesh is related to land grabbing by the majority and the political goons as well as religious prosecution of the Hindus.

Barkat et al. (2008) show how the state of Bangladesh was also responsible for such mass migration as the state failed/unwilling to enact policies to save minority. For example, Enemy Property Act (rename as Vested Property Act) has been used to grab the Hindu property and land. What is important in this context is the deprivation of the Muslim women from the property inheritance under the existing Muslim law. For example, “only 2 per cent women in Bangladesh owns productive lands due to biased religious inheritance law. This is not a picture of secular Bangladesh” (Banyan 2013). (A detail discussion will be included in the later part of this chapter as ‘State of Minorities in Bangladesh’)

However, what is crucial at this point is to focus on some of the recent incidences which could be similar to that of ‘Arab Spring’ to see whether they have the potential impact on the way the majority Muslim perceive secularism in Bangladesh. One of the examples of such incidence is the Shahabagh Movement that took place in 2013 and still taking part, though in lesser extent in many socio-political issues (it has been discussed in detail in chapter three also). Shahabagh Movement advanced a political campaign to ban religious politics in Bangladesh. In the context of the war crime trials, Shahabagh Movement advanced a campaign for the capital punishments for the leaders of Jamaat-e-Islami who were convicted for war crimes in 1971. But, it is important to what is the implication of such movement. In this context, Ganguly

(2013) argues that “Shahbagh Movement in 2013 demonstrates and harbour hopes of a secular and unified Bangladesh”. However, it is evident that this movement was urban, educated class based and did not reflect the ordinary mass population.

In academic literature, it is clear that many of them put AL as champion of secular Bengali nationalist identity and implementing the non-religion based nationa (see Jahan, 2014) while BNP, Jatiya Party and Jamaat are in the forefront of implementing Islamic and Bangladeshi nationalism (Hasan 2017). However, problematic in this discourse that AL like their counter part BNP also using many Islamic rhetoric and symbols in their political campaign. For example, AL puts ‘Allahhu Akbar’ (Allah is the Greatest) at the centre of the cover of their publications which put question of their position towards secular identity (Hasan, 2017).

Like other scholars of religion and politics in Bangladesh (e.g. Riaz, 2003), I argue that by putting Allahhu Akbar at the centre cover of their political manifesto and using other Islamic idioms and symbols in their election manifesto and campaign, AL is communicating to Bangladeshi public that Islam is at the heart of its politics. Moreover, for AL leadership secularism there is no conflict between Islam and secularism, rather they infused Islam with secularism. This position of engaging or integrating Islam into politics both by the Islamist parties and AL show a similarity between the both.

5.3: The growth of an Islamic Politics

The genesis of Islam in the Bengal region shows a liberal and humanistic origin though this has turned into “Political Islam” mainly due to three major regressive transformations. Thus, "Communalisation of Islam" has been associated with the emergence of "religious doctrine-based Pakistan State" (in 1947). Other factors include, the failure in punishing the 'war criminals' (of 1971 War of Independence), and legitimizing communalism in the constitution by replacing `secularism' with "Islam as state religion" (Barkat, 2007). Causes can be numerous; the undeniable fact is that there is a rise in political use of religion in Bangladesh. It is important to see

why did a country which apparently fought so hard to achieve a secular constitution achieve so little in this regard. Thus, the state failed to achieve their goal to make a substantive change in the role of religion in society and politics over the last forty-six years. At the same time, it is important how do we explain the mass support for the much more assertive secularism of the Awami League in the late sixties followed by the subsequent fragmentation of this “secular coalition” in the eighties? Why did support for an ostensibly secular party, admittedly a much more watered down secular party, re-emerge in the mid-nineties?

After eighty-four days of chaos following the brutal killing of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Ziaur Rahman, took control of the new regime and became Chief Marshall Law Administrator and President of Bangladesh. Ziaur Rahman amended the constitution and formulated a new concept of nationalism for Bangladesh in order to legitimise the new regime, differentiate it from Mujib’s regime and to garner support from the ‘Islamic’ leaning parties which had been banned and subverted right after the 1971 independence war.

Under Zia, the Second Proclamation Order No. 1 of April 23, 1977 amended Articles 6, 8 and 12 of the Constitution and also the preamble. Article 6, which originally stipulated that the identity of the citizens of Bangladesh would be ‘Bangalee’, was amended to read ‘Bangladeshi’ thereby linking the identity of the nation to its territorial limit and separating it from the culture in West Bengal – which previously had been the basis for nationalism and had led to the struggle for independence. The words ‘historic struggle for national liberation’ in the preamble was changed to ‘historic war for national independence’, thus highlighting the military’s role in the Liberation War and minimizing the role of the civilian population. And most importantly, the word ‘secularism’ which appeared in the preamble and in Article 8 as one of the four fundamental principles of the state, was replaced with ‘Absolute Trust and faith in the Almighty Allah’. A new clause was added stating that ‘absolute trust and faith in Almighty Allah’ would be the basis of all actions. Article 12 and the definition of secularism were omitted and the words ‘Bismillah-ar-Rahman-ar-Rahim’

was inserted.

During Zia's regime, the Political Parties Regulations (PPR) Act was also promulgated. The Act allowed the post-1971 banned Islamist political parties (which had opposed the independence of Bangladesh and supported the Pakistan army, many of whose leaders are today leaders of the Jamaat) back into mainstream politics. Moreover, Zia held elections for parliament in February 1979 with the participation of the Islamist parties and his own Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). Upon winning the election BNP made the 5th amendment to the constitution. This amendment incorporated all the resolutions, decrees, proclamations, and orders issued under the authority of martial law into laws and parts of the constitution was passed.

The core of Zia's ideology constituted of 'religion, territoriality of identity and national security', a far cry from the ethnic, linguistic and secular ideology, which led to the creation of Bangladesh. Zia successfully used the symbol of Islam to create a sense of identity for Bangladesh and the changed the basis of Bangladeshi nationalism. The two interpretations of nationalism in Bangladesh (secular Bengali vs. Islamic Bangladeshi nationalism) as had been propagated by the AL and Zia seem to support Smith's claim in that neither has proven to be durable or more persuasive than the other. Even today Bangladesh often comes to a standstill because of the violence perpetrated by those who support the BNPs claim of religion and territoriality being the basis of nationhood in Bangladesh and those who support the AL's claim of ethnicity and secularism being the fundamental aspect of nationhood for Bengalis. Kabeer (1989) writes that the competing elites have manipulated these two symbols (language and secularism vs religion) in succession so that the two form the 'foci of identity in Bangladesh'.

After the death of Ziaur Rahman and following a decade of authoritarian rule under Ershad (who also utilised Zia's Islamic nationalism) democracy was reinstated in Bangladesh in 1991. Today Bangladesh is still experiencing two types of nationalism and collective identity. 'Bangladeshi' ideology is based on Islamic and territorial

identity and is propagated by the BNP and the AL's 'Bengali' ideology is based on a secular Bengali identity. Sufia M. Uddin (2006) pointed out that, 'Through emphasis and omission, communities employ historical evidence to create a specific collective memory that legitimises the existence of the new nation-state'.

In Bangladesh, two competing collective memories have been constructed by the political leadership to lend legitimacy to their respective parties and electoral violence, politics of the street and the lack of acceptance of democratic institutions continue to be instigated by using these rivalling ideologies as and when it suits political parties. For example, the rhetoric that 'the Awami League is 'pro-Indian' with a Bengali bent, and that the opposition BNP, 'pro-Pakistani', is receptive to Islamic tendencies. This is reflected on its alliance with the Islamic parties like Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Oikkya Jote and continues to be aired and forms the basis of most electoral campaigns.

The electoral outcomes since the creation of Bangladesh would suggest that Bangladeshis alternate between the identity they associate with and political parties have paid lip service to both Islam and secularism, as well as allied with religious groups and leftist groups as per the dictates of political expediency. Besides political expediency, there are number of other factors behind the rise of Islam in politics including preaching, segregated education system.

In rural areas of Bangladesh, Wajmahfil, a form of preaching, plays a significant role in promoting Islamic knowledge. Preachers like Delwar Hossain Saidee (a former MP of the Jamaat now facing trials for crime committed against humanity in the war for independence in 1971) at such meetings speak about the glory of Islam and the greatness of its Prophet. Moreover, this kind of public preaching often makes comment of the current social and political system that go against Islam. This as a result promotes political Islam in the country. For example, Saidee provides "an ideology-driven, politically motivated interpretation of Islam, as sanctioned by the Jamaat, thus providing motivation for potential Islamist militants" (Hasan 2015).

In Bangladesh there are three types of education systems i.e. secular Bengali Medium, Islamic Madrassa system and English medium. In case of Madrassa education, two types are available: Alia and Quomi where Alia madrassah curriculum is government-approved, run on government support and degrees and certificates are approved by the government through a Madrassa Education Board. Alia education is divided into four levels: dakhil (secondary school), alim (higher secondary), fazil (Bachelor), and kamil (Masters). On the contrary, privately managed Quomi (people's) madrassa which cater the largest segment of the poor and rural and also disadvantaged pupils teach the Quran, Hadith, Sunnah, and an orthodox interpretation of the Sharia (Islam) to its students though with less job prospect (Hasan 2015).

Hasan (2015), based on the secondary sources, shows that government madrassas have grown over 700 per cent and student enrolment has jumped by 653 per cent during the period from 1972 to 2004. He also claims that around two million students are enrolled across 15,000 Quomi madrassas. Usually these Quomi Madrasha funded by individuals mainly from countries in the Middle East e.g. Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Libya, and the United Kingdom. What is pertinent in this regard is the overwhelming support towards political Islam in Bangladesh comes from these Madrassa. One of such example, is the rise of Hefaz-e-Islam in Bangladesh in Bangladesh politics whose main support base is the Quomi student (Hasan 2015). (a detail discussion will be included on the growth of religious (madrassa) Education in Bangladesh in the later part of this chapter)

Islamisation has major impacts on the secular polity, Bangladesh is a clear example of state sponsored Islamisation that paves the way for the rapid growth of Islamist political parties. According to Bangladesh Election Commission (BEC) list, there only eight Islamist parties are currently registered with them. These are: Jaker Party, Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh Tarikat Federation, Bangladesh Khelafat Andolon, Bangladesh Muslim League, Jamiate Ulamaye Islam Bangladesh, Islamic Front Bangladesh and Islami Oikkyo Jote (IOJ). Yet, the number of Islamist parties who operates covertly and without EC regulation surpasses 100 (Hasan 2015). It

interesting to note that Islamism has not always been separated from a democratic system as they might work within the democratic system. Thus Riaz (2003) divides Islamists in Bangladesh into three categories. These include: first, Islamists who participate in the existing political system; second, who work within the democratic political system despite their objections about it; finally, Islamists who refuse to take part in constitutional politics and remain clandestine.

Among those Islamist parties in electoral politics, Jamaat is the most prominent in terms of number of votes they receive and the political support base on the ground. For example, although other Islamists receive only less than 2 per cent of the total votes, Jamaat received 12.13 per cent and 8.63 per cent of votes in the 1991 and 1996 parliamentary elections respectively. Other Islamist parties who are unregistered and mainly militant in character e.g. Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) make headlines for different reasons including militant activities such as country-wide terror bombing on August 17, 2005 demanding the establishment of the rule of Allah and abolishing the democratic and constitutional political system in Bangladesh (Kabir and Salehin 2006).

5.4: Islam, Bangladeshi Nationalism and Politics of BNP:

Discourse and Practices

The section that follows will deal with the development of discourse of religious and Islamic politics in particular by the political leadership of BNP. After the brutal murder of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975, Army General Ziaur Rahman took power and later formed the BNP. Many anti-AL constituents participated in the formation of BNP. Zia amended Mujib's vision of the constitution. He took further steps to make a clear distinction between his regime and the Mujib's regime through officially orienting Bangladesh towards Islam. He has done this through removing secularism from the constitution and replacing it with absolute trust and faith in Allah, as well as the inserting of Bismillah-ar-Rahman-ar-Rahim (In the name of God, the beneficent, the merciful) in the constitution. Zia also made changes in the national identity through

replacing “Bangladeshi nationalism” instead of Mujib’s “Bengali nationalism.” The national identity thus became linked with territorial boundaries, distinguishing Bengali Muslims from the Bengali Hindus of West Bengal and thus Zia endorsed the spirit of Islamic nationalism by asserting it in the constitution (Hasan 2015).

5.4.1 : Religious Discourse in BNP’s Politics

As religion represents the inner core of life for the millions of people in Bangladesh, Islam as a majority religion in the region has been taken into consideration while gaining the majority vote in electoral politics. Thus, one of most prominent figures in BNP central leadership argues why and BNP adopt Islam in their political discourse:

Using religion in politics and doing in politics in the context of religious milieu...When Ziaur Rahman came to power, he added ‘Allahar protivichol astha o bishas’ in the constitution. As a result, a confidence was built among the people in a country where 95 percent are Muslim. If you listen to his public speeches of that time, there was no indication towards religious communalism, militancy. Even in the BNP’s manifesto, it mentioned religious values not Islamic values, meaning treating all religions equally and giving freedom to the people from all religious sphere to observe their own religious practices. BNP emphasised on the religious values and thus communalism was absent there. Even, if you look at the many practices of the current prime minister (in the form of pilgrimage to Mecca for Hajj, using Islamic dress code e.g. Hijab) resembles to how she uses Islamic practices. Thus, use of religion or Islam has played a great role in Bangladeshi politics [Mr. Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, Interview, 15-11-2017: Dhaka].

All other interviewees agreed on the above point which entails since Bangladesh is Muslim majority state and that religion and Islam represents inner core of life, it inevitable that religion must be part of politics. As one of the central BNP leader [Dr. A B M Obidul Islam, Interview, 04.02.2018: Dhaka] claims ‘This (Bangladeshi) Muslim population is religion fearing or fearful of religion not necessarily pious Muslim...As this Muslim majority will support those [political party] who are in favour of religion’. This also evident during the interviews, consulting the documents and our personal experience as Bangladeshi citizen all the major political parties e.g. BNP, AL, JP al go the pir (Muslim saints) and Mazar before they start their election campaign. This is to show to the majority Muslim that they are always in favour of

Islam. These and other practices will be discussed in detail in the section Islamic/religious practices among the major political parties during 1991-2014.

However, BNP leader has differentiated two different forms of use of religion in politics. One is the use of religion as they have belief on religion and act accordingly. Other is the use of religion for political purpose. BNP belong to the first type as they work based on their belief on Islam, while Awami League belong to the later type and thus use Islam for political purposes. As Awami League do not hold the real spirit of Islam among them and hence they are moving out from their position regarding Islam. They just use religion for their political end. One of the BNP leader calls it Awami League's 'double standard' [Mr. Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, Interview, 15-11-2017: Dhaka].

Yet, one of the respondents from BNP [Dr. Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, Interview, 05-12-2017] argues that though it is important to follow the Majority Muslim sentiment about Islam for electoral victory but it not the only element for the success or electoral victory. For example, as the respondent's claims:

In whole of Bangladesh you will see hardly any Mowlana, Mowluvi or Imam of a Mosque become elected as chairman in the local government election. If we have to politics basing on Islam, them many Islamic parties were supposed to come to power to form a government. But this did not happen in Bangladesh. Therefore, people do not vote only thinking about religious affiliation of the particular political party [Dr. Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, Interview, 05-12-2017].

Therefore, it is inevitable that political parties have to see other options also for their success in politic alongside religious affiliation. For example, economic and other activities that could sustain the livelihood of the ordinary people. Then, the question arises whether religious or Islamic politics is just the result of the political parties do want to go against the majority public sentiment regarding religion. Since the independence of the country, economic reconstruction of the country was a prime important the then government. However, different policies failed to deliver the desired economic development of the war-ravaged country. Thus, a BNP leader puts

it:

When a theory fails to fulfil people's desire and demand, then the people move forward to other ideologies. Socialism was craze two to four decades ago. Youth and countries were becoming socialist. For example, Vietnam, China, North Korea and Eastern European countries...these systems failed satisfy the people in India and Bangladesh...some people sleep in the footpath and some will build mountain of wealth—if this is socialism or democracy why will people go for these. Rather they are finding something special, for example, some places Islam talks about equity, justice. Same is true for Hinduism. Thus, religion has an appeal and political parties step in to it. [Mr. Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, Interview, 15-11-2017: Dhaka].

At the same time, a major divide in national identity i.e. Bangalee vs. Bangladeshi has been used to unite people into two factions. For example, Bangladeshi nationalism as BNP leader argues during the interview

...has united the people into a certain geographical identity instead of loosely used Banglaee nationalism which include Banglai speaking people from West Bengal, Assam of India. As our founder of BNP thought we require to have unique identity as nation and hence introduced Bangladeshi nationalism Moreover, Bangalee nationalism produced immense debate and put people into crisis of identity as it was based on language. Linguistic identity could not be the only national identity of a nation [Dr. Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, Interview, 05-12-2017].

Yet, how Bangladeshi nationalism has contributed in religious politics of BNP needs to be discussed in detail will be dealt in the following section.

5.4.2 : Practice of Religious politics

The section that follows we intend to explain the practices and activities to address how Islam, politics and secularism was interplayed the politics of BNP during the period of 1991-2014. After the general election in 1991, BNP formed the government. BNP was led by Begumm Khaleda Zia. Begum Zia continued Ziaur Rahman's tradition in the use of Islam in politics. During the election campaign of 1991, BNP leader Khaleda Zia and her party men alleged that if the AL win the election and form the government, it would remove "Bismillah-ar-Rahman-ar-Rahim" from the constitution and Bangladesh will take different turn in its religious identity.

Interesting enough that leader of AL dismissed this as a defamation campaign against the Awami League. They also emphasised that the chief of AL Sheikh Hasina had “no quarrel with Bismillah.”

If anyone analyse the posters and slogans of BNP and Jamaat, from the 1991 general elections, it would be very easy to identify the extent of use and influence of Islamist idioms, and rhetoric on the political discourse in their politics of religion. Slogans by all the political parties attempted to demonstrate their strong commitment and support to Islamic faith. For example, BNP supporters chanted, “La ilaha illallah, Dhaner shishe Bismillah” (There is no God but Allah, vote for paddy-sheaf saying God the merciful) (Riaz 2003). Islamic jargon and religious verbiage used by the Jamaat, BNP and the like-minded parties are in line with their predecessors and thus nothing to be surprised with.

The period 1991-1996 under the BNP government witnessed some incidents signalling that Bangladesh was becoming more and more intolerant toward secular ideals and multiculturalism. A feminist writer, Taslima Nasreen, was declared a heretic by some clerics because of her work titled *Lajja* (Shame). Pressure from the religious Mullahs and their followers was mounting on the government to arrest Taslima due to which she had to leave the country seeking refuge abroad. Fatwas (religious ruling) were issued by the same quarters against the activities of NGOs engaged in poverty alleviation programs and the empowerment of rural women. There were several incidences clashes between the rural Mullahs and NGO officials particularly BRAC. Several prominent secular minded writers including poets and university professors were threatened with their lives and were declared heretic. A newly founded cleric pro-Islam organisation called Ahle-Hadith launched a violent campaign against a tiny minority sect of Ahmadiyya, who are regarded as non-Muslim by their Ulemas.

There was remarkable expansion of Madrassa education (religious education) in this period with state support. The growing number of unskilled Bangladeshi workers in

the Middle Eastern countries made Bangladesh's economy increasingly dependent on foreign remittances. This has a huge impact on the spread of Salafi ideology in Bangladesh as the unskilled worker not only sent remittance to their home but also brought conservative ideologies and dress code and religious practices. At the same time, on Saudi funding various Islamic NGOs began to proliferate in Bangladesh starting their operation (Harun-or-Rashid 2012).

After defeat in the 1996 general election BNP stayed out of state power for five years. Yet, in the 2001 elections, the BNP and its Four party alliance including Jamaat-e-Islami came to power. One of the significant aspect of the return of BNP's rule is the employment of war criminals and leaders of Jamaat in different ministries. Begum Khaleda Zia led government employed Matiur Rahman Nizami (Minister for Industries) and Ali Ahsan Mohammad Muzahid (Minster for Social Welfare) and hence, Jamaat formally became a partner of the government. This was a very significant event Bangladeshi politics. As a Minster of Social Welfare, could influence and strengthen the local welfare system filling with people from the same religious affiliation. Moreover, BNP–Jamaat government period (2001-2006) witnessed an unprecedented support for Islamisation by the state. Soon after the elections, a reign of terror was unleashed upon the Hindu minorities in different parts of the country for their alleged support towards the Awami League, leading many of them to flee to India for fear of persecution. Mostly supported by non-educated rural poor, the rise of a host of internationally linked pro-Islam terrorist organisations, such as, Jam'atul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) and Harkat-ul-Jihad-Islami (HUJI) became a matter of serious concern for this period. Islamism in Bangladesh acquired a new dimension through the emergence of a trans-national Islamist group called Hizb-ut-Tahrir in the late 1990s that stands for the creation of the Khilafat i.e. Islamic state.

In 2004 and 2005, these Islamist militants were believed to have caused two very serious incidents in the country giving a kind of red alert to impending danger. On August 17, 2005, Bangladesh experienced a country-wide shockwave of terror. JMB

exploded around 500 bombs simultaneously across the country creating unprecedented fear of terror. In the pamphlets that were left at every bombing spot with demands of establishing the “law of Allah”. They demand the abolishment of the present democratic and constitutional system. Because, as they claim, democracy and constitutions are sources of polytheism and goes against the rule of Islamic Shari’a. Afterwards, JMB carried out attacks on the Bangladesh judicial system with several suicide bomb attacks, on October 3rd and 8th, and November 14, 2005. During these attacks they murdered four judges to underscore the seriousness of their demands. Along with JMB, Harkatul Jihad Bangladesh (HuJI-B), who allegedly funded by al-Qaeda and its leader Osama Bin Laden, carried out a series of terrorist activity throughout the country including a grenade attack on the British High Commissioner in Bangladesh in 2004. They also made a failed attempt on the life of renowned secular poet Shamsur Rahman at his Dhaka residence in 1999, grenade attack in 2004 on an Awami League rally in Dhaka (killing twenty-three people), and a failed attempt to assassinate Sheikh Hasina were most notable. As it was reported in the South Asian Terrorism Portal, HuJI-B “at one point of time, the groups issued a slogan, Amra Sobai Hobo Taliban, Bangla Hobe Afghanistan” (We will all become Taliban, and we will turn Bangladesh into Afghanistan).

At the end of BNP rule in 2006, a military backed-Care Taker government run the country until AL win the victory in the general election in 2008. Since then, BNP is out of the government until now in 2018. In the upcoming general election to be held in 2018, there is less chances for them to regain the political power as BNP became weaken over the years in terms of political capacity and popular support. Most importantly, their prime ally Jamaat is now under tremendous trouble after execution of top leader of Jamaat-i-Islam by the ruling AL due Jamaat’s involvement in war crime.

Yet, the pertinent question is whether religious politics of BNP is just for the sake of capturing majority Muslim votes or not. During interview one of the eminent educationalists of Bangladesh explained why BNP adopted Islamic politics in their

agenda. He explains: ‘To strengthen the anti-Awami League and anti-Indian stance, BNP brought religion-based politics in Bangladesh. It BNP who brought religion-based politics’ [Dr Abul Kashem, Interview, 04-08-2017: Dhaka]

There are some other areas where it is evident that how and why BNP did not want to get of religious politics. For example, though AL during 2008 general election makes it explicit that they will work reforming Muslim family laws in particular inheritance rights, BNP on the other hand does not even bother to make women’s inheritance rights a part of their agenda. Another events that also require attention is the Shahbag movement in 2013 onwards. During the initial period of the Shahbag movement, the BNP was at a complete loss and said nothing. Although its ally Jamaat needed to stop its leaders from being tried for war crimes and attacked the Shahbag protestors as atheists and started large scale agitation and violence. Afterwards, BNP leadership also realised that its greatest electoral advantage lay with the ‘Islam in danger’ cry.

5.5: Islamic and Secular Politics in Awami League’s

Political Discourse and Practices

As it has been discussed elsewhere, Awami League has always been committed to bring secularism in the state policy and politics. Therefore, Awami League has initiated secular and socialist orientation in the early days of independence of the country. However, they gradually shifted from secular position to use of Islam or religious politics. Yet in their political discourse, they are still based on the secularism though it varies from their practice in the political field. The section that follows will discuss Awami League’s endeavour to bring secularism back in the constitutional followed by the explanation of the use of religion in the political practices

5.5.1: Awami League, Constitutional Amendments and the Conflict between Islam and Secularism

Bangladesh observed the ninth consecutive year of the present Awami League Government on January 5, 2018. In the last nine years Awami League’ rule, the

country has witnessed impressive socio-economic development including increased per capita GDP, better infrastructure. Along with economic development, Bangladesh has successfully restored its soft-power image internationally. Nevertheless, what has made the critical observer of Bangladesh to worry is the question of state of democracy and rule of law. Since Bangladesh already on the way to become a middle-income country, it needs to keep up its steady economic progress along with the restoration of the values of democracy that have diminished over the past few years. What is important to mention in this section is that in the electoral politics, Awami League could not stay out of politicisation or political use of religion. The section that follows, it will discuss about the Awami League's role in constitutional amendment, Islamic and secular politic after 1991.

During the general election of 1991 Awami League was defeated and become the opposition party in the parliament. In 2005, during BNP rule, the High Court Division (HCD) of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh declared the removal of secularism from the Constitution illegal and the Appellate Division of the same Court held the decision of the High Court Division. However, it took several more years for the Bangladesh Parliament to amend the constitution and finally it happened in 2011. Therefore, in 2011 the Parliament of Bangladesh restored the provision for secularism in the constitution. Yet, the most controversial issue in this amendment was the retention of the state religion i.e. Islam and leaving Bismillah-ar-Rahman-ar-Rahim intact in the preamble of the constitution. This amendment particularly raised political and public concern in the media as well as in the public. However, Bhuiyan (2017) argues that “there is no contradiction between the concept of secularism and these inclusions in the Constitution because they operate merely as an acknowledgement of Bangladesh's status as a Muslim majority country and do not, in practice, undermine the constitutional guarantees of equal rights and protection of all citizens including religious minorities”. During the fieldwork with the one of AL's central leader's same argument was evident as he pointed out that

AL was in need to use religion for the electoral victory. At the same time,

ideologically AL is committed to secularism. I don't see any problem in using religion for electoral victory as long as religion is at core of people's life. Moreover, secularism for AL not religion-less, rather secularism is the equal treatment for all religion as everybody is free to practice their own religion. Thus, constitutional amendment to bring secularism back represents AL's ideological commitment to secularism. [Dr. Nuh-Ul-Alam Lenin, Interview, 13-11-2017].

Yet, it undeniable that Awami League had a high price to promote secularism in the post August 1975 politics dominated by the BNP-Jamaat-Jatiya Party. The BNP-Jamaat and other Islamic parties at the public meetings propagated that Sheikh Hasina was 'anti-Islami' as she did not utter 'Bismillah-ar-Rahman-ar-Rahim' while Khaleda Zia and her slain husband and founder of BNP Ziaur Rahman used to utter 'Bismillah-ar-Rahman-ar-Rahim'. Military ruler HM Ershad also utters Bismillah-ar-Rahman-ar-Rahim. To counter such allegations, Sheikh Hasina, who is a devout Muslim saying prayers five times a day, started uttering 'Bismillah-ar-Rahman-ar-Rahim' before her public speeches. Furthermore, Begum Matia Chowdhury, a conservative communist-turned Awami Leaguer, goes one step forward with: Aujubillahi Minashai Toanir Rajim, Bismillah-ar-Rahman-ar-Rahim, to begin her public speech nowadays. Former Dhaka city Mayor Mohammad Hanif during election campaigns introduced 'La Ilaha Illallah, Noukar Malik Tui Allah' to Islamise the campaign.

Moreover, before the 1996 general election, AL leader Sheikh Hasina pilgrimage to Mecca to perform hajj and started a special kind of scarf to cover her head. Before the election time in 2006, AL has made five-points treaty with Taliban influence Islamist political party Khelafat Majlish to make a gain in the electoral politics. This is self-contradictory as it goes AL's commitment towards secularism. During the last few years AL has shown a very soft attitude or formed an affinity with Hefazat-e-Islam, a hardcore Islamist party to show AL's lineal attitude towards Islam. They also become very positive about the Quami Madrassa and education system. These Islamic shifts impacted the local Awami League leaders who now do not bother to sell the idea of secularism. During the interview with one of the eminent civil society representatives and educationist [Dr Syed Anwar Hosain, Interview, 28-01-2018: Dhaka] claims that 'a parallel trend of Religionization of Politics and Politicisation of Religion is

happening in the country and these are for purely political purposes’.

Yet, there are many factors that forced the Awami League to go for Islamic rehearsal. One of such fact as one of the respondent argues ‘the party needs to woo the increased number of people subscribing Islamic values while the number of minority votes coming down. The party needs focus on the 90 per cent Muslims than the 10 per cent minorities’ [Dr. Abul Kashem Fazlul Haque, Interview, 12-02-2018: Dhaka]. This logic is very much strong among the central as well as to the local AL political leaders.

Whatever the use of religion and secularism in politics, many of the Awami League leaders and supporters believe in development and want focus on their socioeconomic achievement particularly their slogan for a ‘digital Bangladesh’ and many other infrastructures like ‘Padma Bridge’. It was evident from the interviews that political leadership of AL believe that AL has proved its supremacy during the course of its tenure in office particularly over last one decade. It has become successful in making an ever-increased political network throughout the country and helped weakening BNP’s support base in the rural areas. The country is already divided into two opposing blocks of two different ideological groups of pro-liberation and Bangalee and secular nationalism vs. Bangladeshi and religious nationalism. During AL tenure since 2008, it been deepening further. Yet, during the time of Awami League there were incidences of killings of secular and atheist bloggers, the growth of radicalised youth and the international growth of right-wing nationalists.

As Awami League and its supporters now opt for ‘development’ first and then democracy, politics now revolve around the idea of economic prosperity due to which AL does think much what happening or what are they doing with religion. Many of the supporters of AL believe that if economic development could really happen and their leader Shiekh Hasina be a role model like Mahathir Mohammed of Malaysia, Bangladesh could be reach their goal to be in the middle-income countries. Yet, it undeniable that many of the autocrats throughout the history has overthrown and

some like Mahathir has also been accused of Islamisation of the country. Therefore, concentration of power to a few of AL leaders and development without human face could not bring positive outcome.

Yet, competing Nationalisms and the Politics of Rhetoric of secular vs. Islamic as is evident from the above, the conflict between the Bengali nationalism as championed by the Awami League and the Bangladeshi nationalism of the BNP continues to be used for the purpose of electoral gain. But unfortunately, it undeniable that for the ordinary Bangladeshi political rhetoric of Bangalee vs. Bangladeshi nationalism and added religious flavour to this does not matter much. As long as they have something to live on, they are happy. What AL or BNP have been doing is to strengthen of corrupt and politicised vested interested group. Though, this might sound a little bit idealistic, the reality has far reaching outcome. As Bengalee nationalism is supposed to be the nationalism of the Bengalee people, and Bangladeshi nationalism, the nationalism of the Bangladeshi people, the problem as the BNP leaders mention during the interviews Bengalees who live in the Indian state of West Bengal, Assam and thus stresses the shared linguistic culture of the two Bengals. On the contrary, Bangladeshi nationalism as advanced by BNP highlights the Muslim culture of East Bengal and points out the specifically Islamic practices that define social life in Bangladesh. However, the way in which both the BNP and the AL had dealt with the politics of religion was so similar that it could not be argued that the ideology presented by either had an impact on the practice of secularism.

Over the last few years, the level of commitment to Islam seems to have real difference between AL and BNP. During the last general election, the issue of Islam vs secularism was little more than political rhetoric. For example, during the recent Shahbagh movement veiled out the level of commitment to ‘Islam’ and ‘secularism’ for the two major political parties. Because, within days of the formation of the Shahbagh movement, the AL grabbed their opportunity and showed support to the demonstrators, going as far as providing meals and 24-hour police protection through which AL believed its identity as the upholders of secularism and its Bengali

nationalism would make the urban populace forget about the failures of the past four years and support them for bringing the war criminals to justice and for their progressive stance.

Unfortunately, Awami League government swiftly started arresting bloggers accusing them of writing anti-Islamic sentiment, and thereby trying to disassociate from its previous secular stance and also play ‘the protector of Islam’ card. The only area in which the BNP and the AL may be approaching religion differently is in meeting the Hefazat-e-Islam’s demand for a Blasphemy Law providing for the death sentence for those hurting Islamic sentiments and hence, AL has clearly stated that it will not enact any such law.

Same rhetoric and practice could be found in relation to the Fifteenth Amendment of the constitution as upheld on 29th July 2010. The Supreme Court Appellate Division upheld the High Court’s historic verdict of 29th August 2005 that had declared the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution (1979) illegal. This historic verdict restored the ban on the formation of political organisations based on religion and ratified all actions of the martial law regime of Ziaur Rahman including those that destroyed the basic structure of the Constitution by removing secularism, allowing politics based on religion, and allowing anti-liberation forces to enter mainstream politics. The most pertinent issues in the amendment is that it retained Islam as the state religion but at the same time restored secularism into the constitution making AL’s political position self-contradictory.

Therefore, this initiative once again represents the AL’ desire to placate the Muslim majority in the country and thereby not damage their vote bank. Another incidence of AL’s unclear or a relation in disguise is the reluctance of taking any initiative after the High court verdict on the ban of Jamaat-e-Islam on August 1, 2013 as AL government thought it might create political upheaval in Muslim majority state. Yet, what has been discussed less in academia and in the public discourse is the issues familocracy and intraparty politics. The section that follows will shed some light on the issue of

familocracy and lack of intraparty democracy in Bangladesh.

5.6 Familiocracy and Intraparty Democracy

Like other South Asian countries, some of the families dominate political sphere of Bangladesh, for example, Mujib and Zia family. This family rule in Bangladesh as I term ‘familocracy’ or in Norwegian scholar Amundsen’s (2016) term ‘democratic dynasties’ play the most significant role in Bangladeshi political life. This is due to the fact that:

Villagers in Bangladesh seem to value their dynasties: they value politicians who can ensure a continuous flow of patronage from above. They prefer leaders with personal qualities like education, wealth and generosity, and when asked they explain that ‘ordinary people do not make good political leaders’ (Ruud, 2011: 67–68). Dynasty is an efficient branding, mobilization and vote-winning method in a country where party programmes are vague and actual policies are moving into the populist middle (Amundsen, 2016: 52).

During my fieldwork in Dhaka most of my respondents agrees that families of Mujib and Zia have been playing the most significant role in Bangladeshi from the national parliament to public debate. Although the contribution to the nation and images of the two families varies among the people, they dominate the public discussion and seems to be no other alternative to these family rule in the coming future.

Regarding the role of the family one of my respondents who is respected member of Bangladeshi civil society says:

In many third world countries, familiocracy is continuous process. But my question is if there is qualification and acceptance among the people, familocray is not a problem to me. But, if someone with disqualification entered into politics just through inheritance is problematic for politics. (Dr. Syed Anwar Hossain, Interview, 28-01-2018: Dhaka).

Yet, another respondents who very critical of the familocray in Bangladesh claims:

You will see, among the civil society, they are also divided into AL or BNP and hence, a real picture becomes much obscure from them. In reality, they will either in favour of AL or BNP disregarding good or bad practices. Thus, they might not see familocracy is problematic. It is undeniable that when all power is concentrated in one hand, it obviously becomes autocratic and any decision could be made for

anything whether to make concession to religion or religious political parties or using force to stay in political power. [Dr. Mohammad Musfequs Salehin, Interview, 15.07.2017]

It is therefore, evident from the analysis of the reverent document, observation and interviews that a democratic dynastic rule or what I call familocracy is very much evident in Bangladesh and guiding the future course of Bangladesh.

5.6.1 Dynasties and Alliances

If we look at the major political parties, most eminent thing is to observe is the presence of their immediate and extended family members are at the core of political power and control many of the country's leading business enterprises. There many such evidences, for example, A couple of Sheikh Hasina's cousins also play important roles in the party, like Abul Hasnat Abdullah, member of the working committee, and Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, member of the presidium, MP and former minister. Hasina's younger sister, Sheikh Rehana Siddiq, is an informal 'advisor', confidant and companion on state visits and functions. Sheikh Hasina's son, Sajeeb Ahmed Wazed (Joy) joined the party in 2010 (as 'primary member'), and he is a 'special advisor' to the party president (his mother). He has recently also taken part in international visits and political rallies and mass meetings in Bangladesh, along with his mother (Tusher, 2013). Now that her son Sajeeb Wajed Joy is active in party politics and he emerged as a main man behind the 'Digital Bangladesh' and many further courses of development is dependent on him.

Not Only the Sheikh Mujib family, the familocracy also established in many political stalwarts in Bangladesh like the Captain Monsoor Ali (former Minister during the first Government of Bangladesh), his son Mohammad Nasim (Minister for Health and Family Welfare) and his son Tanvir Shakil Joy (former MP); Taj Uddin Ahmed (Former Minister during the first Government of Bangladesh), his son Sohel Taj (former State Minister), daughter Shimeen Hussain (Rimi) MP; Sayed Nazrul Islam (First acting President of Bangladesh), his son Syed Asraf Hossain (Minister for

Public Administration and ex. Party General Secretary) etc. Political parties many times nominated deceased MP's wife for by-Election and by this way they established familiocracy in the party. This also interesting to note that many of these people are connected to BNP and JP through in-law's relation. This is not only the case for Awami League it is also happening in BNP and other political parties in Bangladesh.

BNP is a nationalist, centre-right political party, opposing communism and socialism and promoting free market policies along with Islamism. It has grown distinctly more religious; it is actively voicing the Islamic consciousness of the Muslim majority of Bangladesh. Since the inception of the party it shows its inclination to Islamisation of politics and the country and as way to it BNP allied to distinctly Islamist parties like the Jamaat-e-Islami and the Islami Oikya Jote. Hence, BNP was alleged to be behind the rise of the Islamic militants in the country. Kheleda Zia, the widow of military ruler Ziaur Rahman, has led the BNP since 1983. Ziaur Rahman established the party in 1978. He established the party in an attempt to civilianize his military rule. However, Zia was murdered in 1981 in a coup. Following the murder, Khaleda, widow of Zia, ““much like her rival Sheikh Hasina’, consolidated her control of the party ‘by banning all major decisions taken in her absence and making it impossible to remove her as its chief’” (International Crisis Group (ICG), 2012: 9).

Khaleda's elder son Tarique Rahman was made senior Vice Chairperson in 2002 and effectively his mother's successor. Tarique now figures on placards and posters with his mother and deceased father like Sheikh Mojib, Hasina and Joy in case of AL. A personality cult is being nurtured in rallies, on placards and with his web pages (www.tariquerahman.net and <http://tariquerahmanfanclub.webs.com>) and blogs, where he is presented as ‘our next Prime Minister’. Lineage in BNP politics is not as strong as AL, still Khaleda's sister Khurshid Jahan Haque, former MP and minister (deceased 2006), and her brother Sayeed Eskandar, former Vice Chairman of BNP and MP (deceased 2012) were in central power of BNP. Tarique's younger brother Arafat Rahman (deceased 2015) was a businessman, sentenced in court in 2011 in absentia for corruption and money laundering during his mother's 2001–2006

premiership. Dynastic succession is thus secured within the BNP. Yet, it is undeniable that the AL/Mujib dynasty is larger than BNP. The family members in major political parties occupying a greater number of government, party and business positions making Bangladeshi politics more prone to corruption, undemocratic as well as susceptible to the rise of the militants.

Beyond the two major parties (BNP and AL), there is also other relatively important parties, but these are not dynastic. The third largest party, the Jatiya Party, was established by former military dictator Hussain Mohammad Ershad in 1984 in an attempt to civilianize his rule, and it is still in business, allied to the AL, and is still led by Ershad, now an octogenarian MP. In the last elections it secured 27 MPs, but the party has split several times and is in terminal decline. Without a clear successor, the party is more personal authoritarian than dynastic but there is also some dynastic flavoured because there are two Vice Chairman- G M Kader (Ershad Brother) and Begum Rowsan Ershad (Ershad wife) are from the family of Ershad.

5.6.2 Intraparty Democracy in BNP and AL

Due mainly to the dynastic character, the supreme leaders of the main political party i.e. AL and BNP hold the main decision-making power. Yet, it needs to be clear how do measure the lack of intra party. Internal party democracy is wide and include the most centralised political parties to most decentralised political parties. In case of the former (the most centralised political parties), the party president has the final say. In case of later the national party organisation only has a coordinating role. Within this continuum, three areas of decision-making are identified through which it is possible to measure the degree of internal party democracy. These aspects are: leadership and candidate selection (or election), policy selection and formulation, and coalition formation (Amundsen, 2016).

As internal party democracy requires an open and inclusive process of selecting candidates for party and public offices, we emphasise on the first element i.e. leadership and candidate selection (or election) in both BNP and AL. Both AL and

BNP, however, leadership election, including the selection of the party leader, is conducted beforehand and only approved by the convention as a mere formality (Amundsen 2016). In case of AL, the party President and General Secretary are elected by the tri-annual party convention, called the council. The council is composed of 3000–4000 district representatives. This includes the President, General Secretary and up to 25 party members from the party's 74 district bodies. In order to select the other party bodies, the tri-annual council elects the majority of the members though the party president nominates a certain number.

Yet, in reality as some of my respondents made it clear to me that the party leader is elected at the party convention only through a formal approval of a single candidate. It is also evident that usually before convention, possible alternatives are discussed in closed door though election for the party President and General Secretary are always devoid of alternatives. The leadership issue has always been settled informally before being formally endorsed by the council (by acclamation) (Amundsen, 2016). In addition, the members of the presidium, executive and advisory committees are for all practical purposes chosen by the party president (International IDEA, 2007: 93) which clearly indicates the lack of internal party democracy.

However, when it comes to BNP it is even more centralised and informal, as it was evident from my observation of party activities over the time as well as confirmed by both BNP officials and others during my interviews. Furthermore, the 19 members of the standing committee and all the members of the advisory council of BNP are all appointed by the Chairperson i.e. Khaleda Zia. The approximately 250 executive committee members are elected among the council representatives, in formal terms by the council. However, in reality it was selected by the party chairperson. In the process of selection of candidates for parliamentary elections, BNP candidates are (like AL candidates) selected by the top party leaders. Although there are applications, 'fees' and 'consultations' with the party leadership, the Chairperson has the final say which has a huge impact of the democratisation of internal party politics.

There is a co-relation between use of religion in politics and the growth of religions education specially the Madrassa education in Bangladesh. If we go through the educational history of Bangladesh, we will find it clear that the undemocratic or military ruler gave more patronage to the Madrassa education or they highlighted this education system because of their political dividend. Therefore, the following section, we will shed some light on the growth of madrassah education as well as the state of minorities to unpack the complex interplay of religion and politics in Bangladesh particularly with the return of democracy in Bangladesh in 1991.

5.7. Growth of Religions Education (Madrassa) in Bangladesh

Madrassa is an Arabic word and its meaning is Muslim educational institution like school. From the very beginning the Muslim history this type of religions institution were established for teaching of Islam and during the heyday of Muslim rule, there were also scoping to study the secular subject like Law and Jurisprudence, Science and Medicine, Literature and Arts in these institutions. But in the declining period of the Muslim after the 13th century these institutions confined on the study of the religions subject only.

During the colonial rule the sub-continent, the colonial ruler introduced the teaching of secular subject with the medium of instruction in English. But the madrassa education system remains in the medium of Arabic, Persian and Urdu language and contemplated on Islamic studies only. The colonial ruler tried to reform the Madrassa education system during their whole period. The first attempted of reform was in 1851 when academic section of the Calcutta Aliya Madrassa was divided into two section, one was Arabic and other one was Anglo Persian section (Sattar 2004:134). In 1888 the British Government appointed a Commission under the chairmanship of W W Hunter to review the education system. Sir Syed Amir Ali and Nawab Abdul Latif were the Muslim member of that commission. This commission recommended the compulsory English language teaching in all Madrassa (Sattar 2004). Another some major reforms were made in Madrassa education in 1908, 1921 and 1946.

After the partition of India, the government of East Pakistan setup a Madrassa education board in 1949. This board regulated the education system, Syllabus and conducting the terminal examination. The Pakistan government formed a national education commission in 1959 which known as 'Sharif Commission'. The commission report was published in 1962 and strongly criticised the religious education system of the country. This commission observed that the religious education of Pakistan was outdated and out of step with the modern times. This commission recommended series of proposal to modernize the Madrassa education and suggested to bring Madrassa education closer to the main stream education system. Sharif commission also recommended that the Islamic studies department of the university should produce scholars to do research and development of Islamic knowledge.

After the birth of Bangladesh, the first National Education Commission was formed under the chairmanship of Dr. Kudrat-i-khuda in 1972. The report of the Commission was published on 1974. This commission recommended the compulsory free primary education up to the class eight and education system should be uniform for all. This Commission recommended Bangla to be the medium of instruction at all levels of education and there should be Madrassa education system after eight grade. This commission recommended the qualitative change in the Madrassa education system also. But after the brutal killing of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in August 1975 this report was not implemented.

Now a day, there were two types of Madrassa education system in Bangladesh. One is Aliya Madrassa which gave emphasis on religions subjects along with some knowledge in science and humanities. The other types were 'Quomi' Madrassa. This type of Madrassa centred only Islamic knowledge. They are not properly regulated by government. During the military rule (1975-1990) there was no specific education policy but system was run by ad-hoc policy. The military ruler use religion for their political purpose. They use religious education system as a tool of their popularity and to appease the religious leaders.

Table 5.1: Growth of Quomi and Aliya Madrassa in Bangladesh (1950-2008)

Year	Quomi Madrassa	Aliya Madrassa
1950	3100	1230
1960	4794	1864
1970	7510	2721
1980	12312	5767
1990	19742	9163
2000	31801	11882
2008	39612	14518

Source: Barkat (2011): 81

During the rule of Ziaur Rahman as a part of the reforms of Madrassa education he divided Dhakil (class ix-x) and Alim (xi-xii) class into two streams namely, Humanities and science. Zia setup a separate directorate within the education ministry for Madrassa education. He also established Madrassa education board to oversee the Madrassa education and conducting public examinations. The board also empowered to making Madrassa education equivalent to secular education which creating opportunities for Madrassa educated student to enter into the main stream educational institutions like universities. Zia not only promoted the Madrassa education but also tried to give a religious orientation of the secular education. He established a ‘Syllabi committee’ on 1977. The committee report stated that, “Islam is a code of life, not just the sum of rituals. A Muslim must live his personal, social, economic and international life in accordance with Islam from childhood to death. So, the acquiring of knowledge of Islam is compulsory of all Muslims- men and women.” (Gob, 1977:149). Zia introduced Islamiyat in the general education up to class viii. (which disused earlier)

During the Earshad period he used religious education as a tool of his political aspiration. He tried to Islamise the state, society and also education sector. He builds Mosque, Madrassa and Islamic religious institutions. He declared the Alim and Dakhil courses equivalent of SSC and HSC course of the general education. During the military rule the growth of Madrassa was very first and after the democratic rule

this trend also prevail in the society. In a statement it showed that from 1972-2004 government Madrassa have grown about 73 per cent and student enrolled had increased by 653 per cent (Karim 2004; Riaz 2008;37). This increase was happened due to the gradual reforms of Madrassa education and open opportunity for the Madrassa students to study in the public universities.

Table 5.2: Number of Main stream Educational Institution and Madrassa and their Students (1991-2008)

Year	Main Stream Educational Institutions (School, College and University)		Madrassa (Quomi and Aliya)	
	Number	Students	Number	Students
1970	35270	7000000	10231	260000
1980	53020	11000000	18079	510000
1990	94953	15800000	28905	800000
2008	103618	24991456	51130	9827742

Source: Abul Barkat (2017):113, 117, 121-122

During the Begum Khaleda Zia's second period (2001-2006) she formed an Education Commission which known as Maniruzzaman Commission. The recommendation of this commission gave an impression that they want to make happy to the madrassa lobby. The main recommendation for the Madrassa education of Maniruzzaman commission were:

- a) Nationalisation of the Ibtidaia Madrassa in the same proportion as the primary schools.
- b) Introduction of the same textbooks in Bangla, English and Mathematics in Ibtidaia Madrassa as in primary schools.

- c) Providing the same facilities as in the primary schools to the teachers and students of Ibtidaia Madrassa.
- d) Fazil and Kamil courses of Madrassa education to be declared equivalent to the mainstream B. A and M. A respectively.
- e) Establishment of a separate affiliating university to regulate the Madrassas.
- f) Establishment of Madrassa teachers training college.
- g) Setting up of a separate Madrassa Text Book Board.
- h) Setting up of a Bangladesh Civil Service (Madrassa) cadre (Similar to Bangladesh civil service (Education) cadre for employment in government education institutions in the mainstream.
- i) Setting up of a government Madrassa in each of 64 Districts (Compared to currently existing three government Madrassa)
- j) Stopping co-education in all Madrassa after 6th grade and setting up separate girl's Madrassa. (GoB 2003)

The recommendation shows that the direction of the Bangladesh education system and the encouragement of religious education. In the Quadrat-i-Khuda commission they emphasised the universal compulsory education of one stream but after 29 years Bangladesh going back and encourage religious education. Some recommendations follow the election pledge of BNP of 2001. It somebody will go through the recommendation it will revealed some contradiction also. They recommended same text book for the primary and Ibtidaia classes, but they also recommended for separate text book board and separate teachers training college for Madrassa.

It is mention earlier that there are two type of Madrassa in Bangladesh- one is government regulated Aliya and other one is Quomi (people's) Madrassa. Quomi Madrassa follows the curriculum from deoband Madrassa of India and they teach only the Quran, Hadit, Sunnah and an orthodox interpretation of the Sharia (Karim 2004; 298). The Quomi Madrassa was operated by the private donation and sometime this type of Madrassa is co-located with Mazars and Masjid. The businessmen, industrialist and politicians donated fund for this Madrassa for many purposes. Quomi

Madrassa also received fund from various countries such as Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Libya, and the United Kingdom (Karim 2004). But the present government introduced strict controlled on foreign donation to this Madrassa and also banned some Middle Eastern NGO activities in Bangladesh. When the military ruler Ziaur Rahman developed a special relation with the Muslim countries, a new way also opened for Bangladeshi workers to these countries especially in Saudi Arabia and Gulf countries. These workers come back with a new ideology (Wahabism) and established Quomi Madrassa created social ground for fundamentalism. Because of their curriculum the student of these Madrassa is not fit for the job market. According to an estimated report that there are 15,000 Quomi Madrassa around two million students are studying in these Madrassa. Present government are trying to regulate these Madrassa and declared equivalent their highest degree (Dawraye Hadit) with M. A. degree of secular education.

The military regimes tried to overcome their legitimacy crisis by using the religion. For that reason, the Islamist got an opportunity to enter into the main stream politics in Bangladesh. The military rulers not created this opportunity to the Islamist but also, they made Islam as a de-facto state ideology (Riaz 2008). After the reintroduction of democracy in Bangladesh, the political governments could not overcome the religious ideology. From the anti-military movement both the political party/forces Bangladesh Awami League and Bangladesh Nationalist Party trying to maintain a good relationship with the religious political parties/forces. Even the main political parties AL and BNP making a competition over this issue- 'Who is more Islam pasand (Loving)?' BNP formed the government in 1991 and 2001 with the support of Islamist and AL also deviated it policy after the defeat of 1991 election. Because of this situation the religious education is growing fast.

During the period of Ershad (1981-90) there were large increased the number of Madrassa and their budgetary allocation. It is nation worthy here that there are only three government Madrassa in Bangladesh and there are several thousand governments' school and college but per student public expenditure in Madrassa was

higher than the students of secular institutions (Mainstream education).

It is also mentionable here that the Madrassa education board is only one in Bangladesh and it is conducting Dakhil and Alim examinations. On the other hand there are six education board in Bangladesh. But the Madrassa board pass rates are higher in compare with the pass rates of general education board. Though the better result of Madrassa students does not reflect the stronger intellectual capabilities than the general students.

Table 5.3: Result of SSC and Dakhil and Percentage (2006-2016)

YEAR	SSC			Dhakhil		
	Appeared	Passed	Percentage	Appeared	Passed	Percentage
2006	784815	466732	59.47	161999	122808	75.81
2007	792165	454455	57.37	167735	110486	65.87
2008	743609	526576	70.81	180585	148186	82.06
2009	797891	537878	67.41	185726	159444	85.85
2010	912577	713560	78.19	210419	182431	86.70
2011	986650	810666	82.16	237524	197699	83.23
2012	1048144	904756	86.32	273065	241572	88.47
2013	992313	885891	89.28	221257	197199	89.13

2014	1087870	1008174	92.67	236630	211203	89.25
2015	1108683	961405	86.72	254622	229666	90.20
2016	1300284	1153363	88.70	246336	217314	88.22

Source: Bangladesh Education Statistics 2016, BANBEIS

The growth of Madrassa reflects the Islamisation of the society and polity. It is widely believed that the growth of Islamist fundamentalist has a close link with the religious education specially Madrassa. During the investigation of the bombs attacked of 17 August 2005, it was revealed in the investigation and subsequent arrests that there was a close link with the religious education persons.

In the Bangladeshi society, Islam is more adaptable and syncretic because of Sufi Islam. Bangladeshi Islam respected the ethos of the societal values. But the growth of Madrassa education destroying this spirit of the society because the Madrassa educated were not well adapted with first changing modern society and technology driven modern world. That's why they are not ready to accept any change in the society, even more, they are declaring some Bengali culture are un-Islamic, like Pahela Baishak (Bangla New Year), paying homage in the Shaheed Minar (Memorial site for the Martyrs of the Language Movement), singing during marriage and other occasions, drawing to alpana (traditional decorative drawing on floor, or walls at a house or roads) (Ahadullah and Chowdhury 2006)

The Madrassa educated were very hard on the women and the poor in the villages. Their views that the women should be at home and this is their work place and their main duty is to look after children and husband. According to their believe women are inferior and they should be in the custody of a male guardian. But the Bangladesh women are going outside for work in NGO, RMG and so on. So, the Madrassa educated people issued fatwa against the poor women in the village. Though in a High

Court verdict on 31 December 2002, declared Fatwa is illegal and punishable offence under law. But fatwa is still there in Bangladesh. Not only this but also a real example of the use of religion by the political parties, especially by the secular political party AL, signed a MOU with Khelafat Majlish (a religious political party) before the proposed election of 2006, that they will except fatwa in a limited scale, reported in The Daily Star on 24 December 2006.

So, it is easy to say that because of the use of religion by the political parties, it's directly affect the growth of religious education in Bangladesh and this is one of important tool of the Islamisation process of the society and polity.

It is very important for this research that what are the implications on the religious minorities on the use of religion in politics. In the next subsection an attempt has been made to enquiry the state of minorities in Bangladesh during the use of religion in politics since the birth of Bangladesh. It will be cleared in this discussion that the majoritarian politics has obliterated the spirit of the freedom struggle and repressed the interest of the minorities and also there in no significant change in their statues during the reintroduction of democracy in 1991.

5.8: The State of Minorities in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is a multi-ethnic, multi-religions and multi-lingual pluralistic society. Though it is a pluralistic society, it is also a clear homogenous country. The 98 per cent people speaking Bangla Language, the rest 2 per cent are ethnic communities numbering somewhere around 45. The majority people are Sunni Muslim constituted around 90 per cent rest are minorities (constitute 8.54 per cent Hindu, 0.60 per cent Buddhist, 0.37 Christian and others 0.14) (GoB 2011). There are also small numbers of Shia Muslim, Bahais, Animists and Ahmadiyya Muslim. So, the minorities of Bangladesh can be categorised as religions minorities; Ethnic minorities; Linguistic minorities; and other minorities.

In this subsection we will discuss about mainly the religions minorities. A group of

people who have a faith which is different from the majority people, because of their faith are faced unequal treatment and collective description therefore they are regarded as religions minority group.

The British colonizers divided Bengal in 1905 to separate the predominant Muslim eastern Bengal from Hindu dominant Western Bengal. Though the practitioners said it was to improve the administrative effectiveness of the large province particularly in the neglected eastern areas, but it was believed that, the main reason was to weak Hindu led opposition to British rule in Bengal. The Muslim majority of East Bengal generally welcomed the partition, because they saw prospects in it for political, social and economic advancement. But the Hindus considered it as a part to weaken the Indian nationalist movement. At last the British annulled it in 1911 because of the movement of the Hindu elites. This incident created a long-lasting effect on Hindu-Muslim relation in Bengal.

In 1947 the whole India was divided on the basis of religion. Many of the Muslim leaders believed that the partition of India would protected the interest of the Muslim population. But these attitudes changed ‘as dissention, frustration and disillusionment about the viability of one Muslim nation grew’ (Uddin, S. M. 2006:13). The Bengali speaking East Pakistani (now Bangladesh) soon detached from religions based Pakistani spirit because the West Pakistani (now Pakistan) ruling elite refused to recognize the Bengali language as one of the State Languages of Pakistan.

The religions minorities also faced hostile environment as Pakistan enacted anti-minorities law including the Enemy Property Act (EPA) of 1965 that paved the way for the widespread expropriation of Hindu-owned land (Rozairo, R. R. and Uttom, S. 2016). The Pakistani ruling class made compulsory religions education for the majority group (Islamiyat).

During the Pakistan era (1947-1971) the East Pakistani were discriminated by culturally, economically and politically. This discrimination turned into nationalist movement during the late sixties by the East Pakistani political party Awami League.

Under the able leadership of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Awami League achieved the landslide victory in the national election of 1970, which paved the way for legal ground for freedom struggle. The Pakistani ruling elite refused to hand over power to Awami League and they deployed their military to stop the self-rights movement of the Bangalis. By the three million death of East Pakistani, two thousand hundred sexual violence ended the freedom struggle with the military's surrender on 16 December 1971. More than ten million people were forced to flee to India where they live in refugee camps.

5.8.1 : Constitutional and Legal Safeguard for the Minorities in Bangladesh

After the independence of Bangladesh, the Constitution was passed in the Parliament on 4 November 1972. In the preamble of the Constitution it is declared that “the high ideals of nationalism, socialism, democracy and secularism which inspired our heroic people to dedicate themselves to, and our brave martyrs to sacrifice their lives in, the national liberation struggle, shall be the fundamental principles of the Constitutions’ (GoB 1972: 1). In the part ii (Fundamental Principles of State Policy) of the Constitution reaffirm the fundamental principles of the Constitution to pave the way for inclusive environment for different religions communities to coexist. In the same article it is declared that this fundamental state policy which are to be ‘fundamental to the governance of Bangladesh’ and ‘shall be applied by the state in the making of laws, shall be guided to the interpretation of the Constitution and of the other laws of Bangladesh’ (GoB, 1972: Article 8(2)).

The 1972 Constitution not only declared the secularism and freedom of religion but also setup safeguard to establish the environment of secularism. Article 12 of Constitution clearly declared that-

- “the principle of secularism shall be realized 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 purpose;

- d. any discrimination against, or persecution of, persons practicing a particular religion.” (GoB 1972: Article-12)

In the ‘Fundamental Rights’ section of the constitution religions freedom also ensured and declared that ‘the State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth’ [Article 28(i)]. The Constitution also guarantees the freedom of religion. In the article 41 of the Constitution it is stated that-

- a. every citizen has the right to profess, practice or propagate any religion;
- b. every religions community or denomination has the right to establish, maintain and manage its religions institutions;
- c. no person attending any educational institution shall be required to receive religions instruction, or to take part in or to attend any religious ceremony or worship, if that instruction, ceremony or worship relate to a religion other than his own.” (GoB 1972: Article 41(2))

The 1972 Constitution try to establish the communal harmony and coexistence of the religions minorities. In the right to freedom of association article of the constitution firmly declared that-

- “no person shall have the right to form, or to be a member of the said association or union, if
- a. it is formed for the purposes destroying the religions, 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” (GoB 1972: Article, 38 (a-c))

Bangladesh’s penal code also includes misdeed related to religions which proscribe “deliberate and malicious intention of outraging the religions feelings of any class of the citizens of Bangladesh, by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representation insults or attempts to insult the religion or the religious beliefs of that class, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years, or with fine, or with both” (Penal Code 1860).

The religions community in Bangladesh are govern by their respective family law, like the Muslim are regulated by the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance, 1961 which are based on Hanafi school of thoughts. The Hindu community also govern by their Personal Status Law, but the Buddhist community has no separate personal law, they follow the Hindu law. The interfaith marriage is not permissible according to Hindu law. The Muslim family law permit the Muslim man for interfaith marriage with a kitabi (scripturalist- Christen or Jewish). But with the Special Marriage Act of 1872, interfaith marriage between Muslim man and Hindu women or between Muslim women and a non-Muslim man are lawful in Bangladesh.

5.8.2: The State of Minorities during first Government of Bangladesh

The first government headed by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman enacted many laws and directed the country as a secular polity. The Constitution also prohibit the use of religion in politics. But there were some issues that were affected adversely to the interest of the minorities. In the Constitution of 1972 Bangladesh was declared to be unitary state [article 1] and Bangla was adopted as the state language [article-3]. It is also declared in the Constitution that the people of Bangladesh shall be known as Banglaees, [Article 6(2)], The Bangalee nationalism was defined in the constitution that “the unity and solidarity of the Bangalee nation, which deriving its identity from its language and culture, attained sovereign and independent Bangladesh through a united and determined struggle in the war of independence, shall be the basis of Banglee nationalism” (GoB 1972: Article 9) The inclusion of the above mention article in the Constitution established the political and cultural dominance of the Bangalee within the State. The adoption of Bangalee nationality had an impact on ethnic minorities as it was a denial of the cultural distinctiveness of the other group (Mohsin 1997: 92).

During the period of sixties when the Language based nationalist movement of Banglee rose its zenith, the language-based identity overcome the religious based identity and the communal conflict almost died. But after the independence some

sound of the Islamic content in the Bangladesh politics has increased because of the majority of the inhabitants are Muslim. Bangladesh also emerged with a contrast identity. On one hand Bangladesh is a second largest Muslim country and on the other hand it was declared as a secular polity. But the will of the majority soon hegemonies the political scene. Therefore, Bangladesh began to be characterised in racial or religious terms, namely, by giving attention to the Muslim identity of the people (Ahmed 1997: 318).

In the later part of the regime of Bangabondhu, he had tilted towards sentiment of the majority. He revived the Islamic Academy. He not only revived it but upgraded to a foundation (in March 1975). He also attended many Islamic gathering. Mujib received the OIC recognition (February 1974) and attended the OIC confluence in Lahore, Pakistan. Bangladesh also become the founder member of Islamic Development Bank (1975). During this period, Mujib made frequent references to the Islam in his speeches. He used terms and idioms like Allah (the Almighty God), Insha Allah (God Willing) Bismillah (in the name of God). He also some time dropped his symbolic valedictory expression Joy Bangla (Glory of Bangla) and ended his speech with Khuda Hafiz (May God protect you). By these way Bangladesh polity was described as atypical in nature during 1972-75. The Constitutional provisions and traditional laws projected the state as a secular polity but actually country was run by majoritarian Muslim will.

5.8.3 : State of Minority during Military Rule

In 1975, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was assassinated and Bangladesh entered into military rule for fifteen years. During this time, the majoritarian rule was established, and the rights of the minorities were leaned. Ziaur Rahman, the first military ruler, amended the Constitution by Proclamation Order and galvanised the Constitution as Islamic fervour. The fundamental principle of the Constitution 'secularism' was replaced with the 'Absolute trust and faith in the Almighty Allah shall be the basis of all actions.' He introduced 'Bismillah-ar-Rahman-ar-Rahim' (in

the name of Allah, the beneficent, the merciful) above the preamble of the Constitution. Ziaur Rahman legalize the use of religion in politics. He omitted the article 12 of the Constitution which eliminate communalism and communal politics and the use of religion in politics. He also changes the Banglee nationalism into Bangladeshi nationalism with a basis to Islam. Zia not only changed the Constitution provisions but also patronised the Islamic culture in the country. He introduced Azan in the radio and television and broadcast the Islamic verse (Quran and Hadith) during the programme of the radio and TV. He introduced religious subjects (Islamiyat) in the general education. For these fundament changes in the constitution by Zia, the minorities fell insecure in their existence.

After the assassination of Zia General Husain Muhammad Ershad came to power in a bloodless coup. Ershad follow the footstep of Zia and he also use religion in politics more openly than Zia. In 1988 with the Eight Amendment of the Constitution Ershad declared ‘the state religion of the Republic is Islam, but other religions may be practiced in peace and harmony in the Republic’ (GoB 1988). After the eight amendment which declared Islam as the State left no space for incorporating the minorities within this new state discourse (Mohsin 1997). All the political parties even the religious political parties also criticised the declaration of state religion. Awami League called it as betrayed with blood of three million martyred, reported in The Daily Khobor on 10 June 1988. BNP observed that this declaration will create civil war in the country, reported in The Daily Khobar on 11 June 1988). The religions political party Jamaat-e-Islami criticised this declaration and they said it was declared not for the welfare of the people and state but to hide their undemocratic activities and they only using the religion of Islam, reported in The Daily Khobar on 9 June 1988.

By this declaration the religions minorities felt that they are driven towards an uncertain future. The religions minorities of Bangladesh i.e. The Hindu, Buddhists and Christians formed an association called the Hindu-Buddha-Christian Oikya Parshad (Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council) on 20 May 1988 while the eight

Amendment bill was placed before the parliament. They raised their voice and demanded the unconstitutional provisions of 1972 Constitution which violated the rights of the religions minorities shall have to be repealed. BHBCOP placed a memorandum to the Speaker of the National Parliament. Later they demanded seven points demand to protect the minorities in Bangladesh. The demands were-

1. ‘‘Repeal 5th and 8th amendment of Constitution- we don’t want a religions State, we want a secular State;
2. We want the re-establishment of a secular and democratic bereft of all disparities on the basis of Bengali nationalism in the light of the four fundamental State principles which constitute the basic consciousness of the War of Liberation;
3. We want equal rights in all spheres of life including defense, foreign affairs, government administration, government-controlled institutions, State policy-making bodies, industries and commerce;
4. Fulfil all the legitimate demands of the tribal communities including preservation of their own culture and heritage;
5. Repeal the notorious Enemy (Vested) Property Act;
6. Resist communalism, fundamentalism and fanaticism- stop all kinds of religions discrimination, deprivation and harassment;
7. Stop torture and oppression on religion minorities in the false plea of alleged ‘Swadhin (Independent) Bangabhumi’’. (Bhattacharyya, D. C. (ed.) 1992:5)

There is another organisation called Sampriti Morcha (Harmony platform) which was established in November 2006 with progressive intellectuals of the country. They also work for maintaining communal harmony and protection of the rights of the religions minorities. But with all their works the religions communities were in a vulnerable position in Bangladesh during the military rule.

5.8.4: State of Minorities during Democratic Rule

Democracy was reintroduced in Bangladesh in 1991. BNP came to power in a free and fair election and formed the government with a tacit support from the religions political party Jamaat-e-Islami. In 1994 Jamaat-e-Islami triad to move ‘Blasphemy’ law in the parliament to persecute the minorities and secular forces. The minorities

were not in a good condition during BNP rule. Major General (Rtd.) C.R. Datta, Bir Uttam¹ stated that ‘in today’s Bangladesh great majority of the religions minorities fell insecure’ (Bhattacharyya, D. C. (ed.) 1992:6). In his speech he referred many data which showed that how the religions minorities were discriminated. Though the data were old and now the situation is little bit improving but this data will help us to understand the scenario of discrimination of the minorities during the military rule when religion was used for political purpose.

Table 5.4: Discrimination of Religions Minorities in Defence Service (Army)

Post	Total Strength	Minority
Second Lt.	900	3
Captain	1300	8
Major	1000	40
Lt. Colonel	450	8
Colonel	70	1
Brigadier	65	NIL
Major General	22	NIL
Total Officer	3807	62
Jawans	80000	500

Source: Major General C. R Datta 1991: 7

¹ Major General C.R. Datta was a Sector Commanders of Bangladesh Liberation War. He stated this statement in a seminar on ‘Restoration Human Rights in Bangladesh’ organised by Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council, U.K. on 19 October 1991 at Bangladesh Centre, London.

Table 5.5: Discrimination of Religions Minorities in Police Service

Post	Total Strength	Minority
ASP/ Assistant Commissioner	635	40
DCP/ Addl. SP	87	2
SP/ AIG	123	10
DIG	18	1
Addl. IG	6	NIL
IG	1	NIL
Total Officer	870	53
Ordinary Police	80000	2000

Source: Major General C. R Datta 1991: 7

Table 5.6: Discrimination of Religions Minorities in Administrative Service

Post	Total Strength	Minority
Secretary	49	NIL
Addl. Secretary	26	NIL
Joint Secretary	134	3
Deputy Secretary	463	25
Excise and Customs Officials	152	1
Income Tax Officials	450	8

Source: Major General C. R Datta 1991: 8

At the end of his speech he appealed to all quarters who believe in democracy, human rights and religions equality to raise their voice against injustices, maltreatment and humiliation of the minorities in Bangladesh (CR Datta, 1991: 11).

Awami League came to power in 1996 but the situation was almost same. It is pointed out by the political and social analysts that General Ershad was criticised by BNP and

Awami League that he was usurper and his rule was undemocratic and autocratic but none of these parties even after assuming power had been, or it is posited here would be able to retrench the Islamisation measures taken by Ershad (Mohsin 1997:98)

5.8.4.1: Vested Property Act (1974) and Vested Property Return Act (2011)

Since the independence of Bangladesh many discriminatory laws have been passed in favor of majority at the cost of minority's interest. Among these unjust law, the Enemy Property Act was major one. In 1965 when war was broken out between India and Pakistan, the Pakistan government enacted this law. This law allowed the government to seize the property which were belong to enemies of the State. This law basically was used against the Hindus those who temporarily fled to India in fear of their lives. It includes also those who never left East Bengal but were accused of supporting India during the war were labelled as enemies of Pakistan. (Khan, 2009). After the independence of Bangladesh in 1974 two laws were adopted- 'The Enemy Property (Continuance and Emergency Provisions) Act' and 'The Vested and Non-Resident Property (Administration) Act.' The Vested Property Act has been disastrous effect on the minorities especially on Hindu. From 1965 to 2006 around 2.6 million acres of land were seized and 1.2 million Hindu household were adversely affected (Dasgupta, Togawan and Barkat, 2011: xx). The leaders and members of all the major political parties including AL and BNP in Bangladesh have had records of Hindu land grabbing by using this act.

The Hindu community especially BHBCOP, Human right groups and civil society activist has been pressing successive government to repeal this law. In 2001 Bangladesh Awami League led government enacted the Vested Properties Return Act to repeal the Vested Property Act. This act allows the government to return the seized property, but the act was never rightly and quietly accomplished. According to this law government must prepare and published the district wise list of returnable vested properties. This has to be done through gazette notification within 180 days of the enactment of this law. But the subsequent government of BNP amended the time

limit. In 2011 Awami League government again enacted another law to implement The Vested Property Return Act. The VPRA permit the Hindus to reclaim their seized property from the government and political persons. But the real problem is that many of the property were confiscated more than forty years ago, so it might be impossible to return all the properties. From 2011 to 2013 there were four positive amendment has been taken on this act and present government are trying to release the land. Though Awami League had an election pledge of 2008 to return confiscated properties to their original owners, but the return process is very slow. The Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council accused the government official for the unnecessary delay of the process. (Dasgupta R 2018)

5.8.5: Recent Challenges of the Minorities in Bangladesh

The minorities are facing challenges in political, social and economic from the time of the partition of India in 1947. Politically the minorities were more vibrant during the Pakistan period than Bangladesh time. Because in the first election of Pakistan in 1954 there were 309 members in the East Pakistan assembly. Among the total number 72 were minority representative in the Assembly. After the Bangladesh period the number are decreasing.

It is noteworthy here that after the fall of military dictator in 1990, there was none minority representative in the fifth National Parliament (General Seat) from BNP. The total minority representative number was 12 of whom 9 from Awami League 1 from Jatiya Party and 1 from Gonotantrik (Democratic) Party, BNP elected 1 from reserved (women) seat.

Table 5.7: Representative of Minority Community in the Parliament

Parliament Election	General Member	Minority	Reserve Seat (Women)	Minority
1 st Parliament	300	09	15	02
2 nd Parliament	300	08	30	00
3 rd Parliament	300	06	30	01
5 th Parliament	300	11	30	01
6 th Parliament	300	04	30	01
7 th Parliament	300	12	30	03
8 th Parliament	300	08	45	00
9 th Parliament	300	14	50	02
10 th Parliament	300	18	50	01

Source: Bangladesh Parliament (www.parliament.gov.bd)

The minority community are considered as the vote bank of Awami League because generally the minorities supported Awami League. So after the election defeat of Awami League torture and extortion were common phenomena upon the minority's community. It was cross all limits after the election of 2001, the minorities has to face rampage of rape, torture, murder, looting and forcing to flee their villages. Not only after the election, have the minorities had to face same situation after the verdict by the International Crimes Tribunal for the war crimes of Jamaat leader Delwar Hossain sayeedi on 28 February 2013. So, the minorities are very vulnerable position in Bangladesh. Because of the constant attacks, threats, land grabbing, rape and sexual violence, the minorities especially the Hindu population are decreasing day by day.

Table 5.8: Decaling Hindu Population in Bangladesh

Community	1951	1961	1974	1981	1991	2001	2011
Muslim	76.9	80.4	85.4	86.7	88.3	89.7	90.4
Hindu	22.0	18.5	13.5	12.1	10.5	9.2	8.5
Buddhist	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.6
Christian	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Others	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.1

Source: Census of India 1941, Census of Pakistan 1951 and 1961, Census of Bangladesh 1974, 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011.

The minorities were not facing only the inter communal attacks, but also now a days they are targeted by the extremist militants. Recently in many places of Bangladesh the minorities were attacked by the militant groups. Not only the Hindu, Buddhist and Christian, but also the Muslim minorities like Shia, Ahmadiyy were also targeted by the militant groups in Bangladesh. The minorities are scared before the coming general election in Bangladesh. The Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council placed seven points demand- to establish Ministry of Minorities and National Minorities Commission before the election; to enact Minorities Protection Law; speedy return of vested properties, to proper implementation of peace treaty of Chittagong Hill Tracts etc. (Dasgupta, Rana, Three Decades of the Movement of Existence, presented in the discussion meeting at Press Club, Dhaka on 25 May 2018, organised by BHBCOP).

Bangladesh started its journey as a secular country but after the murder of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Military ruler running back the country like Pakistan philosophy. By the Proclamation Order and amendment of the

constitution the military ruler Zia and Ershad try to make Bangladeshi polity as religious. Bangladeshi religious minorities fall in a danger when Ershad declared state religion Islam in 1998 though it was written in the Constitution that “the state religion of the Republic is Islam, but other religions may be practiced in peace and harmony in the Republic’ (GoB 1988: Article 2A). Here one thing is very important to know the mindset of the ruler that in this article they used ‘may be practiced’ but in the Constitution of Bangladesh everywhere shall were used in this circumstance. This mindset showed the status of the minorities of Bangladesh during the military rule.

New hope was emerged for the minorities after reintroduction of democracy in Bangladesh in 1991. The minority community, civil society, social and cultural activist demanded the democratisation of constitution and return to the Constitution of 1972. Awami League government had to change the constitution by the court order and declared to return to 1972 Constitution. But in the sixteen amendment of the constitution it is declared regarding the state religion that ‘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 religion’ (GoB 2011: Article 2A). There are lots of ambiguity in this article, it is not clear how State shall ensure equal status and equal right in the practice of other religion of the minorities where state already granted special status to the majoritarian religion Islam as a state religion. By this amendment secularism also reinserted in the constitution as fundamental principle of the State. Not only these sixteen amendment also revive Article 12 of the 1972 Constitution where strictly prohibited the granting political status of any religion. So now, state religion and secularism both are in the same constitution in Bangladesh which makes the constitution peculiar and it is easily assumable that what the status of the minorities in Bangladesh is.

It is clearly showed that state of Bangladesh failed to implement the true spirit and essence of democracy for it minorities, rather they have been marginalised politically, economically as well as culturally in the name of democracy or majoritarian rule (Mohsin 1997:103).

5.9: BNP, the rise of Islamism and threat towards the democracy of Bangladesh

During the fieldwork it was repeatedly raised whether the rise of Islamism or militant Islam and the unequivocal connection with BNP and the imminent threat toward the very existence of secular Bangladesh. When I asked the BNP central leaders about their connection between the rise of the militant Islam with though they denied any causal connection between the two, it is much clearer from the interviews that BNP agrees that they use religion in politics for the sake of demanding the ‘demand’ of the Muslim majority.

Yet, my respondents from AL, as usual claimed that BNP is behind the rise of militant Islam posing threat to the existence of Bangladesh. For example, one of the AL central leaders claims:

It is well established that when Ziaur Rahman came to power, he established very good connection with the Middle East. He brought funding from there to build Madrassa or to fund them. In these institution, do they give modern education? This is not real education. This not real religious education, rather they teach militancy education. [Ms. Marufa Akhter Popy, Interview, 10-303-2018]

While another AL leader said make it much clear when claims that:

BNP is obviously responsible for the rise of militancy in Bangladesh. Because, they talk about religiously blended Bengalee nationalism and use religion excessively. A segment of the public believe that BNP is the flag bearer of Islam, they are the defender of Islam. Whether they are defending Islam or not they are protecting Islamic communal politics. They are the inventor of this politics and follower and through following such politics they are favouring the spread of militant Islam [Dr. Nuh-Ul-Alam Lenin, Interview, 13-11-2017].

Yet, it was denied by the one of the main BNP leaders. As he said:

I don't see any threat to the state. You have to understand the people of Bangladesh. Bangladeshi Muslim are liberal Muslim. How many riots took place here? How many riots took place in India? Hindu and Muslim are living closely here. Here you hear the sound of azan as well as shankha. The incidence of Ramu and Rangpur are well planned to push this society in a different avenue. I am rather afraid that some people are working to make Bangladesh a ‘fake state’ [Mr. Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, Interview, 15-11-2017: Dhaka].

Therefore, it is evident that the rise militant Islam and a connection with BNP patronage politics while AL also has played a significant role in using Islam in the electoral politics.

5.10: Conclusion

It can be concluded that the Islamisation has produced a conflicting political discourse in Bangladesh. All major political parties including BNP and AL (both secularists and Islamists) were responsible. Such conflict continues today. It is therefore, the reality that both the AL and BNP made concession to religion and religious political parties in practice though they are sometime different in their discourse on religion in politics. The rise of political Islam in Bangladesh may be attributed to the debates over secularism, ethnic vs. religious nationalism, gap between aspiration and performance, inherent tendency among the majority community (religious, ethnic) to gain in power relations at the state level, politics of alliance building among the power contenders, role of traditional Ulema (religious leaders), the increasing influence of madrassa (religious school) education, large poverty, high unemployment, low literacy rate, Bangladesh's increased dependence on the Middle Eastern countries for man power exports, the Afghan war, the demise of the former Soviet Union as an alternative global ideology, impact of internationalisation of political Islam and a new sense of domination among the Bangladeshis by neighbouring India. Moreover, lack of internal party democracy as well as democratic dynastic rule or familocracy in Bangladesh has played significant role in the religious politics of Bangladesh.

CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The history of Bangladesh as a 'nation-state' begins with its independence from Pakistan in 1971 and immediate renaming from 'East Pakistan'. This is perhaps the most significant political event in the recent history of the geographical region occupied by Bangladesh, whose Muslim, Hindu and indigenous history, though not well documented, extends more than 3000 years (BBS, 2012). For many contemporary commentators, Bangladesh's independence from Pakistan represented a structural break in history that in a traditional religious society and polity created an environment conducive to the establishment of an ethno-language/culture-based nation and a socialist, secular polity.

About 46 years later, a major challenge has emerged to the rationale of an ethno-language/culture-based national identity and a socialist, secular polity that aimed to replace the Muslim identity of the dominant community developed and propagated in this region over a thousand years. One explanation is that the separation of Bangladesh from Pakistan in 1971 was not the outcome of an organised socio-cultural/political revolution; instead, the separation was the 'unexpected' outcome of the elite conflict that started initially for political power and access to resources of the Pakistani state that had been established earlier by Indian Muslims after long socio-religious/ cultural and political struggles against the dominant Hindu community and British rule (Jalal, 1995). This is not historically proved because the creation of Bangladesh in 1971 was not an accident of history rather a logical outcome of the establishment of Bangladeshi culture and social spirit. The Bangladeshi people are overwhelmingly Muslim who created secular Bangladesh with a struggle against the Pakistani military forces over a nine-month bloody war.

Pakistan was created based on an Islamic nationalism project, which propagated the unaccommodative and international Islamism. Contrary to this, the Bengalee Muslim are very much accommodative and hence, Islam in Bangladesh did not establish a

monolithic tradition. Islam in Bangladesh as in many other places has taken many forms and has assimilated values and symbols not always in conformity with Qur'anic ideals and precepts (McLeod, 2008). Islam in Bangladesh absorbed and assimilated mainly four traditions. The first one is Sufi Islamic tradition. This tradition is accommodative and tolerant and allows the co-existence of different faith. As a result, mutual influence on a religious and cultural basis gave a different kind of Islam. Secondly, Islam was influence by the scripturally literalist and socially active Islamic tradition derived from the influence of revivalist reform movements in the nineteen and twentieth centuries. Thirdly, modern Islamic traditions in Bangladesh mostly derived from radical and militant Islamist political parties and organisations. Finally, the secularised and modernist traditions of Islam in Bangladesh derived from the European education system introduced by the British colonial rulers (Alam, 2008). Despite of the recent spread of international Islamism (intolerant Islam) by the Islamist political parties and the (mis)use of religion by the main political parties in Bangladesh, the sufi tradition of Islam (tolerant Islam) have a substantial impact on the Bangladesh Muslim. Therefore, the rationale for the creation of Bangladesh in 1971 was the preservation of unique Bangalee culture and tradition where there was no place for Islamism but for secularism.

During the Pakistan period, Bangladesh Awami League was successful to turn the Bangalee consciousness, their cultural pride and their traditions into Bangalee nationalism. Through the Language Movement of 1952 a secular ideology was created among the Bangalees. This absolutely in opposition to Pakistani nationalism (Islamic) project. The Awami League nurtured this ideology and by their self-right and autonomous movement, they wanted to eliminate the disparities between two wings to the Pakistan. Thus, the East Pakistani were ready to fight to establish their rights. Under the leadership of Bangabondhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Bangladesh was liberated from Pakistan occupational forces with a bloody war in 1971. After the independence of Bangladesh with a logical ground Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the father of the nation introduced – nationalism, socialism, secularism and democracy as four state principles

in the constitution of Bangladesh. But this secularism was different from European secularism. According to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman the concept of secularism was:

Muslims of Bangladesh will abide by Muslim's religion, a Hindu will practice his own, a Buddhist will practice his own as well. We don't have religion less society here, rather we have secularism. It has its own significance. No one should make religion a commodity here. No more exploitation in the name of religion. No more breeding of 'Razakars' and 'Al-Badr's' in Bangladesh, through religion-based politics. Sectarian politics shall not be allowed (Hossain and Ullah, 2003).

After the brutal killing of the father of the nation in 1975, the state was captured by the military and they propagated a different ideology like the previous Pakistani government. They used religion for their legitimacy and political expediency. The military ruler not only politically used religion but also tried to change the social fabric of secular Bangladesh to establish an Islamic state.

Nevertheless, after the reintroduction of democracy in 1991 the main political parties i.e. Bangladesh Awami League and Bangladesh Nationalist Party started using religion in their political gain. Consequently, the governance of the state of Bangladesh, irrespective of the military or democratic government, has been chaotic, repressive and exploitative. The situation has not improved over time. Because of sustained partisan interference and manipulation with impunity by political actors, most national institutions, including the civil service, military and judiciary, have been routinely deployed to serve the interests of those who managed to 'capture' state power by whatever means. Hence, over time, whatever consensus had existed among the people of Bangladesh on the idealistic question of the actual or imagined national identity of the people during the struggle against the Pakistani military over the nine-month independence war in 1971 has been in at stake.

At the societal-political level, the state of Bangladesh has sustained an identity crisis despite the repeated propaganda in one form or another by the political elite in the government to create a monolithic identity for the people of Bangladesh (Huque and Akhter, 1987; Murshid, 1995, 1997; Osmany, 1992). Throughout this thesis, it is

evident that the ongoing political polarisation and political crisis in Bangladesh since independence in 1971 reflect the fundamental weaknesses of the pillars of Bangladeshi society and identity. In particular, the present political division on the question of national identity reflects the deep historical differences in the beliefs, cultures and aspirations of the two religious communities (Hindu and Muslim) that developed over centuries. In order to explain the interplay between religion and politics in Bangladesh, this thesis explains why and how Muslim nationalism, which was the basis for the establishment of Pakistan, has re-emerged in contemporary Bangladeshi society and polity and is competing against Bengali ethnicity, language, culture and secularism within an emerging 'two-party' political system (i.e. BNP vs. Awami League).

With the above background this thesis aims to understand the interplay between religion and politics in Bangladesh to address the role and use of religion in politics of two major political parties e.g. AL and BNP. In line with this main object of the research, following research questions will be answered: a) What is the nature and extent of use of religion in politics in Bangladesh and what are the factors behind the adoption and use of religious political ideals by the major political parties e.g. AL and BNP?; b) Why do the mainstream political parties of Bangladesh consider Islam and Islamic parties as an important factor in the political domain, despite the Islamic parties' lack of success in electoral politics?; c) Why and how major political parties (miss)use religious minority in electoral politics and what is the implication of such (miss)use in democratisation in Bangladesh?

To conclude, this section will go through all the hypothesis set in the beginning of the thesis.

Hypothesis 1: The rise of religious politics is the result of the crisis of legitimacy and electoral politics of the major political parties during 1991-2014.

Bangladesh emerged as an independent country and started its journey as a secular state on the principals of "secular-nationalist" ideology, following a bloody nine-month long war with Pakistan in 1971. The then Awami League government led by Sheikh Mujibur

Rahman emphasised nationalism, socialism, secularism, and democracy as four state principles. The Constitution of Bangladesh not only declared secularism as state principle but also provided some provisions to stop religious politics. But then again, the government did not act according to the philosophy of the constitution and established soft authoritarian rule. Soon religion become part of the political discourse of Awami League. The Bengali word corresponding to secularism was *Dharmaniropekhot*, literally meaning “religious neutrality”. This indigenous form of secularism rather emphasizes on the no preferential treatment to any religion though ‘a particular religion (Islam) received special government patronisation. In a war-ravaged country, it is not unexpected that Mujib’s original vision of secularism and socialism for Bangladesh was under pressure. One of the reasons, however, was the serious economic problems and corruption.

As this thesis is mainly concern with the period from 1991-2014, it did not intend to focus on the country’s troubled past of military intervention in civil politics, particularly 1975-1990 as this period has huge consequences for Islamisation of the polity. Because, the military regimes led by Ziaur Rahman (1975–1981) and his successor General Ershad (1982–1990) systematically promoted Islam in public discourse and Islam became a tool to legitimise undemocratic regimes in the eyes of the Muslim majority since the military governments lacked a widely accepted public mandate to run the country (Hakim, 1999).

After the return of democracy in 1991, following widespread unrest and a rare period of collaboration between the Awami League (now led by Sheikh Hasina, Mujibur’s eldest daughter) and the BNP (led by Ziaur Rahman’s widow, Khaleda Zia). Since 1990, the two main parties have contested four elections: in 1991, 1996, 2001 and 2008. Unfortunately, the tensions between the religious and secular dimensions of Bangladesh have intensified during this period. During the 1996 election campaign each of the main political parties (the AL, BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami) appealed to Islam for votes and have done so in every subsequent election campaign. As we have explained in the preceding chapters, religion and Islam in particular has never been

strayed out of politics and has been intensified during the military regime and continued to be a significant denominator of politics since the return of democracy in 1991. Looking at the election campaigns of different general elections, posters staring in the name of Allah, popular slogan in the name of Allah e.g. Noukar Malik Toi Allah (Allah, you are the owner of the Boat) or Dhanersise Bismillah (Bismillah is in the paddy leaf). As Reaz (2003:38-39) observes:

From the mid-1980s, the so-called secularist political parties have been using idioms and icons of religion. Circumstances have changed so much that the Awami League [AL], which once took pride in its secular identity, now clearly prefers to be portrayed as a party that values Islam as an integral part of the culture of Bangladesh. Since 1991, the statements of party leaders and party publicity materials have revealed the Awami League's eagerness to present itself as a good custodian of Islam in Bangladesh. Symbolic expressions of this change have been the carrying of prayer beads and wearing of scarves by AL chief Sheikh Hasina. In addition to making pilgrimages to Mecca, Hasina began using Islamic phrases such as Bismillah-ar-Rahman-ar-Rahim, Khoda Hafez, and Insa Allah in her public speeches. Party political posters also carried these phrases to assuage the devout among the electorate.

Bangladesh provides an ideal context for Islamism to thrive as governments continue to use Islam for strengthening their electoral gain. For example, before the 2006 election Awami League signed a treaty with religious political party Bangladesh Khelafat Majlish (BKM). AL promises to give the right to Fatwa, though finally the election was not held, and treaty was not implemented. Another example is the rise of Hefazat-e-Islam which was formed in 2010 as an organisation of the Quomi Madrassa lobby in protest of the Government's National Women Development Policy and the National Education Policy which they called un-Islamic. But, the government appease them compromising with some secular ideologies. Furthermore, after the fifteenth amendment of the constitution, a nexus was made between religion and secularism again through keeping both Islamic ideals and secularism in the constitution.

On the other hand, the founder of BNP, General Ziaur Rahman, the first military ruler of Bangladesh used religion for his legitimacy crisis. He Islamised the constitution by inserting Bismilla-ar-Rahman-ar-Rahim, deleting secularism as state principle and

lifted the ban on religious politics. He reinstated religious political leader in the political scene of Bangladesh who opposed the birth of Bangladesh. Zia propagated a new description of nationalism which based on religion and territorial adjustment. After the assassination of Ziaur Rahman, Begum Khaleda Zia became the main person of BNP and she followed the path of General Zia. She came to power in 1991 with the tacit support of Jamaat-e-Islami. Again in 2001 Begum Khaleda Zia came to power in alliance with religious political party- Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Oikyo Jote. Begum Khaleda Zia not only reinstated the religious political leader who were involved in war crimes in politics like as Zia but also made two minister who were directly involved in war crimes. BNP Government (2001-2006) was also directly involved in patronisation of militant Islam in Bangladesh to sustain in state power. It is thus clear that Khaleda Zia used religion in politics for electoral victory.

Thus, this thesis accepts the hypothesis 1 which claims that the rise of religious politics is the result of the crisis of legitimacy and electoral politics of the major political parties during 1991-2014.

Hypothesis 2: Shifting from the policy of ‘secularism’ by Awami League and befriending with religious political forces/parties is the result of lack of intra-party democracy and eminence of ‘familocracy’ in party politics and electoral politics.

Since the independence of the country in 1971 both military and civilian governments have sought to retain external and popular support by promoting Islam throughout the country. When religion is used in this way for opportunistic reasons, it creates the space for more radical (and violent) groups to participate in an increasingly dangerous political game. Until now, Awami League portrays itself as the heir to the revolutionary forces that contributed to the liberation of Bangladesh. In so doing, the League is trying to attract support from Bangladesh’s youth. However, the success of such an attempt appears to be unlikely given the current bleak political situation.

Nevertheless, danger lies also somewhere else in the lack of intra-party democracy and familocracy. Awami League (AL) held their National Council sessions in 2016. AL

want to rejuvenate their party networks from top to bottom through their respective council sessions. This is indeed a positive development in the political landscape of Bangladesh. While these council sessions are supposed to be held on a triennial basis, for whatever reasons, this has not always been the case. Sometimes we have seen several terms have been lapsed and political observers believe that this is one of the reasons for the intra-party conflicts that erupt now and then. The councils, if held on a more regular basis, will not only be beneficial to the parties concerned but will bring about concrete gains to the country and democracy as a whole.

One of the preconditions for democracy to flourish in a country is to have democracy practiced within the different political parties. As the people know, unfortunately in this country intra-party democracy is almost an alien concept in Bangladesh. The absence of intra-party democracy has contributed to some political parties becoming closed autocratic structures with increasing fragmentation within parties, selection of poor electoral representatives and at times abuse of financial power in elections. The roots of the most pertinent challenges faced by Bangladeshi politics today can be traced to the lack of intra-party democracy and dominance of familocracy.

During my fieldwork some of the respondents agree that though there are some democratic practices in the party politics, all the major decisions are always taken by the party leader and get approved by the party chief. Sheikh Hasina has led the AL since 1981 and she was the prime minister from 1996 to 2001 and from 2008 till now.

During her first premiership, in particular, the family established political power and building up a political base in government and administration. A couple of her cousins also play important roles in the party, like Abul Hasnat Abdullah, member of the working committee, and Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, member of the presidium, MP and former minister. Hasina's younger sister, Sheikh Rehana Siddiq, is an informal 'advisor', confidant and companion on state visits and functions. Sheikh Hasina's son, Sajeeb Ahmed Wazed (Joy) joined the party in 2010 (as 'primary member'), and he is a 'special advisor' to the party president (his mother). He has recently also taken part

in international visits and political rallies and mass meetings in Bangladesh, along with his mother (Tusher, 2013). Now that her son Sajeeb Wajed Joy is active in party politics and he emerged as a main man behind the 'Digital Bangladesh' and many further courses of development is dependent on him.

Not Only the Sheikh Mujib family, the familiocracy also established in many political stalwarts of Awami League in Bangladesh like the Captain Monsoor Ali, his son Mohammad Nasim (Minister for Health and Family Welfare in AL government) and his son Tanvir Shakil Joy (former MP); Taj Uddin Ahmed, his son Sohel Taj (former State Minister), daughter Shimeen Hussain (Rimi) MP; Sayed Nazrul Islam, his son Syed Asraf Hossain (Minister for Public Administration and ex. Party General Secretary) etc. Political parties many times nominated deceased MP's wife for by-Election and by this way they established familiocracy in the party. This is not only the case for Awamili League but also in BNP and other political parties in Bangladesh.

Therefore, the lack of intra-party democracy and extended family networks e.g. in the form in-laws network has also contributed to the growing nepotism in political parties. This extended Awami Family/ Mujib/Hasina family are at the core in decision making. This has though not always directly encouraged/did not resist use of Islam in politics in Bangladesh. Because, all the extended networks required to be in the state power, to fulfil their vested interest and hence do not bother to use any means including religion to sustain in political game. Therefore, it is undeniable that shifting from the policy of 'secularism' by Awami League and befriending with religious political forces/parties is result of lack of intra-party democracy and eminence of 'familiocracy' in party politics and electoral politics.

Hypothesis 3: Religious politics of BNP is the result of anti-secular politics in Bangladesh and alliance with Islamists leading to sustain religious politics for majority votes, 'familiocracy' and lack of democracy in party politics.

As one of the respondents during my fieldwork claims 'politicians are afraid to touch religion because they are afraid of losing votes and to win in the electoral politics they

can do whatever would help to win the election'. Thus, web of the extended family network and undemocratic party politics could also be responsible in religious politics. The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) is a nationalist, centre-right political party, opposing communism and socialism and promoting free market policies. It has grown distinctly more religious. It is actively voicing the Islamic consciousness of the Muslim majority of Bangladesh. It also allied with Islamist parties like the Jamaat-e-Islami and the Islami Oikya Jote. Moreover, the birth of BNP was for anti-Awami League politics and it has propagated the ant-secular philosophy of the state form the inception of the party. These legacies are still with the BNP.

Like their counterpart Awami League, BNP dynasty was established by the assassinated military rule Ziaur Rahman in the late 1970s. Zia established the party in 1978 in an attempt to civilianize his rule. Zia was murdered in 1981, and Zia's widow Khaleda Zia has led the BNP since 1983. Khaleda, consolidated her control of the party 'by banning all major decisions taken in her absence and making it impossible to remove her as its chief' (International Crisis Group, 2012: 9). Khaleda's son Tarique Rahman was made senior Vice Chairperson in 2002 and effectively his mother's successor ('in response to rising demand from ranks and files of the party', according to his web page). Tarique now figures on placards and posters with his mother and deceased father, and a personality cult is being nurtured in rallies, on placards and with his web pages (www.tariquerahman.net and <http://tariquerahmanfanclub.webs.com>) and blogs, where he is presented as 'our next Prime Minister'. Included in the political/business family were also Khaleda's sister Khurshid Jahan Haque, former MP and minister (deceased 2006), and her brother Sayeed Eskandar, former Vice Chairman of BNP and MP (deceased 2012). Tarique's younger brother Arafat Rahman was a businessman, sentenced in court in 2011 in absentia for corruption and money smuggling during his mother's 2001–2006 premiership. Dynastic succession is thus secured within the BNP.

BNP hold its sixth Council on March 2016 after six years of their last council (Fifth Council was held in December 2009). Though according to the constitution of BNP council should be held by triennial basis but it always lapsed some terms. The age of

BNP is about forty years, until now they hold only six councils. One of the big reasons for lack of practicing democracy in party politics of BNP is the nomination process of party executives not by election. Party President hold unlimited power in every decision of the party matter. Thus, the party President rules the party in an undemocratic way.

It is imperative to note here as per the constitution of the major political parties, the party leaders in Bangladesh (Presidents/Chairpersons and General Secretaries) are elected by bi or tri-annual party council. But, in the case of both AL and BNP, there have not been any alternative candidates presented for the election of party president in the council. The election is just a formal approval of a single candidate, usually by acclamation. Regarding the selection of the other party bodies, in formal terms, the tri-annual council elects the majority of the members whereas the party President nominates a certain number. In reality, however, the party conventions have always authorised the party President to nominate almost all members, in “consultation with” other office holders. Thus, in practice, the members of the party Presidium/National Standing Committee and Executive and Advisory bodies are for all practical purposes chosen by the party President and a small group of party insiders, both within AL as well as within BNP. There is no real democracy in party leadership selection within the leading parties, although the AL is a bigger party that is better organised and structured in formal terms than BNP. Therefore, it could be concluded Religious politics of BNP is the result of anti-secular politics in Bangladesh and alliance with Islamists leading to sustain religious politics for majority votes, ‘familiocracy’ and lack of democracy in party politics.

Bangladesh has experienced moderately good economic growth over the past decade of more than 6 per cent a year and will be graduating from Least Developed to Developing countries despite its high levels of corruption and poor governance. The path to such development has therefore been through the export of labour-intensive ready-made garments and remittance. To strengthen the economy further and making people’s life and livelihood better, political parties must not fight among themselves

over gaining state power by any means, for example, any undemocratic means as well as use of religion in politics.

Bangladeshi society/polity has been polarised and divided almost vertically on the question of national identity and political philosophy and created sustained political instability and uncertainty (Hossain, 2000). Taking the advantage of such instability Islamist are rising. Violent Islamist are gaining prominence. This thesis suggests that neither ethnicity/language/culture/secularism-based nationalism ('Bengali nationalism') nor predominantly Muslim-territorial nationalism ('Bangladeshi nationalism') alone can bring stability Bangladesh. Instead, the objective conditions in the country dictate that a competitive democratic system of politics that accommodates aspects of secularism, language, Muslim identity and Islamic ethical-moral codes remains the feasible political discourse for forming and consolidating the country's multi-ethnic, multi-religious national identity over the long run and its survival as a sovereign state.

No research is without shortcomings and neither this one. Due to some practical issues including time, monetary issues I could not conduct in-depth fieldwork and hence led interviews with a small number of political leaders. If I could include more and diverse number of political leaders in my sample size, it might give this research a better insight. Although within the scope of this research it was not possible to include the leftist and extreme right (e.g. Jamaat) political parties, it might have produced a better comparative picture of the use of Islam and religion in politics if we could include all of them. Moreover, as this research scope did allow us to include the issues of funding particularly for the Islamist and their allies as well as their connection with the Middle East could be a further area of research to see how these factors play a role in the rise of religion in politics.

Therefore, the study proposes the following recommendations:

- a) More research is required on the political economy of the rise of Islam in politics or on the economic aspect of political Islam in Bangladesh. Moreover, a detail

study is required to analyse the potential role of the Middle Eastern countries and particularly the spread of Salafism in Bangladesh to address rise of Islam in politics.

- b) All political parties must be brought under the surveillance of Election Commission to monitor intra-party democratic practices which will ultimately dwindle the web of familocracy as well as strengthen democratic practices within the political parties. This will result into less dependence upon religion or political victory.
- c) To face the rise of political use of Islam and consequent Islamist and militancy, public institutions must be strengthened, and all political parties must consent and work on strengthening these institutions. As a result, illiberal (confrontational) democracy will be replaced with liberal democracy and no reliance with religious politics.
- d) As Bangladesh has entered into a digital revolution, government institutions as well as international donors, other non-state actors and social media should have to spread the unscrupulous dimension of the rise of militancy as well as making the youth aware of their role in resisting the militancy.
- e) Factional party politics and intolerant political culture required to be replaced with the inter-party communication. This could have been done through mediation between two major political parties by the eminent citizens/coalition. This would help building trust among the political parties and bring tolerant political culture in Bangladesh. As a result, the political party would not capture state power by any means (thus religion will be a less important issue).
- f) To fight with the rise of religion in politics, it is imperative to modernise education system and the Government and opposition political parties should follow Kudra-e-Khuda Commission report of 1974 because that emphasizes on the unitary education system. It would therefore eliminate multi-system education.
- g) Government enacted the law of 'Return to the Vested Property Act' but its implementation is very slow according to this law government should publish gazette notification of the list of the returnable vested properties which will help the religious minority (the Hindu) to feel safe and secure and establish their democratic rights.

REFERENCES

References

(* Indicates a primary sources)

- Abusulayman, Abdul Hamid (1994), *Towards an Islamic Theory of International Relations: New Dimensions for Methodology and Thought*, Herndon: International Institute of Islamic Thought.
- Afzal, M. Rafique (1976), *Political Parties in Pakistan, 1947–1958*, Islamabad: National Commission on Historical and Cultural Research.
- Ahamed, Emajuddin and D.R.J.A. Nazneen (1990), “Islam in Bangladesh: Revivalism Power Politics?” *Asian Survey*, 33(8): 795-808.
- Ahamed, Moudud (1983), *Bangladesh Era of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman*, Dhaka: The University Press Ltd.
- Ahmad, Mumtaz. (2008), “Islam, State, and Society in Bangladesh”, in *Asian Islam in the 21st Century*, Edited by John L. Esposito, John O. Voll and Osman Bakar, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ahmed (1983a), “Current Trends of Islam in Bangladesh”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 18: 1114–19.
- Ahmed B. U. (2010), *Parliament Elections Report 1937—2008*, Dhaka: Country First Foundation.
- Ahmed Moudud (2010), *Choloman Itihas*, Dhaka: The University Press Ltd.
- Ahmed, A. F. Salahuddin (2004), *Bangladesh: Past and Present*, New Delhi: APH Publishing Corporation.
- Ahmed, Emajuddin (1988), *Military Rule and the Myth of Democracy*, Dhaka: The University Press Limited.
- Ahmed, Imtiaz (1997), “Indo-Bangladesh Relations: Trapped in the Nationalist Discourse” in Barun De and Ranabir Samaddar (eds.), *State, Development and Political Culture: Bangladesh and India*, New Delhi: Har Anand Publication Pvt. Ltd.
- Ahmed, Imtiaz (ed.) (2014), *Human Rights in Bangladesh: Past, Present and Futures*, Dhaka: The University Press Ltd.
- Ahmed, Mohiuddin (2016), *BNP: Somoy-Asomoy (Bangla)*, Dhaka: Prothoma Prakashan.
- Ahmed, Moudud (2012), *Bangladesh: A Study of the Democratic Regimes*, Dhaka: The University Press Ltd.

- Ahmed, Nizam (2010), "Party politics under a non-party caretaker government in Bangladesh: the Fakhruddin interregnum (2007–09)." *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* (48.1): 23-47.
- Ahmed, Oli, Col. (Rtd.) (2014), 'Personal interview' cited in Ullah, Mahfuz (2016).
- Ahmed, Rafiuddin (1981), *The Bengal Muslims 1871 -1906: A Quest for Identity*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Ahmed, Rafiuddin (ed.) (1990), *Religion, Nationalism and Politics in Bangladesh*, New Delhi: South Asian Publishers.
- Ahmed, Rafiuddin (ed.) (2001), *Religion, Identity and Politics: Essays on Bangladesh*, Colorado: International Academic Publishers Ltd.
- Akbar S. Ahmed and David M Hart (1984), *Islam in Tribal Societies: From the Atlas to the Indus*, New York: Routledge.
- Akbar S. Ahmed and David M Hart (1984), *Islam in Tribal Societies: From the Atlas to the Indus*, New York: Routledge.
- Akhand, Akhtar Hossain (2012), "Islamic Resurgence in Bangladesh's Culture and Politics: Origins, Dynamics and Implications," *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 23(2): 165–198.
- Akhter, Muhammad Yeahia (2001), *Electoral Corruption in Bangladesh*, Aldershot: Ashgate Publisher.
- *AL (1970), *Nirbachoni Istaher (Election Manifesto)*, 6th June 1970, Dhaka: AL.
- *AL (1979), *Election Manifesto of Awami League*, Dhaka: Election Steering Committee of AL
- *AL (1981), *Election Manifesto of Awami League*, Dhaka, *The Bangladesh Observer*, 21 October 1981.
- *AL (1986), *Election Manifesto of Awami League*, Dhaka: Bangladesh Awami League.
- *AL (1987), *The Manifesto and Programme of Bangladesh Awami League*, Dhaka: Bangladesh Awami League.
- *AL (1991), *Bangladesh Awami Leaguer Sangsad Nirbachoni Istaher (Parliament Election Manifesto of Bangladesh Awami League)*, Dhaka: Bangladesh Awami League.
- *AL (1996), *Bangladesh Awami Leaguer Sangsad Nirbachoni Istaher (Parliament Election Manifesto of Bangladesh Awami League)*, Dhaka: Bangladesh Awami League.

- *AL (1997), *The Manifesto and Programme of Bangladesh Awami League*, Dhaka: Bangladesh Awami League.
- *AL (1999), *Awami League Government er Safolly (Success of Awami League Government)*, Dhaka: Bangladesh Awami League.
- *AL (2001), *Bangladesh Awami Leaguer Sangsad Nirbachoni Istaher (Parliament Election Manifesto of Bangladesh Awami League)*, Dhaka: Bangladesh Awami League, 2001.
- *AL (2002), *The Manifesto and Programme of Bangladesh Awami League*, Dhaka: Bangladesh Awami League.
- *AL (2006), *Bangladesh Awami Leaguer Sangsad Nirbachoni Istaher (Parliament Election Manifesto of Bangladesh Awami League)*, Dhaka: Bangladesh Awami League, 2006.
- *AL (2008), *Bangladesh Awami Leaguer Nirbachoni Istaher (Election Manifesto of Bangladesh Awami League)*, Din Bodol er Sanad, Dhaka: Bangladesh Awami League Election Staring Committee.
- *AL (2009), *The Manifesto and Programme of Bangladesh Awami League (as modified upto 29 December 2012)*, Dhaka: Bangladesh Awami League.
- *AL (2012), *The Manifesto and Programme of Bangladesh Awami League*, Dhaka: Bangladesh Awami League.
- *AL (2013), *Election Manifesto of Awami League*, Dhaka: Bangladesh Awami League.
- Alam, S.M. Shamsul, (1993), "Islam, Ideology and the State in Bangladesh", *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 28, (1-2):97-110.
- Alam, Sarwar (2008), *The Genesis of Islamic Extremism in Bangladesh (Post-Doctoral Research)*, Georgia: Emroy University.
- Alam, Shamsul (1995), "Democracy Politics and the Fallof the Military Regimes in Bangladesh", *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, 27(0): 28-42.
- Amnesty international (2001), "Bangladesh: Attacks on members of the Hindu minority," [web online], accessed on 12 March 2018, URL: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA13/006/2001/en>.
- Alvi, Hamza (1973), "The State in Postcolonial Societies: Pakistan and Bangladesh" in *Imperialism and Revolution in South Asia*, K. Gough and H. P. Sharma (eds.), New York: Monthly Review Press.

- Amundsen, Inge (2016), “Democratic Dynasties? Internal Party Democracy in Bangladesh”, *The International Journal for the Study of Political Parties and Political Organization*, 22(1): 49-58.
- ANFREL & Forum-Asia (2002), *Bangladesh Eight Parliamentary Election*, Bangkok: Asian Network for Free Election (ANFREL) & Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (Forum Asia).
- Asad, Talal (2003), *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Ayoob, Mohammad (1973), “Pakistan’s new political structure: Change and Continuity”, *International Studies*, 12, 2, April-June, New Delhi.
- Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (2012), *2011 Statistical Yearbook of Bangladesh*, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.
- Bangladesh Education Statistics 2016, BANBEIS (www.banbeis.gov.bd).
- Bangladesh Election Commission (1978), *Report on Election to the office of the President*, Dhaka, Bangladesh
- Banu, U.A.B Razia Akthar (1994), “Jamaat-e-Islami in Bangladesh: Challenges and prospects,” in H. Mutalib and Taj. I. Hashmi (eds.), *Islam, Muslims and the Modern State*, London: Macmillan Press.
- Banu,U.A.B Razia Akthar (1992), *Islam in Bangladesh*, Leiden: E J Brill Publication.
- Banyan (2013), “Who Owns Bangladesh?,” Dhaka and Delhi: *The Economist*, 21 August.
- Barakat, Abul et al. (2000), *An Inquiry into causes and consequences of Deprivation of Hindu Minorities in Bangladesh through the Vested Property Act: Framework for a Realistic Solution*, Dhaka: PRIP Trust.
- Barkat, Abul (2007), ‘Economics of Fundamentalism and the Growth of Political Islam in Bangladesh’ [Online: web] accessed on 12 Jan.2008, URL: <http://www.secularvoiceofbangladesh.org/article%20by%20Abul%20Barkat.htm>.
- Barkat, Abul . et. al. (2008), *Deprivation of Hindu Minority in Bangladesh: Living with Vested Property*, Dhaka: Pathak Shamabesh.
- Baxter, Craig (1992) “Bangladesh in 1991: A Parliamentary System”, *Asian Survey*, 32: 162–67.
- *BEC (2008), *Ninth National Parliament Election Result*, Dhaka: Bangladesh Election Commission (www.ecs.gov.bd).

- Bell, James (2012), The World's Muslims: Unity and Diversity (Pew Research Center, 2012), [Web online] accessed on 3 April 2014, URL: <http://www.pewforum.org/Muslim/the-worlds-muslims-unity-and-diversity.aspx>.
- Bennett, Clinton (2010), Muslim Women of Power: Gender, Politics and Culture in Islam, London: Continuum.
- Berger, Peter L, Brigitte Berger and Hansfried Kellner (1973), The Homeless Mind: Modernization and Consciousness, New York: Random House.
- Berger, Peter L. (ed.) (1999), The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics, New York: Wim B Eerdmans Publishing.
- Bhardwaj, S.K. (2010), "Contesting Identities in Bangladesh: A Study of Secular and Religious Frontiers," Asia Research Centre Working Paper: 36, London: LSE.
- Bhardwaj, S.K. (2015), "Contemporary South Asia" A Keynote Paper delivered in Dhaka, Bangladesh on the 66th Indian Republic Day on January 26, 2015.
- Bhattacharyya, D.C. Justice (ed.) (1992), Communal Discrimination in Bangladesh: Facts and Documents, Dhaka: BHBCOP.
- Bhuiyan, Monoar, Kabir (1999), Politics of Military Rule and the Dilemmas of Democratization in Bangladesh, New Delhi: South Asian Publishers.
- Bhuiyan, Jahid Hossain (2017), "Secularism in the Constitution of Bangladesh", The Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law, 49(2): 204-227.
- Binder, Leonard (1961), Religion and Politics in Pakistan, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- *BNP (1979), Nirbachoni Istaher (Election Manifesto) Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), [Online: web] accessed on 9 December 2014 URL: <http://bangladeshnationalistparty-bnp.org/>.
- *BNP (1991), Nirbachoni Istaher (Election Manifesto) Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), [Online: web] accessed on 9 December 2014 URL: <http://bangladeshnationalistparty-bnp.org/>.
- *BNP (1996), Nirbachoni Istaher (Election Manifesto) Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), [Online: web] accessed on 9 December 2014 URL: <http://bangladeshnationalistparty-bnp.org/>.
- *BNP (2001), Election Manifesto of Bangladesh Nationalist Party, Dhaka: Bangladesh Nationalist Party.

- *BNP (2008), Nirbachoni Istaher (Election Manifesto) Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), [Online: web] accessed on 9 December 2014 URL: <http://bangladeshnationalistparty-bnp.org/>.
- *BNP (2009), The Constitution of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) as amended upto 8 December 2009, [Online: web] accessed on 9 December 2014 URL: <http://web.archive.org/web/20131202233735/http://bangladeshnationalistparty-bnp.org/content.aspx?tablename=webitem2&id=8&child=null&parentid=nul>
- *BNP (2014) Songram O Gouraber 35 Bossorer (35 Years of Struggle and Glories) [Web online] accessed on 12 December 2017 URL: www.bnpsbd.org.
- Casnova, Jose (1994), Public Religion in the Modern World, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- *Census of India (1941), Census of Pakistan, (1941) and (1951), Bangladesh Government Census and as cited in Policy Focus: US Commission on International Religious freedom (Fall 2006), at (www.Uscrif.gov).
- Chakravarty, S. R. (1995), Bangladesh Under Mujib, Zia and Ershad, New Delhi: Har Anand Publications.
- Chakravarty, S.R. (1978), The Evolution of Politics in Bangladesh, 1947-78, New Delhi: Associate Book Agency.
- Chakravarty, S.R. and Virendra Narain (eds.) (1986), Bangladesh, Vol I, II, III, New Delhi: South Asian Publisher.
- Chambers, Paul W. and Avrel Croissant (2010), Unravelling Intra-Party Democracy in Thailand'', Asian Journal of Political Science, 18(2): 195-223.
- Chatterji, J. (1994), Bengal Divided: Hindu Communalism and Partition, 1932-1947, London: Cambridge University Press.
- Christiano, Kevin J., William H. Jr Swatos and Peter Kivisto (2016), Sociology of Religion: Contemporary Developments, Lanham, Boulder, New York and London: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Dasgupta, M., Togawa M and Barkat, A. (eds.) (2011), Minorities and the State: Changing Political Landscape of Bengal, New Delhi: Sage Publication.
- Dasgupta, Rana (2018), Astitto Rakkhar Andoloner Tin Dosok (Bangla) (Three Decades of the Movement of Existing), Dhaka: BHBCOP.
- Deacon, David etal. (eds.) (2007), Researching Communications: A Practical Guide to Methods in Media and Cultural Analysis, London: Hodder Arnold.

- Dil, Afifa (2012), “Impact of Arabic on Bengali Language and Culture,” *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh*, 57(1): 101-152.
- Dixit, J.N. (2001), *India’s Foreign Policy and Its Neighbours*, New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House.
- Dutta, C. R., Major General (Rtd.) (1992), “Different Aspects of Discrimination against Religious Minorities” in Bhattacharyya, D.C. Justice (ed.), *Communal Discrimination in Bangladesh: Facts and Documents*, Dhaka: BHBCOP.
- Eaton, Richard Maxwell (1994), *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier, 1204–1760*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Election commission (1986), *Bangladesh Election Commission* (www.ecs.gov.bd).
- Episoto, J.L. (ed.) (1986), *Islam in Asia*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Esposito, John (ed.) (1983), *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fair Election Monitoring Alliance (FEMA) (1996), *Bangladesh Parliamentary Elections, 12 June 1996*, Dhaka: FEMA.
- Firoj, Jalal (2012), *Democracy in Bangladesh: Conflicting Issues and Conflict Resolution*, Dhaka: Bangla Academy.
- Fitzgerald, Timothy (2000), *The Ideology of Religious Studies*, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Franda, Marcus (1982), *Bangladesh: The First Decade*, New Delhi: South Asian Publisher.
- Gallup poll (2006), *Survey Result*, Gallup International, [Online web]: Accessed on 1 June 2018, URL: <http://www.gallup-international.com/survey-results/>.
- Gallup poll (2012), *Survey Result*, Gallup International, [Online web]: Accessed on 12 Feb 2018, URL: <http://www.gallup-international.com/survey-results/>.
- Gandhi, Rajmohan (1987), *Understanding the Muslim Mind*, Penguin: Harmondsworth.
- Ganguly, Sumit (2013), ‘The Battle for Bangladesh: Who Defines Bengali Identity?’ *Foreign Affairs Magazine*, [Web Online], accessed on 3 March 2017, URL: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/bangladesh/2013-03-13/battle-bangladesh-0>.
- Gee, Paul James (2005), *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis*, London: Routledge.
- Ghazali, Abdus Sattar (1996), *Islamic Pakistan: Illusion and Reality*, Michigan: The Michigan University Press.

- Ghosh, Shyamoli (1990), *The Awami League, 1949-1971*, Dhaka: Academic Press and Publishers Library.
- *GoB (1972), *The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh*, Dhaka: Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs.
- *GoB (1973), *Bangladesh Collaborators (Special Tribunals) Order*, Dhaka: Bangladesh Government Press.
- *GoB (1973), *The International Crime (Tribunals) Act, 1973*, ACT, no. xix of 1973, Dhaka: Bangladesh Government Press.
- *GoB (1973 B), *Bangladesh Education Committee Interim Report*, Dhaka Ministry of Education, Dhaka: Government Printing Press.
- *GoB (1975), *The Indemnity Ordinance 1975*, ordinance no. XLX, *The Bangladesh Gazette Extraordinary*, 26 September 1975, Dhaka: Bangladesh Government Press.
- *GoB (1976), *The Bangladesh Gazette Extraordinary*, 24 December 1976, Dhaka: Bangladesh Government Press.
- *GoB (1977), *The Bangladesh Gazette Extraordinary*, 23 April 1977, Dhaka: Bangladesh Government Press.
- *GoB (1978), *The Second Proclamation Order*, Dhaka: Bangladesh Government Press.
- *GoB (1979), *Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh*, Dhaka: Ministry of Law, Judiciary and Parliamentary Affairs.
- *GoB (1979B), *The Bangladesh Gazette Extraordinary*, 7 April 1979, Dhaka: Bangladesh Government Press.
- *GoB (1987), *The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh*, Dhaka: Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs.
- *GoB (1988), *The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh*, Dhaka: Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs.
- *GoB (1991), *Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh*, Dhaka: Ministry of Law, Judiciary and Parliamentary Affairs.
- *GoB (2003), *Bangladesh Shikka (Education) Commission Report*, Dhaka: Ministry of Education, Government of The People's Republic of Bangladesh.
- *GoB (2011), *Official Census Result*, Dhaka: Bangladesh Government Press.
- *GoB (2011), *The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh*, Dhaka: Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs.

- *GoB (2014), *The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh*, Dhaka: Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs.
- *GoB (1975), *The Indemnity Ordinance 1975*, ordinance no. XLX, *The Bangladesh Gazette Extraordinary*, 26 September 1975, Dhaka: Bangladesh Government Press).
- *GoB (1996), *The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh*, Dhaka: Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs.
- *Gov.PK (1949), *The Constitutional Assembly Debate of Pakistan, Official Report of the Fifth Session, Vol-IV*, Karachi.
- Griffiths, Martin, and Mubashar Hasan (2015). "Playing with Fire: Islamism and Politics in Bangladesh." *Asian Journal of Political Science* (23.2): 226-241.
- Gupta, Swarupa (2007), "Samaj, Jati and Desh: Reflections on Nationhood in Late Colonial Bengal," *Studies in History*, Los Angeles/London/ New Delhi/ Singapore: SAGE Publication. DOI: 10.1177/025764300702300201.
- Hakim, Muhammad A. (1998), "Bangladesh: The beginning of the End of Militarised Politics?", *Contemporary South Asia*, 7(3): 283-300.
- Hakim, Muhammad A. (1998), "The Use of Islam as a Political Legitimization Tool: The Bangladesh Experience, 1972–1990", *Asian Journal of Political Science*, 6: 98–117.
- Haqqani, H. (2005), *Between the Mosque and the Military*, Washington: CEIP Press.
- Harun-or-Rashid, (2012), 'Desecularisation and Rise of Political Islam in Bangladesh', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh*, 57(1): 29-40.
- Hart, Gilliant (1988), "Agrarian Structure and the State in Java and Bangladesh," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 47(2): 249-267.
- Hasan, Mubashar (2015), "The Diverse Roots of the Secular in East Pakistan (1947-71) and the Crisis of 'Secularism' in Contemporary Bangladesh," *History and Sociology of South Asia*, 11(2): 156-173.
- Hasan, Mubashar (2015 A). "The advance of political Islam in Bangladesh," *The Independent*, Dhaka, [Web Online], URL: <http://www.theindependentbd.com/post/14560>.
- Hasanuzzaman (1991), *Bangladesh: Rashtra O Sarkerer Shamorikayan*, Dhaka: The University Press Limited.

- Hashmi, Taj I. (2003), "Failure of the Welfare State': Islamic resurgence and political legitimacy in Bangladesh," in Shahram Akbarzadeh and Abdullah Saeed (eds.), *Islam and Political Legitimacy*, London and New York: Routledge Curzon.
- Hewitt, Vernon Marston (1992), *The International Politics of South Asia*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Hossain, Abu Mohammad Delwar and Rahamat Ullah (eds.) (2003), *Bongabondhur Manobadikar Dharshan (Human Rights Philosophy of Bangabondhu)*, Dhaka: National Human Rights Commission.
- Hossain, Akhand Akhtar (2015), "Contested National Identity and Political Crisis in Bangladesh: Historical Analysis of the Dynamics of Bangladeshi Society and Politics," *Asian Journal of Political Science*, 23(2): 366-396.
- Hossain, Golam (1988), *General Zia ur Rahman and BNP: Political Transformation of a Military Regime*, Dhaka: The University Press Limited.
- Hossain, Kamal (2013), *Bangladesh: Quest for freedom and Justice*, Dhaka: The University Press Limited.
- Hossain, Syed Anwar, (1990), "Religion, Nationalism and Politics in Bangladesh," in Rafiuddin Ahmad (ed.), *Religion, Politics and Nationalism in Bangladesh*, New Delhi: South Asian Publishers.
- Huque, A.S. and Akhter M. Y. (1987), "The Ubiquity of Islam: Religion and Society in Bangladesh", *Pacific Affairs*, 60(2): 200-221.
- Hurd, Elizabeth Shakman (200), *The Politics Secularism in International Relations*, Princeton: The Princeton University press.
- Hurd, Elizabeth Shakman (2004), "The Political Authority of Secularism in International Relations," *European Journal of International Relations*, 10(2): 235-262.
- Husain, Syed Anwar (1997), "Bangladesh Politics: From Secular to Islamic Trend", in Barun De and Ranabir Samaddar (eds.), *State, Development and Political Culture: Bangladesh and India*, New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications.
- Hussain, Athar (2000), "Peregrinations of Pakistan Nationalism" in Leifer M. (ed.), *Asian Nationalism*, pp.126-152, London: Routledge.
- International Crisis Group (ICG) (2012), *Bangladesh Back to the Future*, 13 June 2012 [available in Web] accessed on 12 January 2018: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-asia/bangladesh/bangladesh-back-future>).

- International IDEA (2007) Annual Report, [web Online] accessed on 18 November 2017, URL: https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/reference_docs/Annual-Report-2007-A-record-of-actions-PDF.pdf.
- Islam, Maidul (2015), *Limits of Islamism: Jamaat-e-Islami in Contemporary India and Bangladesh*, Delhi: Cambridge University Press.
- Islam, Md Nazrul and Islam, Md Saidul (2018), *Islam, Politics and Secularism in Bangladesh: Contesting the Dominant Narratives*. *Social Sciences*, 7(3): 37.
- Islam, Sirajul (ed.) (2003), *Banglapedia*, Dhaka: The Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.
- Islam, Syed Serajul (2001), “The Politics of Islam in Bangladesh”, in Santosh C. Saha and Thomas K Carr (eds.), *Religious Fundamentalism in Developing Countries*, West Port, Conn: Greenwood.
- Jahan, Raunaq (1994), *Pakistan: Failure in National Integration*, Dhaka: The University Press Ltd.
- Jahan, Rounaq (2005), *Bangladesh Politics: Problem and Issues*, Dhaka: University Press Ltd.
- Jahan, Rounaq (2014), *CPD-CMI Working Paper Series-8: Political Parties in Bangladesh* (CMI, 2014), [Web Online], accessed on 12 February 2017, URL: <https://www.cmi.no/publications/file/5229-political-parties-in-bangladesh.pdf>.
- Jahan, Rounaq (2015), *Political Parties in Bangladesh: Challenges of Democratization*, Dhaka: The University Press Ltd.
- Jahan, Rounaq (ed.) (2002), *Bangladesh: Promise and Performance*, Dhaka: The University Press Ltd.
- Jahangir, B. K (1990), “Fundamentalism in Bangladesh” in *Violence and Consent in a Peasant Society and Other Essays*, Dhaka: Centre for Social Studies.
- Jahangir, B.K. (1986), *Problematics of Nationalism in Bangladesh*, Dhaka, Centre for Social Studies.
- Jalal, Ayesha (1995), *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia: A Comparative Historical Analysis*, New Delhi: Cambridge University Press.
- Kabeer, Naila (1989), *The quest for national identity: Women, Islam and the state in Bangladesh*. Brighton, England: Institute of Development Studies.
- Kabir, Akbar (2010), *Athakatha: Srmiti-Bismitir Bangladesh (Bangla)*, Dhaka: Pathak Somabesh.

- Kabir, M. G. (2001), “Religion, Language and Nationalism in Bangladesh”, in Rafiuddin Ahmed (ed.), *Religion, Identity and Politics: Essays on Bangladesh*, Colorado: Springs International Academic.
- Kabir, Mohammad Humayun & Mohammad Musfequs Salehin (2006), ‘Religion and Violence: Politico-Historical Analysis of Rise of Islamic Militancy in Bangladesh’, *Dhaka University Studies*, 64(2): 125-144.
- Kabir, Mohammad Humayun (2014), *Vasa Andolon o Nari (Language Movement and Women)*, Dhaka: Bangla Academy.
- Kabir, Muhammad Ghulam (1994), *Changing Face of Nationalism: The Case of Bangladesh*, New Delhi: South Asian Publishers.
- Karim, Lamia (2004), ‘Democratizing Bangladesh State, NGOs, and Militant Islam’, *Review of Cultural Dynamics*, 16(2-3): 291-318.
- Karim, Lamia (n.d.), *In Search of an Identity: The Rise of Political Islam and Bangladeshi Nationalism*, Oregon: Department of Anthropology, University of Oregon.
- Karlekar, Hiranmay (2005), *Bangladesh: The Next Afghanistan?*, London: Sage Publication.
- Khan, A. Majid (1982), *Jatir Proyjone Shikkha*, Dhaka: Minister of Education, Sports and Culture, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh.
- Khan, Mohammad Mohabbat and Zafarullah, Habib Mohammad (1979), “The 1979 Parliament Elections in Bangladesh,” *Asian Survey*, 19(10): 1023-1034. DOI: 10.2307/2643851.
- Khan, Mohammad Mohabbat and Zafarullah, Habib Mohammad (1979), “The 1979 Parliament Election in Bangladesh”, *Asian Survey*, 19(10): 1023-1036.
- Khan, Tariq Mahbub (2009), *Revitalization of Panam Nagar: Social Displacement and the minority Issue*, the 4th International conference of the International Forum on Urbanization (FOU), Amsterdam.
- Khan, Tariq Mahbub (2009), *Revitalization of Panam Nagar: Social Displacement and the Minority Issue (Conference Paper)*, The fourth International Conference of the International Forum for Urbanization (FOU): Amsterdam.
- Khan, Zillur R. (1982), “Bangladesh in 1981: Change, Stability, and Leadership”, *Asian Survey*, 22: 163–70.
- Khan, Zillur R. (2001), ‘From Mujib to Zia: Elite Politics in Bangladesh’, in Rafiuddin, Ahmed (ed.), *Religion, Identity and Politics: Essays on Bangladesh*, Colorado: International Academic Publishers Ltd.

- Lenin, Nuh-Alam (2001), *Awami Leaguer Panchas Bochor: Songramer ek Gaurabojjal Itihas (Fifty years of Awami League: a Glorious History of Straggle)*, Dhaka: Bangladesh Awami League.
- Lenin, Nuh-Ul- Alam (2015), *Bangladesh Awami League: Sonkhipto Etihash o Nirbachito Dolil*, Dhaka: Somoy Prokashon.
- Lenin, Nuh-Ul-Alam (ed.) (2001), *Awami Leaguer Panchas Bochor: Songramer ek Gaurabojjal Itahis (Fifty years of Awami League: a glorious history of straggle)*, Dhaka: Bangladesh Awami League.
- Lenin, Nuh-Ul-Alam (ed.) (2004), *Gourober 55 Bochor (55 Glorious Years)*, Dhaka: Bangladesh Awami League.
- Lewis, David (2011), *Bangladesh: Politics, Economy and Civil Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Liftschultz, Lawrance (1979), *Bangladesh: The Unfinished Revolution*, London: Zed Press.
- Lowe, N. (2013), *Mastering Modern World History*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lt. Col. Khan, M Abdul Latif (Rtd.) (2012), ‘Personal Interview’ cited in Ullah Mahfuz (2016).
- Madan, T. N. (1998), ‘Secularism and its Crisis’ in Rajeeb Bhargava (ed.), *Secularism and Its Critics*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Majumdar, Shantanu (2010), *Secularism and Awami League: a study of the main liberal political party of Bangladesh*, Ph. D. Thesis, Institute of Commonwealth Studies (ICS), University of London.
- Majumder, Ramendu (1972), *Bangladesh, My Bangladesh: Selected Speeches and Statement*, Dhaka: Muktaadhara.
- Maniruzzaman, Talukder (1980), *The Bangladesh Revolution and its Aftermath*, Dacca: Bangladesh Book International Ltd.
- Maniruzzaman, Talukder (1986), ‘Bangladesh Politics: Secular and Islamic Trends’, in Narain, Virendra and Chakrabarty S. R. (eds.), *Bangladesh History and Culture*, Volume one, New Delhi: South Asian Publishers.
- Maniruzzaman, Talukder (1990), ‘Bangladesh Politics: Secular and Islamic Trends’, in *Religion, Nationalism and Politics in Bangladesh*, Edited by Rafiuddin Ahmed, New Delhi: South Asian Publishers.
- Maniruzzaman, Talukder (1992), ‘The Fall of the Military Dictator: 1991 Election and the Prospect of Civilian Rule in Bangladesh’, *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 65: 203-224.

- Maniruzzaman, Talukder (1994), *Politics and Security of Bangladesh*, Dhaka: The University Press Ltd.
- Maniruzzaman, Talukder (1975), *Radical politics and the Emergence of Bangladesh*, Dacca: Bangladesh Books International Ltd.
- Mascarenhas, Anthony (1971), *The Rape of Bangladesh*, New Delhi: Vikas Publication.
- McLeod, Duncan (2008), *India and Pakistan: Friends, Rivals or Enemies*, London: Routledge.
- Milam, Wilam B (2009), *Bangladesh and Pakistan Flirting with Failure in South Asia*, London: Hurst Publishers Ltd.
- Mogahed, Dalia (2006), "Islam and Democracy," Gallup World Poll. Survey Result, Gallup International, [Online web]: Accessed on 1 June 2018, URL: <http://www.gallup-international.com/survey-results/>.
- Mohsin, Amena (1997), *The politics of Nationalism: The Case of Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh*, Dhaka: The University Press Ltd.
- Mohsin, Amena A. (2004), "Religion, Politics and Security: The Case of Bangladesh. in *Religious Radicalism and Security in South Asia*", Edited by Satu P. Limaye, Robert G. Wirsing and Mohan Malik, Hawaii: Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, pp. 467–88.
- Morol, Shishir (2014), "0.9 Million Hindu Population Reduced in Last 10 Years," the Daily ProthomAlo, Dhaka: Bangladesh.
- Murshid, Tanzeen M. (1997), "State, Nation, Identity: The Quest for Legitimacy in Bangladesh", *South Asia*, 20(2): 1-34.
- Murshid, Tazeen (1995), *The Sacred and the Secular: Bengal Muslim Discourse, 1871-1971*, Calcutta: Oxford University Press.
- Murshid, Tazeen (1996), *The Sacred and the Secular: Bengali Muslim Discourse 1871-1971*, Dhaka: The University Press Ltd.
- Myrdal, Gunnar (1968), *Asian Drama: An Enquiry into the Poverty of Nations* (three Volume), New York: Pantheon.
- Nair, M. B. (1990), *Politics in Bangladesh: A Study of Awami League 1949-58*, New Delhi: Northern Book Center.
- Naurath, Nicole (2009), "Religion, secularism working in tandem in Bangladesh," World, [Web online] accessed on 15 February 2018, URL: www.gallup.com/poll/121937/Religion-Secularism-Working-Tandem-Bangladesh.aspx.

- NDI (2006), Report of the National Democratic Institute (NDI) Pre-Election Delegation to Bangladesh, [Online web]: Accessed on 2 June 2017, URL: <https://www.ndi.org/node/22859>.
- Novok, James J. (1994), Bangladesh Reflection on the Water, Dhaka: University Press Ltd.
- O' Donnel, Charles Peter (1984), Bangladesh, Boulder, Co: West View Press.
- O'Connell, Joseph T. (2001), "The Bengal Muslims and the State: Secularism or Humanity for Bangladesh," in Rafuddin Ahmed (ed.), Understanding the Bengal Muslims: Interpretative Essays, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Osmany, Shireen (1992), Bangladesh Nationalism, History of Dialectics and Dimensions, Dhaka: The University Press Limited.
- Pew Survey (2012), Global Religious Future, [Online web]: Accessed on 1 June 2017 , URL: (http://www.globalreligiousfutures.org/countries/bangladesh#/?affiliations_religion_id=0&affiliations_year=2010®ion_name=All%20Countries&restrictions_year=2015).
- Piscatori, J.P. (1986), Islam and the Nation State, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Population Census of Pakistan (1951), Pakistan Bureau of Statistic, [Online web]: Accessed on 18 Jan 2018, URL: http://www.pbs.gov.pk/sites/default/files/other/pocket_book2006/2.pdf.
- *Population Census of Pakistan (1951), Pakistan Bureau of Statistic, [Online web]: Accessed on 21 June 2017, URL: http://www.pbs.gov.pk/sites/default/files/other/pocket_book2006/2.pdf.
- Rahman, Hasan Hafizur (ed.) (1979), Bangladesh Liberation War Documents, vol.1, Dhaka: Ministry of Information, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.
- Rahman, M (1978), Bangladesh Today an Indictment and a Lament, London: News and Media ltd.
- Rahman, M. Aatur (1983), "Bangladesh in 1982: Beginnings of the Second Decade", Asian Survey, 23: 149–57.
- Rahman, Sheikh Mujibur (2012), The Unfinished Memoirs (Trans. By Fakrul Alam), Dhaka: University Press Ltd.
- Rahman, Syed Tayyeb-ur (1985), Global Geo-Strategy of Bangladesh, OIC and Islamic Ummah, Dhaka: Islamic Foundation Bangladesh.

- Rahman, Ziaur (2005), *Bangladeshi Nationalism*, [Online: web] accessed 17 January 2018 URL: <http://bangladeshnationalistparty-bnp.org/>.
- Rashiduzzaman, M (1978), ‘Bangladesh in 1977: Dilemmas of the Military Rulers’, *Asian Survey* 18: 126–34.
- Rashiduzzaman, M. (1989), ‘East-West Conflicts in Pakistan: Bengali Regionalism, 1947-70’, in Wilson, A.J. and Dalton D. (eds.), *The State of South Asia: Problems of Integration*, London: Christopher Hirst.
- Rashiduzzaman, M. (1994), ‘The Liberals and the Religious Right in Bangladesh’, *Asian Survey*, 34(11): 974-990.
- Riaz, Ali & C. Christine Fair (eds.) (2010), *Political Islam and Governance in Bangladesh*, London & New York: Routledge.
- Riaz, Ali (2003), ‘“God Willing”: The Politics and Ideology of Islamism in Bangladesh’ *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 23(1&2): 301-320.
- Riaz, Ali (2004), *God Willing: The Politics of Islamism in Bangladesh*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Riaz, Ali (2008), *Islamist Militancy in Bangladesh: A Complex Web*, USA: Routledge Press.
- Riaz, Ali (2016), *Bangladesh: A Political History Since Independence*, London-New York: IB Tauris
- Römmele, Andrea (2003), ‘Political Parties, Party Communication and New Information and Communication Technologies’, *Party Politics*, 9(1): 7-20.
- Roy, Ashim (1983), *Islamic Syncretistic Tradition in Bengal*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Roy, Oliver (1994), ‘The Failure of Political Islam,’ Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Rozairo, R.R. and Uttom, S. (2016), ‘Bangladesh’ in M. Kelly (ed.), *On the Edge: Religions Freedom and Persecution across Asia*, Hind marsh, SA: ATF Asia.
- Ruud, Arild Engelsen (2011), *Democracy in Bangladesh: A Village View*, cited in Amundsen, Inge (2016), ‘Democratic Dynasties? Internal Party Democracy in Bangladesh’, *The International Journal for the Study of Political Parties and Political Organization*, 22(1): 49-58.

- Sattar, M. A. (2004), *Bangladeshe Madrassa Shikkha O Samaj Jibone tar Probbhab* (Madrassa Educatuin and its influence on Society in Bangladesh), Dhaka: Islamic Foundation Bangladesh.
- Salehin, Mohammad Musfequs (2013), “Democracy and Islam: A Tale of Democratic Struggle in a Muslim Majority State” *Sociology of Islam* 1: 88–114.
- Sarkar, J.N. (1972), *Islam in B e n g a l*, Calcutta: Ratna Prakashan.
- Sayeed, Khalid bin (1968), *Pakistan: The Formative Phase, 1858-1947*, London: Oxford University Press.
- Scarrow, S. (2005) *Political Parties and Democracy in Theoretical and Practical Perspectives: Implementing Intra-party democracy*, Washington: National Democratic Institute.
- Scarrow, Susan (2005), *Political Parties and Democracy in Theoretical and Practical Perspective: Implementing Intra-Party Democracy*, Washington D.C.: National Democratic Institute for International Affairs.
- Schaffer, H. B. (2002), “South Asia faces the future: back and forth in Bangladesh”, *Journal of Democracy*, 13(1): 76–83.
- Schendel, William van, (2009), *A History of Bangladesh*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Shehabuddin, Elora (1999), “Contesting the Illicit: Gender and the Politics of Fatwas in Bangladesh, *Signs*, 24(4): 1011-1045.
- Shehabuddin, Elora (2008), *Reshaping the Holy: Democracy, Development, and Muslim Women in Bangladesh*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Siddiqi, Ayesha (2013), *Pakistan Military: Ethnic Balance in the Armed Forces and Problems of Federalism* (Manekshaw Paper, no. 39), New Delhi: KW Publishers
- Smith, C.W. (1946), *Modern Islam in India*, London: Victor Gollancz.
- *The MoU between Awami League and Bangladesh Kelafat Majlish, Dhaka, *The Daily Star*, 23 Dec. 2012.
- TIB (2013), *Transparency International Annual Report*, [Online web]: Accessed on 18 December 2012, URL: <https://www.ti-bangladesh.org/beta3/index.php/en/annual-reports/4372-tib-annual-report-2013>.
- Trottier, Anne-Helene (2000), *A Case of Grassroots Syncretic Sufism: The Fakir of Bengal*, *ISIM News Letter-5*, [Web Online], accessed on 15 March 2018, URL: https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/bitstream/handle/1887/11961/news1_5.pdf?sequence=1.

- Tschannen, Olivier (1991), “the Secularization Paradigm: A Systematization,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 30(4): 395-415.
- Tusher H. J. (2013), ‘No place for reformists’, *The Daily Star*, 21 January, [Web online] (accessed on 20 September 2017, URL: <http://archive.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=263793>)
- Uddin, Safia M. (2006), *Constructing Bangladesh: Religion, Ethnicity and Language in an Islamic Nation*, USA: University of North Carolina Press.
- Uddin, Sufia M. (2006), *Constructing Bangladesh: Religion, Ethnicity and Language in an Islamic Nation (Islamic Civilization and Muslim Network)*, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press.
- Ullah, Mahfuz (2016), *President Zia of Bangladesh: A Political Biography*, Dhaka: Adorn Publication.
- Umar, Badruddin (2004), *The Emergence of Bangladesh: Class Struggles in East Pakistan (1947–1958)*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Upreti, Sonia (2004), *Nationalism in Bangladesh: Genesis and Evolution*, New Delhi: Kalinga Publication.
- Veer, Peter van der (2002), *The Modern Spirit of Asia: The Secular and Spiritual in India and China*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Votta, N. de (2001), “The utilization of religio-linguistic identities by the Sinhalese and Bengalis: toward a general explanation”, *Common wealth and Comparative Politics*, 39(1): 66-95.
- Zafarullah, Habib (ed.) (1996), *The Zia Episode in Bangladesh Politics*, New Delhi: South Asian Publisher.

News Papers and Weekly

Bangla

The Daily Azker Kagoj (Closed in 2007)

The Daily Bangla (Closed in 1997)

The Daily Bhorer Kagoj, Website- <http://www.bhorerkagoj.com/>

The Daily Ittefaq, Website- <http://www.ittefaq.com.bd/>

The Daily Janakhantho, Website- <http://web.dailyjanakantha.com/>

The Daily Prothom Alo, Website <http://www.prothomalo.com/>

The Daily Sangbad, Website- <http://allbanglanewspaper.net/item/sangbad.html>

English

The Bangladesh Observer, Website [http:// www.observerbd.com/](http://www.observerbd.com/)

The Bangladesh Today, Website <http://www.thebangladeshtoday.com/>

The Daily Star, Website <http://www.thedailystar.net/>

The Economist, Website <https://www.economist.com/>

The Independent Bangladesh, website <http://www.independent-bangladesh.com/>

The Independent, Website <http://www.theindependent-bd.com/>

The New Age, Website <http://www.newagebd.com/>

The News Today, Website <http://www.newstoday-bd.com/>

The weekly Holiday, Website [http:// www.weeklyholiday.net/](http://www.weeklyholiday.net/)

Website

<http://www.bdnews24.com>

<https://www.albd.org/>

<http://en.bnpbangladesh.com/>

List of In-depth Interviews

Dr. Nuh-Ul-Alam Lenin, Former Presidium Member, Bangladesh Awami League.

Ms. Shamsunahar Chapa, Education and Human Resource Affairs Secretary,
Bangladesh Awami League

Ms. Marufa Akhter Popy, National Executive Committee Member, Bangladesh
Awami League.

Mr. Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, General Secretary, Bangladesh Nationalist Party
(BNP).

Dr. Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, National Standing Committee Member,
Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

Professor Dr. A B M Obidul Islam, Education Secretary, National Executive
Committee, Bangladesh Nationalist Party.

Dr. Abul Kashem, Professor, Department of History and International Relations,
University of Rajshahi.

Dr. Syed Anwar Husain, Professor, Department of History, University of Dhaka,
currently Bongabondhu Professor, Bangladesh University of
Professionals, Dhaka.

Dr. Mohammad Musfequs Salehin, Associate Professor, Centre for Peace Studies
(CPS), UiT-The Arctic University of Norway.

Dr. Abul Kashem Fazlul Haque, Professor, Department of Bangla, University of
Dhaka.

Advocate Rana Dasgupta, General Secretary, Bangladesh Hindu Buddhists Christian
Unity Council and Prosecutor, International War Crimes Tribunals.

ANNEXURE

Annexure

Annex- 1

Semi-Structured Questionnaire

Title of Research:

Religion and Politics in Bangladesh: The Role of Bangladesh Awami League and Bangladesh Nationalist Party, 1991-2014

Basic information:

Name:

Religion:

Age:

Education:

Profession:

Political Affiliation (if any):

Religion in Politics

1. Do you think that Bangladeshi political parties use religion in their political ends? If yes, what is the nature of it (e.g. use of religious symbols, slogan in their mission, vision or activities)?
2. (If agreed with the above) what is the extent of (i.e. use most frequently/use in almost every affair—from electoral politics to main order) use of religion in politics?
3. In your opinion, why do the political parties use religion (what are the factors behind the adoption and use of religious political ideals).
4. Do you think that AL compromises with their secular ideology (recent constitutional amendments)? If yes, why (internal democracy, familocracy, legitimacy)? How (give some example)

5. Why there is recent trend/tendency in AL to build affinity with Islamic political party (Khelafat Andolon) and movement (Hefazat e Islam)? Is it because of electoral politics or the issue of legitimacy?
6. As you see Islamic political parties in Bangladesh get least number of votes in election, still AL wants to forge alliance with them. Why?
7. Why AL has a preferential treatment towards a particular religious minority (i.e. Hindu)?
8. Why and how BNP escalate anti-secular ideology and movement in Bangladesh? (Constitutional amendments)?
9. Do you think that BNP has extensively used Islam in their political ends? If yes, give us some example? Could you please explain why they do so?
10. Although Islamic political parties in Bangladesh get least number of votes in election, still BNP wants to forge alliance with them. Why?
11. Do you think that BNP is responsible for the rise of extreme right and militants in Bangladeshi politics? If so, why?
12. Do you think BNPs alliance with some Arab countries, lack of democratic practices, familocracy, and wealth-accumulation, illegitimate capture of state power results in their extreme right position in politics?
13. Could you please tell us why and how religion and Islam in particular became the fabric of Bangladeshi socio-political system?
14. In your opinion, when politicians talk about their religious faith during elections, they are just saying what they think people want to hear or else?
15. Do you think that religious leaders should not try to influence how people vote in elections and should not try to influence government decisions?
16. Do you think that our political system would be threatened if religious leaders and groups were to become a lot more involved in politics, or do you think our political system could easily handle this type of involvement?

Annex- 2

Draft Manifesto of Awami Muslim League, 1949

NAME

This Association shall be called “THE EAST PAKISTAN AWAMI MUSLIM LEAGUE”, and shall be affiliated with the All Pakistan Awami Muslim League in due course.

Why Awami Muslim League was formed

ITS AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

All-India Muslim League struggled for Independence and its main issue was the achievement of Pakistan. After Pakistan came into being, the leaders decided to dissolve the organization and in its stead brought into existence Pakistan Muslim League.

At the inception, Muslims of Pakistan accepted this organization as the successor of the All-India Muslim League which fought for Pakistan; but as days passed by, they were disillusioned. It became clear to them that the Pakistan Muslim League which pretended to inherit all the glories of its predecessor was in fact not meant to be a popular organization but a party whose sole aim was to maintain the Ministry in power. People who actually sacrificed their everything in the struggle for freedom could not enter the organization, thanks to the machination by the organizers, while a large number of erstwhile ‘nationalists’ and anti-Pakistan elements and opportunists power loving people became Muslim leaguers overnight and formed what is called ‘Muslim League’ by a coterie.

The burning problems of the country remained unsolved and for these long years Muslim League did not do anything to alleviate the distress of the people. The party proved to be completely a Governmental machinery and in course of time turned into a Sarkari league. Voice of opposition was gagged and measures under various Safety Acts and Ordinances were adopted to incarcerate the real and natural leaders of the people who demanded just and legitimate rights.

The country has not progressed mainly because of the attitude of the Muslim League. Education of the people collapsed, refugees have not been rehabilitated. Industry has not been developed, by-election in the seats vacant for over two years have not been held; the quality of administration almost in every branch has deteriorated and the list of safety acts is becoming bigger every day.

In this context, it was proposed to form an organization of the people-the common man, with the object of mobilizing public opinion and ensuring economic freedom to the poverty-stricken masses and for trying to get all grievances redressed by strength of popular will. The organization is for all the people-the Awami-as opposed to the pocket or the Sarkari League, which is subservient to the present rulers. Awami League is distinctly a separate organization.

1.

Aims and Objects

The aims and objects of the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League shall be, inter alia, as follows:

1. To provide the Sovereignty, integrity, dignity and stability of Pakistan.
2. To ensure that the constitution and the laws of Pakistan are founded on the principles of true democracy.
3. To promote and maintain the religious, cultural, social, educational and economic interests of the Muslims of Pakistan and to ensure similar rights to other non-muslim citizens of Pakistan.
4. To secure the basic necessities of life for every citizen of Pakistan namely, food, Shelter, clothes, education, medical aid and the scope to earn an honest and honourable competence.
5. To improve the lot of the common man to raise his standard of living and to procure for him full remuneration for his labour.
6. To relieve sufferings, propagate knowledge, promote equality and justice, banish oppression, eradicate corruptions, elevate moral and material standard of the people by organizing social service on the basis of self-help and co-operation.
7. To separate the judiciary from the Executive and maintain the independence of Judiciary and the Public Service Commissions; to provide Judicial trial before any detention unless in emergencies, such as war or mutiny.
8. To safeguard civil liberties, such as individual and collective freedom fo belief, expression, association and organization.
9. To strengthen the bonds of brotherhood amongst Muslims all over the world; to establish and strengthen friendly and economic relationship with the neighboring countries as well as with the Muslim countries all over the world.
10. To disseminate true knowledge of Islam and its high moral religious principles among the people.
11. To promote peace in International affairs.

2.

Immediate Program

1. Abolition of the system of Zamindary without compensation and equitable distribution of land among the tillers of the soil.
2. To nationalise the key Industries, essential to the life of the nation; to establish Industries on Government initiative and also to organize, expand and encourage cottage industries, etc.
3. To introduce free and compulsory primary education; to reorganise secondary ad higher education on modern and scientific basis.
4. To eradicate corruption, favoritism, nepotism, and all other kinds of anti-social evils from the administration and social life.

5. To take bold and swift measures to rehabilitate the Muhajereen in the life of the country and make them useful citizens.
6. To utilize to the fullest advantage-JUTE-the golden fiber, in the interest of the State and to ensure the highest price for the GROWERS and to establish sufficient number of mills to assure proper market for Jute.
7. To adopt austerity measures and to curtail the expenses of administration to the necessary minimum and provide for honest living of the lowly-paid officers.
8. To provide a net-work of Govt. charitable dispensaries to afford free medical aid all over the country.
9. To fix a just and fair apportionment of all revenues between the Centre and the provinces.
10. To eradicate the evil of begging and make provision for establishment of 'Work houses' and to undertake the maintenance education of the destitute orphans to make them useful citizen.
11. To improve the means of communication by roads, railways, river navigation.

Composition of the Organisation

3. The organisation of the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League shall consist of:-
 - i) The Annual and Special sessions of the Provincial Awami Muslim League.
 - ii) The Council of Awami Muslim League as constituted under section 9.
 - iii) The Working Committee of the Provincial Awami Muslim League as constituted under section 11.
 - iv) The District Awami Muslim Leagues as constituted under section 28 and affiliated to the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League.
 - v) The Sub-Divisional Awami Muslim Leagues and City League.
 - vi) Primary Leagues.

Membership of the Awami Muslim League

4. Every member of a primary branch of the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League must be a) a Muslim, b) a citizen of East Bengal, and c) not less than 18 years of age, provided that a candidate for membership who does not fulfill all or any of the above conditions, may be exempted from all or any of the said conditions by the working committee of the East Pakistan Awami League.
5. Every member of a primary league shall declare in writing that he/she adhere to the objects and rules of the league mentioned herein. A member shall cease to be a member unless he/she renews his/her membership by signing membership form for the next following year within two months.

Office-Bearers of the East Pakistan Awami League

6. There shall be the following office-bearers of the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League:

a. President	1
b. Vice President	5
c. Hony, General Secretary	1
d. Hony, Treasurer	1
e. Permanent Secretary	1
f. Asst. Secretary	3

7. The office-bearers of the Provincial Awami Muslim League shall be elected every year by the council of the Provincial Awami Muslim League from amongst its members at the first meeting, hitherto referred to as the annual meeting to be held after the annual election to the Council by the different District leagues and its reconstitution in accordance with Section 9 and they shall hold office until the next annual election but shall be eligible for re-election.
8. No person shall be an office-bearer of the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League unless he/she is a member of some primary branch of the organisation.

The Council of the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League

9. There shall be a council of the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League constituted under the following rules:

i. The Council shall consist of 1043 members elected annually by the District Leagues from amongst the members of the Primary Leagues (other than elected members of the legislature), who shall hold office till the next annual election to the council by the District Leagues and shall be eligible for re-election. The District Awami Leagues shall, on giving fifteen days notice, elect their representatives at least one month before annual election of the office-bearers of the provincial Awami league.

ii. a) The number of the council members from each district shall fixed as follows:

Bakerganj	72	Bogra	32
Chittagong City	20	Chittagong District	40
Dacca City	50	Dacca District	80
Dinajpur	30	Faridpur	48
Narayanganj City	10	Jessore	40
Khulna	32	Mymensing	135

Kustia	32	Nohakhali	50
Pabna	45	Rajshahi	45
Rangpur	60	Saidpur City	10
Tippera	85	Sylhet	50

- b. Over and above the numbers so fixed, all the elected Muslim members of the East Bengal Legislature and the elected Muslim members of the Central Legislature from East Bengal shall be Ex-officio members of the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League.
- c. The elected and ex-officio members shall, at the first annual meeting of the Council, co-opt 20 persons who are members of some primary branch of the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League.
- iii. In case a District Awami League fails to elect within the prescribed time its quota of members, the working Committee of East Pakistan Awami Muslim League shall have power to nominate the requisite quota to represent the said District. Such nominated members shall be entitled to attend, to take part, and vote at meetings of the Council until the next annual election to the Council or the next annual election to the council by the District for which they have been nominated.
- iv) The council shall not be deemed to have been improperly constituted merely by reason of any defect in the election, nomination or co-option of members or for similar reasons.
10. Every member of the council shall pay an annual subscription of Rs. 2/- to the provincial Awami Muslim League within one month from the date of notice by the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League, In any event the subscription be paid before the general annual meeting of the council. An ex-officio or co-opted member shall not be entitled to attend any meeting of council, if he or she has not paid the annual subscription of Rs. 2/-, but an elected or nominated member, who has not paid the said subscription within the above time limit, shall cease to be member of the council. The working committee shall have power to nominate members to the council in the vacancies created by the non-payment of subscription.

THE WORKING COMMITTEE OF THE EAST PAKISTAN AWAMI MUSLIM LEAGUE

11. There shall be a working committee of the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League consisting of 35 members, besides the President, the Secretary and Treasurer, the Permanent Secretary and the Assistant Secretaries, who shall be ex-officio members as well as office-bearers of the working Committee. Of the 35 members 30 will be elected by the council members from amongst themselves, and 5 will be nominated by the President from amongst the members of the council of League. In case, of any vacancy occurring amongst the members elected by the

council, the same will be filled by election by the Working committee, in case of a vacancy occurring from amongst those nominated by the President, the same shall be filled by the president by nomination.

Sessions of the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League

12. The Annual and Special sessions of East Pakistan Awami Muslim League shall be held at such suitable times and places as Working Committee of League may determine.
13. The Working Committee may convene a Special session of the league when it considers so to do, and shall convene within two months such a session when not less than 100 members of the Council of the league shall in writing on the Hony. Secretary of the League to hold such a session.
14. The president of the Annual or Special Session of the Provincial Awami Muslim League shall be elected by the council of the East Pakistan Awami Muslim league from amongst those who have been nominated by the different District Awami Muslim Leagues. The Working Committee may, instead of convening a meeting of the Council for this purpose, obtain in its discretion, the votes in writing of the members of the council.
15. The quorum of the Annual and Special sessions of the league shall be 125.
16. a) As the Annual and Sepcial sessions of the League the members of the Council of the East Pakistan Awami Muslim league and delegates of all affiliated District Awami Muslim League shall be entitled to attend take part vote on payment of a fee of Rs. 2/- each for every session.
b) The delegates for such sessions shall be elected by each District League in numbers not exceeding three times the quota fixed for the Council from that particular district. The District leagues shall, in so doing, equitably distribute the numbers allotted to them among the sub-divisions. Where representatives of a District have been nominated to the Council by the Working Committee, the Working committee shall be entitled to nominate the delegates to the sessions in accordance with the above principles.
17. The Council of the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League, together with such persons not exceeding 50 in number as the Subjects Committee to frame and adopt the resolution to be put forward at the Annual or Special sessions of the league must be placed before the Subject Committee. Only such resolutions may be moved in the open session as have been approved of by the Subjects committee.

Meetings of the Council of the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League

18. Meeting of the Council of the League shall be held from time to time at the discretion of the Hony. Secretary with the approval of the President, but the Council shall meet at least twice a year. Besides on a written requisition by ICO members of the council a special meeting of the council shall be

convened within 30 days of the receipt of such requisition by the Honorary Secretary.

19. Forty members shall form the quorum of all meetings of the Council, provided that the requirement of a quorum shall not apply to adjourned meetings.
20. The Secretary shall issue to each member of notice with the agenda, stating the time and place of the meeting, not less than 15 days previous to ordinary meeting and seven days previous to special meetings.
21. The meeting of the Council shall be held under the Chairmanship of the President and in his absence under one of the Vice Presidents. In the absence of the President and the Vice-Presidents the council shall elect its own chairman from amongst the members present, for the purpose of carrying on the business of that particular meeting.
22. The Workings Committee shall meet at least once a month or as frequently as may be necessary.
23. a). Seven members shall form the quorum of all the meetings of the Working Committee. b) The Secretary not less than seven days previous to an ordinary meeting, shall issue to each member a notice with the agenda stating the time and place of the meeting. Emergency meetings may be called at shorter notice.
24. All resolutions of the Working Committee shall be placed before the Council of the League for approval.

Functions of Council

25. The Council shall exercise the undermentioned functions:-
 - a. To elect office-bearers as provided for in Section 7;
 - b. To elect a President for the Annual or Special Session of the League as provided for in Section 14;
 - c. To consider and pass resolutions in regard to all matters relating to the object of the League;
 - d. To take all necessary steps for giving effect to the resolution passed at the Sessions of the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League or at the meeting of the Council of the Provincial Awami Muslim League.;
 - e. To control and regulate the expenditure of the funds of the Provincial Awami Muslim League;
 - f. To appoint Auditors;
 - g. To appoint Sub-Committee for carrying out its duties and exercising its powers with such limitations and conditions as it may deem fit to impose;
 - h. To Affiliate and dis-affiliate Branch Leagues;
 - i. To pass the Annual Budget;
 - j. To elect members for the Council of the All Pakistan Awami Muslim League for the Province of East Pakistan (when affiliated);

- k. To take disciplinary action against members of the League and against Branch Leagues;
- l. To frame Rules for;
- m. Regulation the conduct of the Sessions of the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League and the meeting of the Council;
- n. Regulating the conduct of the Sub-Committee appointed under clause(g);
- o. Such other and further matters necessary for carrying out the objects of the League;

Provided that no rule framed by the council shall be valid if it is inconsistent with the principles embodied herein.

26. The Council may delegate one or more of its powers to the Hony. Secretary of the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League with such limitation and conditions as it may deem fit to impose.

Functions of the Working committee

27. The Working committee shall exercise of following functions:-
- a. To prepare the Annual Budget for the approval of the Council and to authorize payments in accordance with it;
 - b. To sanction all payment exceeding Rs. 50 not included in the Budget;
 - c. To employ and dismiss employees;
 - d. To appoint Sub-Committees for carrying out its duties and powers, with such limitations and conditions as it may deem fit to impose;
 - e. To remove the name of such member of the Working Committee who absents himself from four consecutive meetings without sufficient grounds satisfactory to the Committee;
 - f. Convene Annual and Special sessions at such suitable times and places as it may determine;
 - g. To ascertain the views of the Council regarding the election of the President of the Annual or Special session;
 - h. The nominate representatives of the District on the Council where it has failed to elect its representatives;
 - i. To nominate delegates from a District to the Annual or Special Session where the District has failed to elect representatives to the Council;
 - j. To perform all functions necessary to carry out the object of the Awami League;
 - k. To perform all function of the council except the powers conferred on the Council by Sections 7, 11, 14, 17, 25(f) (g) (i) (j) unless otherwise decided by the Council.

BRANCHES OF THE PROVINCIAL AWAMI MUSLIM LEAGUE DISTRICT LEAGUE

28. There shall be a District League in each District, which shall constituted as follows:

- a. 25 members elected by each Sub-Divisional League within the District.
 - b. 25 members elected by each City League [Vide Sec. 31 (ii)],
 - c. 5 member per Sub-division and City co-opted by members elected under (a) and (b) before the Annual election of officer-bearers.
 - d. The quorum for a meeting of the District League shall be one-fifth of the total number of members of the District League.
29. Each member of the District League shall pay an Annual subscription of Re. 1/- to the District Fund. Members of the District League who have not paid such subscription within one month of the receipt of notice from the office of the District Awami League calling upon them to pay their subscriptions, may be declared by the Executive Committee to have vacated their office as members of the District Awami League and the Executive Committee shall have power to fill up the vacancies so created.
30. a. The District Awami League shall elect the following office-bearers:
- | | |
|---------------------|-------|
| President | one |
| Vice President | five |
| Secretary | one |
| Permanent Secretary | one |
| Assistant Secretary | three |
| Treasurer | one |
- The number of office-bearers may be altered after obtaining the previous consent of the Working Committee of the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League.
- b. The office-bearers and 18 members elected from amongst themselves by the member of the District Awami League, shall form the Executive Committee of the District League. The quorum of the Executive Committee shall be seven.

Sub-divisional Awami League

31. (i) Every Sub-division shall have a Sub-divisional Awami League, which shall be constituted as follows:
- a. Six members from each League.
 - b. 20 members from each municipality within the Sub-division having less than 10,000 Muslim inhabitants.
 - c. 20 members from each Sub-divisional Head Quarter which have no municipality.
 - d. Ten members co-opted by the above elected members, before the annual election of office-bearers.
 - e. The quorum for a meeting of the Sub-divisional Awami League shall be one-fifth of the total number of members of the Sub-divisional League.
 - f. The following shall be the office-bearers of the Sub-divisional League:
- | | |
|---------------------|-------|
| President | one |
| Vice President | five |
| Secretary | one |
| Permanent Secretary | one |
| Assistant Secretary | three |

Treasurer one

The Working Committee of the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League shall have power to alter the number of office-bearers for any Sub-divisional League.

- g. Each Sub-divisional Awami League shall have Executive Committee which shall be composed of office bearers and 18 members, elected from amongst members provided for in Section 31 (a) (b) (c) (d). The quorum of the Executive Committee shall be seven. Each member of the Sub-divisional League shall pay an annual subscription of As. [8] (eight) to the sub-divisional Awami League Fund.

City Awami League

(ii) Every Municipality having a population of more than 10,000 Muslim inhabitants, shall have a City League of a constitution similar to that of a Sub-divisional League. Every world within the municipality shall have the constitution of a Union and the World Leagues shall be governed by the rules governing Union Leagues, except that each such Ward League will be entitled to elect 20 representatives to the City League.

(b) The City Leagues will be composed of 20 representatives from each Ward League and will be entitled to send 25 representatives to the District Awami League. The subscription payable by each member of the City League to the City League Fund shall be As- [8] – per year.

Union Awami League

32. (a) (i) Every union shall have a Union League, and shall be entitled to elect an Executive Committee of not more than 50 members, exclusive of Office-bearers. The quorum for a meeting of the Executive Committee shall be one-fifth of the members of the Committee.

(b) Every member of the Executive Committee of the Union League shall pay an annual subscription of As. – [2] – to its fund.

(c) Where the Working Committee of the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League is of opinion that two or more unions shall be amalgamated into a unit for purposes of better organizations, it shall, in consultation with the District and Sub-divisional Awami League, create such a unit which shall be governed by all the rules which govern a Union League.

(d) The Officer-bearers of the Union League shall be as follows:-

President	one
Vice-President	five
Secretary	one
Permanent Secretary	one
Assistant Secretaries	three
Treasurer	one

It will be open to the Executive Committee of a District Awami Muslim League to alter the number of office-bearers for any particular Union League, within its jurisdiction in consultation with the Sub-divisional Awami League.

(e) Every Sub-divisional head-quarter without a municipality, and every Municipality having less than ten thousand Muslim inhabitants, shall have a League which shall be called a Town and a Municipal League respectively. A Town or Municipal League shall be governed by the rules governing a Union League, and shall be constituted accordingly but shall be entitled to send 20 representatives to the Sub-divisional Leagues.

(f) In any place where there is no Union Board, the area of a Union League Committee shall be co-extensive with its Panchait Committee.

Primary Awami League

33. The following shall be deemed to be Primary League:-
- a. Union League.
 - b. Town or Sub-divisional Head quarters Leagues.
 - c. Municipal Leagues, with less than 10,000 Muslim inhabitants.
 - d. Ward Leagues under City League.
 - e. Ward League of Municipalities in the cities of Dacca & Chittagong.

FUNDS OF THE AWAMI MUSLIM LEAGUE

Primary League Fund

34. The primary League Fund will be constituted as follows:
Donations and annual subscription by executive members.

Sub-divisional or City Awami League Fund

35. The Sub-divisional or City League Fund will be constituted as follows:-
- a. Special subscriptions at the rate of annas [8] paid by each member of the Sub-divisional League.
 - b. Affiliation fee Rs. [2] by each Union League.
 - c. Donations.

District Awami League Fund

36. The District League Fund shall be constituted as follows:
- a. Special subscriptions at the rate of Re. 1 paid by each member of the District League.
 - b. Affiliation fee Rs. 20 by each Sub-divisional and City League.
 - c. Donations.

Central League Fund

37. The Central League Fund will be constituted as follows:
- a. Special subscription at the rate of Rs. 2 paid by the members of council of the Awami Muslim League as provided for in section 10(a)
 - b. Monthly subscription paid by the ex-officio members of the council of the East Pak. Awami Muslim League as provided for in section 10(b).
 - c. Affiliation fee at Rs. 30 by District Leagues.

d. Donations.

38. Each of the above Funds shall be known as the Primary League Fund, the Sub-divisional or City League Fund, the District League fund and Central League Fund, as the case may be. The funds shall be kept in the post office Savings banks or any scheduled bank approved by the working committee of the central Awami League in the joint names of the Treasurer and the Secretary.
39. The account of each Fund shall be audited at least once a year.
40. (a) The Funds deposited in the Banks shall be operated on the joint signatures of the Treasurer and the Secretary of the respective branch Leagues. In case of the Central Fund also the same rule shall apply.
(b) The Secretary of the Provincial or of a branch League shall be entitled to keep in his personal custody any sum of money for necessary expenses as may be decided by the Working Committee of the Provincial League or the Executive Committee of the branch League as the case may be.

POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE OFFICE-BEARERS

41. The Honorary Secretary shall exercise all the powers delegated to him by the council of the provincial Awami League or which may be entrusted to him by the Working Committee.
42. The Honorary Secretary shall exercise all the powers and discharge all duties laid down by, and incidental to the enforcing of these rules and generally to his office.
43. The Honorary Secretary shall have to appoint, punish, dismiss or grant leave of absence with or without pay to the paid employees of the Awami League, subject to the sanction of the Working Committee.

Assistant Secretaries

44. The Assistant Secretaries shall assist the Honorary Secretaries and perform their duties under his guidance and instructions. The permanent Secretary will be in-charge of the Central Secretariat.
45. (a) The office-bearers of the East Pak Awami League may attend and take part in discussions at meeting of the District and Sub-divisional or City Leagues and their executive Committee.
(b) The office-bearers of the Provincial Awami Muslim League shall have power to examine the records, papers and account of all the branch Leagues in the Province.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

46. All casual vacancies arising in the ranks of the office-bearers or members of the Council shall be filled up by the Council by election.
47. The elections of the different Awami League shall be held generally according to the following timetable:-
a. All Primary League will ordinarily hold the election of their respective office-bearers and Executive Committee, and their representatives to the Sub-divisional or City-League in the month of January to March every year.

- b. All Sub-divisional or City League will ordinarily hold the election of their respective office-bearers and Executive Committees, and their representatives to the District Awami League (or Provincial Awami League) in the month of April every year.
 - c. All District League will ordinarily hold the election of their office-bearers and Executive Committees, and their quota of members to the council of the Provincial Awami Muslim League in the month of may every year.
 - d. The council of the East Pak. Awami Muslim League will ordinarily elect its office-bearers, and the Working Committee shall also be formed, in the month of June or July every year.
48. In exceptional case any within the jurisdiction of a sub-divisional or a City League shall be granted affiliation by the Sub-divisional or the City League as the case may be.
49. (a) (i) Primary Leagues within the jurisdiction of a sub-divisional or City League shall be granted affiliation by the sub-divisional or the City League as the case may be.
- (ii) The Sub-divisional or the City League shall be granted affiliation by the District League.
- Provided that the Working Committee of the Provincial Awami Muslim League shall have power to grant direct affiliation to any branch League.
- (b) All affiliated branch League shall be deemed to be branches of the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League.
50. All disputed of branch League relating to League matters shall be decided by the immediate Superior League with right of appeal to the next higher League. It will, however, be open to the Working Committee of the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League to admit and decide any appeal or dispute.

Rules for the guidance of branch Awami Leagues

51. (a) The office-bearers of the District League may attend, and take part in discussions at any meeting of the Sub-divisional or City League and their Executive Committee; and the office-bearers of the Sub-divisional or City Leagues shall have similar powers in respect to all its subordinate branch Leagues as under section 45 (b).
52. The quota of members to be elected to the Council of the East Pak. Awami Muslim League by each District League should, as far as practicable, be equitably distributed amongst the Sub-divisional
53. Where a Sub-divisional or a City Awami League has failed to elect its quota of members to the District League, the Executive Committee of District League shall have power to nominate the quota from amongst the League members of that particular Sub-division.
54. A District or a Sub-divisional or City League shall meet at least twice a year. Beside on a written requisition by 30 members of District, Sub-divisional or city League, a special meeting of League concerned shall be called within 30 days of the receipt of such requisition by the Secretary.

55. The Executive Committee of District, the sub-divisional or the City League shall meet at least once a month. Besides, on a written requisition by 10 members, the Secretary shall call a meeting of the Executive Committee of the League concerned within 15 days of the receipt of such requisition.
56. (a) Notice of meetings of the District, Sub-divisional or City League: - Section 20 of this constitution shall apply to all meetings of the District, the Sub-divisional or City Awami Leagues.
 (b) At least 7 days clear notice shall be given for ordinary meeting of the Executive Committees of District, Sub-divisional or the City Leagues.
57. All resolutions passed by the Executive Committee of the District and the Sub-divisional or City Leagues shall be placed before the respective District and Sub-divisional or City League for approval.
58. Casual vacancies in the District League or in the District League Executive Committee, shall be filled up by the Executive Committee by election, but vacancies in the ranks of office-bearers shall be filled up by the District Awami League. This rule shall apply mutatis mutandis Sub-divisional and City Leagues.
59. (s) At district, Sub-divisional or City League Conferences the members of the District or the Sub-divisional or the City League as the case may be, and the delegates shall attend, take part and vote on payment of a fee of Re. 1 each.
 (b) The delegates, for the District, Sub-divisional or City Awami Muslim League conferences shall be elected by their respective branch Leagues, but the number of such delegates shall not exceed 5 times their quota of representatives fixed for the District, the sub-divisional or City Leagues, as the case may be.
 (c) The members of the District, Sub-divisional or City Leagues shall form the subjects committee of the District and the Sub-divisional or City League from amongst the delegates to the Subjects committee.
60. At conferences of the District, Sub-divisional or City League, the members, of the council of the East Pak. Awami Muslim League belonging to the respective District of Subdivision or City, Shall be ex-officio delegate and members of the Subjects committee.
61. Notices of the meeting of Primary League:-
 a. Rule 56 shall apply to all ordinary meetings of the Primary Awami League.
 b. In case of requisition meetings of Primary Leagues Rule 55 shall apply except that such requisition be signed by at least 20 members.
62. All vacancies in the ranks of office-bearers and members of the primary League Executive Committee shall be filled up by the Executive Committees by election.
63. All branch Leagues shall submit quarterly reports of their activities to their respective immediate superior Leagues.

The Executive Committee of the District League shall have power to take disciplinary action against any member within its jurisdiction, who violates the decisions of the League or acts in contravention of the principles and policies of the League. Such

members against whom disciplinary action has been taken, shall have the right of appeal to the Working Committee of the Provincial Awami League and the decision of the Working Committee shall be final.

Source: Rahman, Hasan Hafizur (1981), Banglades Freedom War Documents, Vol.1,
Dhaka: Bangla Academy, Lenin, Nuh Alam (2015), Bangladesh Awami League,
Dhaka: Bangla Academy

Annex-3

Founding Manifesto of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)

The sovereignty and independence of Bangladesh, golden fruits of the historic liberation struggle, is our sacred trust and inviolable right. The first and foremost demand of our age is to consolidate and safeguard the independence and sovereignty of our dear motherland. Changing history and the recently gained experience teach us that the united and well-disciplined efforts of the people are the imperishable safeguards of our independence and sovereignty.

1. Firm mass unity inspired and consolidated on the basis of Bangladeshi Nationalism.
2. People-oriented democracy and politics, and
3. National economic emancipation, self-reliance and progress achieved through the united and well-disciplined efforts of the people.

In the absence of a firm and invincible sense of national unity and of national economic self-sufficiency it is hard to defend the national independence and sovereignty from the aggrandizement of imperialism, expansionism and neo-colonialism.

Absence of national unity, particularly the absence of understanding and basic sense of unity among the patriotic forces and groups, may turn presently poor but developing Bangladesh into a victim foreign domination and elements of internal sabotage.

The history of few years has proved the truth of this analysis. The imperialist, neo-colonialist and expansionist forces, taking advantage of our disunity and confusion, have not only barred Bangladesh's road to development and progress, but have also tried through internal sabotage activities to confuse and discourage the nation and retard its progress. As a result of the activities of these forces, our sovereignty was at a stake, production in agriculture and industry were affected, politics became the handmaid of some foreign masters and our foreign policy came to be a slavish immobility. A critical crisis of values and all-pervading confusion had descended on the social life and the education sector had been invaded by an unmitigated anarchism. In word, the sovereign, independent and civilized existence of the Bangladeshi nation faced a great disaster.

New Days

The new days ushered in by the United National Revolution of November 7, 1975, brought an end to this horrible process and during the period of little more than two and a half years that revolution has manifested itself strongly. The affirmative aspect of national unity has gained relevance in the lives of our people as a result of the election of the country's President through direct adult franchise for the first time on June 3, 1978.

All the events that took place between November 7, 1975 and June 3, 1978 and afterwards prove that the people of Bangladesh are opposed to foreign hegemonism and

internal anarchy. The verdict of history of that Bangladesh people want to see the 19-Point Programme materialized.

They want to see that independence, sovereignty and solidarity of the country secure. They want to see that all-out faith and confidence in the almighty Allah, democracy, nationalism, and socialism of social and economic justice are reflected in all spheres of the national life. They want that the people of Bangladesh do not live without food and cloth and do not remain illiterate and without shelter. They want that national unity and solidarity are consolidated.

The unwavering demand of the time is that the expanded national unity and the process of historic solidarity which started through the June 3 presidential election and formation of the National Democratic Front must be consolidated and made permanent. The people of Bangladesh do not want to be a prey to national disunity and weakness and helplessness arising from such disunity.

The demand of the vigilant people at this turning point of national life is very clear- a firm unity of the people and a people's democracy must be built up on the basis of nationalism. The nation must be given the guarantee of freedom from the nightmare of imperialism, expansionism, neo-colonialism and hegemonism through a self-sustaining economy. This party has been formed taking within its fold political parties and groups under the Jatiyatabadi Front in order to meet the historic needs to fulfil the four basic demands of the people.

The Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Dal is the party of national union and unity.

We have the total confidence, logical and practical hopes that the revolutionary liberalism and greatness of his party will rally all patriotic people in one strong and united line to bring about all-round development and progress and stability at the national level.

Nationalism

Firm unity of people based on nationalism from time immemorial, the people of Bangladesh have maintained their separate entity from other nations of the sub-continent with an undeniable uniqueness and characteristics, geographical situation, historic experience, linguistic and cultural affinity and the inheritance of common heritage have strengthened the foundation of Bangladesh nationalist feelings.

This nationalism has been further strengthened by the age-old struggle against external enemies, imperialism, colonialism and hegemonism and at the ultimate stage, the historic struggle of the people in 1971 have the Bangladeshi Nationalism a consolidated, strong and clear shape. The entire Bangladesh people, irrespective of caste, creed or religion, have been transformed into a united nation. Through self-reliant struggle this nation has been able to create its own homeland-independence and sovereign Bangladesh.

Religious faith and love of religion is a great and eternal characteristic of the Bangladeshi nation. Protracted popular struggle against the cruel conscienceless foreign and alien rule and oppression has endowed the broad religious feelings of the Bangladeshi society with permanence and greatness.

A great majority of the people of Bangladesh belongs to Islamic religion. This truth is reflected in the national life. People of Bangladesh could keep themselves free from the poison of rabid communalism because they could assimilate the great teachings of Islam and could consolidate those teachings in the very core of national life.

That is why all the citizens of Bangladesh irrespective of religious beliefs or caste could participate in the national liberation struggle and in efforts at achieving prosperity. One of the principal aims of the party is to further strengthen this sense of unity in order to defend national independence and sovereignty.

People-oriented Politics

What we need is people-oriented politics to achieve overall development and progress through national unity and united efforts. Due to many centuries of misrule, exploitation and oppression, poverty, illiteracy and malnutrition is existing as a cruel curse. Majority of the population, more than 90 percent, are villagers who live below the poverty level and are deprived of all modern amenities. Their per capita income is so low that they cannot afford two meals, necessary clothing and housing. About 80 percent of the population are illiterate. Malnutrition and lack of health is a regular problem of the majority of the people of Bangladesh. The vicious circle of poverty-illiteracy-malnutrition has been kept in a dangerous state by a rapid but undesirable growth of population. Sixty to seventy lakh people have been compelled to lead a cursed life due to unemployment and lack of employment. Because of deprivation of opportunities women, half of the population, have not so far been able to play their due role in the national productive and development process. They are not being able to do so even now.

In this context people-oriented politics must be intimately co-ordinated with the national efforts for economic development and prosperity based on social justice and welfare of the people. All the patriotic forces have to continue their concerted pursuit of production-oriented politics to clearly reflect the positive results of the efforts initiated to free politics from the labyrinth of confusion in national life.

The main feature of the party's politics will be to make untiring efforts to turn politics into an active and everlasting medium of nation-building, achievement of national prosperity and building a strong economy. Allout efforts to keep the process of village-oriented people's politics, free from the dangerous clutches of palace politics will continue. The party will inspire and actively participate in raising production in fields, factories and cottage industries, building roads, re-excavation of rivers, canals and stagnant pools to make politics a strong guiding force in the field of production. As a result the negative efforts of isolated politics on the masses will be eliminated.

It will also help build up an efficient, capable and selfless leadership. Poverty, hunger, illiteracy, malnutrition, lack of shelter and it ill health will go. This will ultimately lead the deprived people towards achievement of an equitable economic development, prosperous and significant life based on justice.

People's democracy is the medium and the inevitable good result of production-oriented politics based on life. The so-called democratic structure and system that only keep the rich, the aristocrats and the upper urban classes in the seat of power but fail to

bring hopes, happiness and prosperity in the life of the people is nothing but a cruel joke of liberty and equal rights in the context of our country.

The aims and the objectives of our party are to build up such a practical and pro-people structure through which the people of Bangladesh will be able to take decisions in their respective areas in all political, economic and social matter and by implementing the decision they would be able to bring about national, social and individual prosperity through deciding their own fate.

The party believes that economic self-reliance is equally essential for achievement of political freedom in the life of a group or an individual as it is essential in the national life. A vigilant organization and framing and implementation of programs at the basic level were the prerequisite for achievement of this self-reliance. The people themselves will think [identify] and solve their problems. The people themselves will build leadership and the pro-people leadership will forge a significant and democratic structure in each area, the highest reflection of which will be manifested in the national life.

Youth Service Programme

National youth service programme will be implemented in different parts of the country within the social welfare sector. The youth cooperative movements will also be strengthened in the field of comparative and rural development. Our party will put all out endeavours to involve the youth community in the development, constructive and social welfare services programmes and will strengthen and consolidate these movements. It will also put in special efforts to arrange job opportunity for the educated unemployed youths of the country, Arrangement will be made to utilize this unemployed manpower in the different development programmes.

Rural Development

Ninety percent of the Bangladesh population are inhabitants of rural areas. Relentless efforts during the last two-and-a-half years have created an atmosphere of overall development and prosperity of this deprived majority.

The party's one of the main objectives is to make this foundation stronger and ensure quick economic and social progress of the rural Bangladesh. Our party is determined to bring about overall development and revolutionary prosperity in the life of rural people. The party will try its utmost to bring an end to the poverty, hunger and economic ills in rural Bangladesh.

To this end, the party

- Will organize in a massive scale and on a strong basis the rural cottage industry, intensive agriculture, education, pisciculture, education and vocational training and production processes.
- Will provide literacy and life-based education for the rural people.
- Will ensure provision of developed housing in the rural areas in phases.
- Will ensure development of health and nutrition for the rural people.

- Will make all-out effort for rapid development of rural communication and electrification.
- Will give modern and balance shape to the land administration system based on the principles of justice.

In brief, the party will expand the avenues for the prosperity of the majority section of the people of Bangladesh through the development of rural economy and society giving priority to the acceleration of rural development at all levels.

Mass-oriented Agricultural Policy

Eighty percent of the rural people of Bangladesh live on agriculture. Our party is determined to make the country self-sufficient and self-reliant by increasing the production of food and other agricultural crops by undertaking progressive agriculture policy. We shall make all out and wholehearted efforts to carry forward the movement for doubling the production of food grains and agricultural crops, which has already begun. With this end in view, we shall

- Strengthen the integrated agricultural programmes.
- Make every peasant an able and skilled one in the struggle for prosperity by providing realistic training and supplying agricultural machinery and implements.
- Strengthen the hands of poor and small peasants by proper organization to help improve their lot and make the national economy strong and self-reliant. Our party will undertake realistic land reforms and land distribution for this objective.

In fact, our programme on agriculture, livestock and fisheries will not only make our country self-sufficient in food but will make it a food-surplus country so that we could broaden the way for national prosperity by exporting food grains, other agricultural products and fish.

Co-operatives

Our party is conscious of the fact of organized and historic role of co-operatives in the overall national development, particularly in rural development. Our party believes that the principal obstacle in the way of expansion and success of co-operative movement was the domination of bureaucratic organization and middlemen in the process and lack of adequate knowledge on co-operatives among the ranks of the people.

For this, our party shall

- End bureaucratic hurdles in the field of co-operatives and will take measures to uproot the opportunists and corrupt tout classes based on middlemen practices.
- Create proper attitude towards co-operatives by expansion of formal education and massive nationwide social services and welfare activities.
- Endeavour to spread co-operative attitude by strengthening the social welfare programmes to make the co-operative movement a success.

The party Government shall build up co-operative movement as an instrument for development efforts of agriculture and cottage industries through effective implementation of these programmes. And it shall be made as a strong medium of increasing national production through consolidation of rural farmers, workers, small traders and professionals economically and by making avenue for them to work through it.

Labour Policy

The need for bringing about co-ordination in the interest of the nation and the workers the industrial labour policy is undeniable. Our party will work for ensuring legitimate demands and facilities to the workers. At the same time constant emphasis will be given to the development of constructive and production-oriented attitude and programmes in the field of labour. The rights of the workers to form trade unions and operate them will be guaranteed and the trade union movement will be built as a safeguard for workers and national interest.

Health and Family Planning

According to our party's analysis overall development is the safeguard for successful health and family planning programmes. The reasons for comparative failure in the national health and nutrition scheme and population control and family planning programmes are that these programmes were kept isolated from the social and economic programmes. The life of narrow professionalism is a process isolated from life. The programmes relating to health and population will be successful in our country only then when they will be integrated with the process for the development of the standard of living. The party notes with satisfaction that the health and population control programmes have been made practical. The party is determined to carry forward this process.

To make the health and family planning programmes successful at the national level our government will launch ceaseless efforts for the improvement of the lot of the poverty-stricken and illiterate rural people who constitute ninety percent of the total population and consolidate social awareness among them. Our government will also intensify the efforts for social welfare and development of the society. The social base of economic, educational and social development will bring desired success in the health and family planning programmes.

Education

Our party supports those steps taken in the recent times to recast the colonial education system. The government of our party is in favour of introducing such education system which will bring national unity, increase production and ensure individual and social progress. Our government will take steps to accelerate scientific, technical and vocational education system in country so that our younger generation do not suffer from unemployment. Our aim is to eliminate illiteracy and make arrangements for people-oriented and vocational education system. One of our main objectives is to launch a movement throughout the country for the removal of illiteracy by way of non-formal and applied education.

Communication

Without a proper and planned communication system a developing country like Bangladesh cannot prosper. Our party will continue to endeavour to bring about an overall improvement in rail, road, air and water transport systems so that our national economy and particularly the rural economy and human resources, will be developed.

Natural Resources

The natural resources of Bangladesh, to a great extent, are still unexploited and least utilized. One of the surest means of economic development and prosperity is proper development of natural resources and its wide use. Our party government will formulate modern and practical steps for the proper harnessing of Bangladesh's diverse natural resources such as stone, oil, coal, water, sunray, forestry and livestock.

Board mass efforts for development and prosperity of comparatively underdeveloped areas and population groups, different areas and population groups of Bangladesh could not be incorporated in the national development efforts and processes. For historical reasons and due to the lack of proper communication systems these areas and population groups remained in a comparatively backward state. We shall strengthen the overall human, social and economic development efforts for these areas and population groups. Our party will implement definitive programmes for the rapid and meaningful development and prosperity of the aborigines and tribal people inhabiting inaccessible areas that had been for historical reasons and due to colonial misrule and exploitation had remained backward economically and in other fields.

Armed Forces

The armed forces of Bangladesh are the eternally vigilant sentinels of the national sovereignty and independence. In order to enable the valiant members of the armed forces to successfully perform their duty of defending the country, our party shall make complete arrangements for the necessary training and equipment and vital organization of the armed forces.

- Strengthen the people-based defense system.
- Make arrangements so that the defense forces get national help and assistance to meet their profession and legitimate demands.

Freedom Fighters

The Soldiers of the great freedom struggle of 1971 are the nucleus elements of our nationalistic realizations and solidarity. Our party and the Government will devote itself to the materialization of well-thought-out plans so that they can participate in realistic, creative, constructive and productive programmes.

For this Purpose:

- The Government will organize the freedom fighters through employing them in activities for their own benefit and for national development and prosperity must be strengthened.

- Physically handicapped freedom fighters will be trained to become productive and self-reliant.
- The history of the freedom struggle will be preserved and published in an undistorted form.
- Steps will be taken to identify the great and historical events and places of the liberation struggle and preserve their memory for all time to come.
- All papers and documents concerning the freedom struggle will be preserved at the national level to inspire our posterity.

Bengali Language

The Bengali language and literature are the integral elements of our national identity and self-realization. The Language Movement of 1948-52 was the first step of our national liberation movement. Our party and Government will exert untiring efforts so that the Bengali language and literature are totally and extensively established in our national life. Our party will do its best so that Bangladesh becomes the centre of future development and flourishing of the Bengali language and literature. To realize these objectives our party will do the following:

- Literary pursuits and the use of the Bengali language will be strengthened in schools and educational institutions.
- The activities of all organizations and institutions devoted to the development of the Bengali language and literature will be coordinated and strengthened.
- Extensive and greater use of the Bengali language at all levels of national life. Steps will be taken for speedy compilation and translation of textbooks and research-oriented books in Bengali.

Culture and Sports

Our party will initiate steps to organize, expand and develop the Bangladeshi literature, culture and sports in view of the spontaneous, overall and proper growth of the nation's creative talents. Will this end in view, we shall build up necessary number of sports and cultural centres properly in phases throughout the country.

- In the field of literature, culture and sports we shall provide assistance to all people-based and practical initiatives of the people.
- Shall put well-organized efforts to search out the talents spread in the far-flung areas of the country in the fields of literature, sports and culture and give national recognition to their achievements earned through perseverance by providing them the opportunity for training and practice.

Religion

Religion is an integral part of our tradition. Bangladesh is the home to people belonging to different religions. Islam is the religion and philosophy of life of the overwhelming majority of the people of this country. We shall put in all-out efforts so that the teachings of Islam are reflected fully in the life of the Muslims. Similarly our party will put in sincere efforts so that the people having faith in other religions can also learn the

teaching of their respective religions. Our party will give all-out support to the Government to protect the necessary changes brought about in the Constitution during the last two and half years in the interest of national independence, sovereignty and development.

Foreign Policy

The aim of the national foreign policy is: independence, sovereignty, progress and international amity and understanding. It is the conviction of our party that successful endeavours for achieving national progress and development in an organized way can establish Bangladesh in the comity of nations with due prestige and honour. The principal aim of the foreign policy of Bangladesh is the development of international understanding, amity and peace on the basis of sovereign equality of all states.

The people of Bangladesh are opposed to international conspiracies and clashes. Our party will follow such a foreign policy that will reflect the will of the people and under which the dream for equality based on sovereignty and independence will be realized. Our party will strictly follow the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries.

The fundamental objectives of our foreign policy are:

- Our full support to the U.N. Charters and its principles.
- To be associated with the efforts to extend and consolidate international peace and harmony.
- To consolidate harmony with the developing countries of the Third World.
- To preserve friendship with the brotherly countries of the Muslim World.
- To extend full support to the Palestinian and Arab brethren for the realization of their rightful demands and rights.
- To continue the efforts for consolidating friendship with the Non-Aligned world.
- To consolidate friendship and co-operation with the neighboring states, particularly of the South-East Asian region.
- To extend all-out support to the revolutionary liberation struggle of the peoples of the world, including Asia and Africa, where the tyrannical colonial and imperialist minority governments are perpetuating their rule of exploitation.

The principal objective of the foreign policy of Bangladesh is to expand the areas of co-operation with all countries keeping its independence and sovereignty intact for building such a peaceful and development-oriented condition which will be helpful for the happiness, progress and development of the people.

Source: The Bangladesh Times, 2-4 September 1978. (The original text was released on 1 September 1978 in Bangla)

Annex-4

Title Page of Bangladesh Awami League's Publications

(a) Election Manifesto of Bangladesh Awami League -1973



(b) Election Manifesto of Bangladesh Awami League -1981

ৰাষ্ট্ৰপতি নিৰ্বাচন

১৯৮১

বাংলাদেশ আওয়ামী লীগের

নিৰ্বাচনী ইশতেহার

প্ৰাৰ্থী :- ডঃ কামাল হোসেন

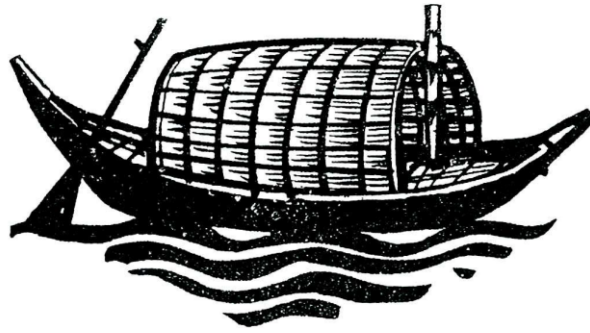
প্ৰতীক  নৌকা

Annex-4

(c) Election Manifesto of Bangladesh Awami League -1991

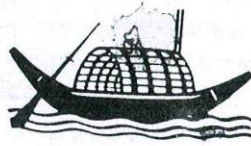
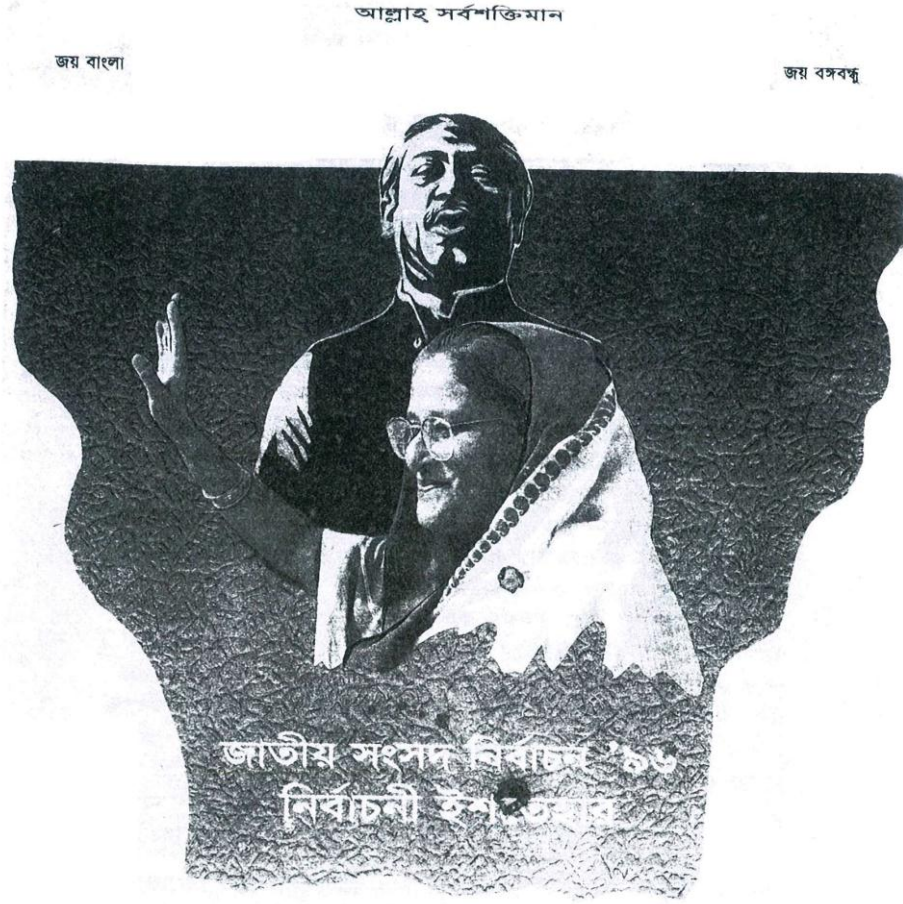
১৯৯১ সালের
সংসদ নির্বাচনী ইশতেহার
বাংলাদেশ আওয়ামী লীগ

৬ ফেব্রুয়ারী - ১৯৯১



Annex-4

(d) Election Manifesto of Bangladesh Awami League -1996



বাংলাদেশ আওয়ামী লীগ

Annex-4

(e) Election Manifesto of Bangladesh Awami League -2001



Annex-4

(f) Election Manifesto of Bangladesh Awami League -2008



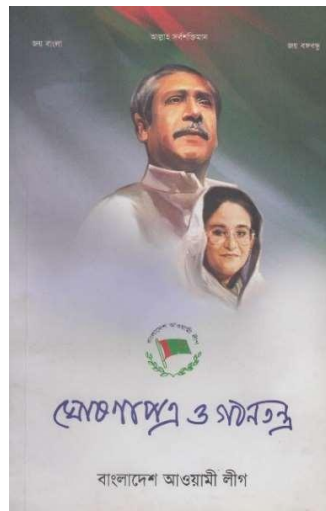
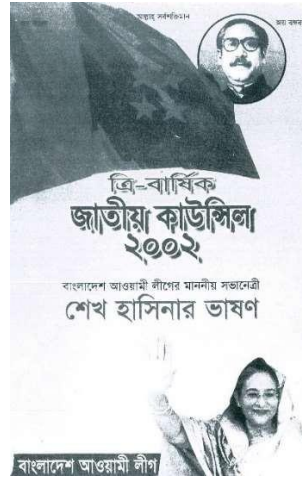
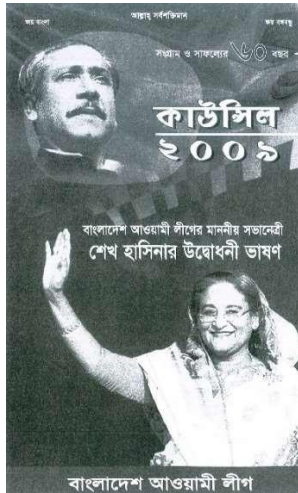
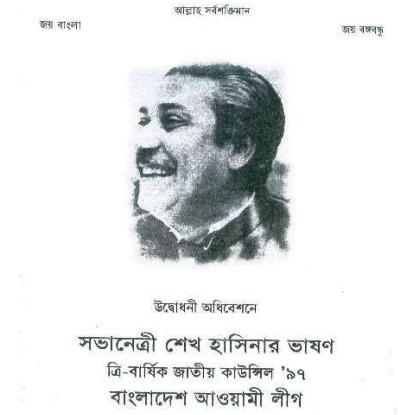
Annex-4

(g) Election Manifesto of Bangladesh Awami League -2014



Annex-4

(h) Party Documents of Bangladesh Awami League -1978-2014



Annex-4

Membership Form of Bangladesh Awami League

<p>পরিশিষ্ট (ক)</p> <p>জন্ম বাংলা</p> <p>আগত্ব সর্বশক্তিমান</p> <p>জয় বঙ্গবন্ধু</p> <p>বাংলাদেশ আওয়ামী লীগ</p> <p>সদস্যপদের জন্য আবেদন</p> <p>সাধারণ সম্পাদক</p> <p>বাংলাদেশ আওয়ামী লীগ</p> <p>জনাব</p> <p>আমি বাংলাদেশ আওয়ামী লীগের গঠনতন্ত্রের ২ ধারায় বর্ণিত লক্ষ্য ও উদ্দেশ্য বিধানপূর্বক নির্ধারিত হারে টাকা প্রদান করিয়া ৫(১) ধারার বিধান অনুযায়ী প্রাথমিক সদস্যপদের জন্য/সদস্যপদ নবায়ন/পুনরুজ্জীবনের জন্য আবেদন জানাইতেছি। আমি সকল সময়ে সনের গঠনতন্ত্র ও নিয়মাবলি এবং যোগ্যপত্র, কর্মসূচি ও সকল সিদ্ধান্ত মানিয়া চলার অঙ্গীকার করিতেছি।</p> <p>নিম্নে আমার ব্যক্তিগত তথ্য প্রদান করা হইল-</p> <p>নাম :</p> <p>মাতার নাম :</p> <p>পিতা/স্বামীর নাম :</p> <p>পেশা :</p> <p>বয়স :</p> <p>(ক) বর্তমান ঠিকানা</p> <p>গ্রাম/মহল্লা :</p> <p>ওয়ার্ড :</p> <p>ইউনিয়ন :</p> <p>উপজেলা/থানা :</p> <p>জেলা :</p> <p>৪২ • গঠনতন্ত্র</p>	<p>(খ) স্থায়ী ঠিকানা</p> <p>গ্রাম/মহল্লা :</p> <p>ওয়ার্ড :</p> <p>ইউনিয়ন :</p> <p>উপজেলা/থানা :</p> <p>জেলা :</p> <p>ফোন :</p> <p>বাঙ্গা :</p> <p>অফিস :</p> <p>রাজনৈতিক অবস্থান :</p> <p>আপনার বিশ্বাস</p> <p>আবেদনকারীর স্বাক্ষর :</p> <p>প্রস্তাবকারীর নাম ও সাংগঠনিক পরিচয় :</p> <p>প্রস্তাবকারীর নাম ও সাংগঠনিক পরিচয় :</p> <p>প্রস্তাবকারীর ঠিকানা :</p> <p>তারিখ :</p> <p>সদস্যপদের স্বীকৃতি/অস্বীকৃতি :</p> <p>নাম :</p> <p>পদবি :</p> <p>স্বাক্ষর :</p> <p>গঠনতন্ত্র • ৪৩</p>
--	---