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Political Dynamics of the July Revolution in Bangladesh: Party Roles and Responses

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Abstract

The July-August 2024 uprising in Bangladesh, led by Generation Z (Gen-Z), was sparked by student demands for government job quota system reforms, particularly in civil service recruitment. The movement escalated as the government delayed addressing these demands and responded violently. Approximately 2,000 deaths and 30,000 injuries were reported during this period. The protests evolved into a nationwide movement against authoritarian rule, ultimately resulting in the fall of the Sheikh Hasina-led government on August 5, 2024. An interim government, led by Nobel Laureate Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus, assumed power, signalling the start of a new political era. This study examines major political parties' roles during this revolution. The research investigates how political parties reacted to the movement using qualitative methods, including document analysis and interviews. While some parties supported the students and acknowledged the rationality of their demands, others, particularly the Awami League and its allies, labelled the movement as anti-state and politically motivated. The ruling party also accused protesters of being anti-liberation forces and used law enforcement agencies and political wings to suppress the uprising. The results reveal contrasting strategies among political parties, highlighting their varying motivations and alignments during the crisis. This discussion contributes to understanding the dynamics of political participation in social movements. The study's findings have implications for political reform and accountability in Bangladesh. By documenting these events, this research provides original insights into the interaction between political parties and youth-led movements in the context of governance and democratic transition.

Keywords: Fascism, Generation- Z (GEN-Z), July Revolution, Quota Reformation, Rajakar.

INTRODUCTION

The Revolution, which occurred in July-August 2024, is the most vibrant event in the contemporary history of Bangladesh. The movement began with a non-political demand under the banner of the Anti-discrimination student movement, but it ousted the Awami League regime. Although the government job seekers, especially university students, started the protest, mass people extended their support and participated actively. The graduated student did not get a job after qualifying for the exam due to the high Quota. There were 56% Posts in jobs for quota-holder groups, including freedom fighters. The merit-based recruitment rate was only 44%. The system discriminated between quota-holders and deserving candidates.

On the other hand, the government failed to ensure civil rights such as political activities, voting rights, and freedom of expression. The national elections in 2014 and 2024 were held without the main opposition party, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party. The government filed a considerable number of cases against the opposition leaders. A lot of political activists were jailed. The influential leaders from the opposition parties were missing. A significant amount of money was laundered from Bangladesh to abroad through illegal transfer methods like hundi by government-supported politicians and business people. A significant amount of money was laundered from Bangladesh to abroad through illegal transfer methods like hundi by government-supported politicians and businesspeople. The Inflation rate was high, and the prices of the daily goods increased dramatically. In that situation, men from all professions and all ages started protesting with the students, demanding one point- the government's resignation.

On the other hand, the government tried to control the situation by taking action against the protesters. A considerable number of deaths and casualties occurred by the law enforcement agencies like- Bangladesh police. Ultimately, the government was obliged to resign. The existing political parties in Bangladesh played a significant role in the movement. The ruling party acted against the protesters. The opposition parties, including the Bangladesh Nationalist Party and Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, primarily extended their moral support and finally joined in the movement actively. This study will broadly analyse the role of political parties during the movement and how they evaluate the protest with their own eyes.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research design to examine the roles and responses of political parties during the July-August 2024 uprising in Bangladesh. The research investigates the nuanced interactions between political actors and youth-led movements within the broader context of governance, authoritarianism, and democratic transition.

The study is based on a case study approach, which allows for an in-depth analysis of the specific socio-political context of the July-August 2024 uprising. This approach helps capture the complexities of political dynamics and interactions during the Revolution.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

As this analysis has focused on the various roles of the existing political parties in Bangladesh, it demands specific operational terms.

Revolution:

What does Revolution mean? The term 'Revolution' indicates the people's uprising from root to central, resulting in fundamental changes, especially in dictator or fascist regime change (Ullah et al, 2020:86). A successful revolution lasts for a long time, at least for a decade.

Political Party:

The Political Party is an influential organisation in a democratic system. It contributes directly or indirectly to conducting a government. Every party is essential to ensure the rule of law in a country. The political parties play a significant role in ensuring a state's culture of

accountability. It is also a vital organisation to establish an ideology. “A political party consists of more or less organised citizens who aim to control the government and carry out their general policies through voting power. It is the most elaborate and comprehensive form in which public opinion is organised and made effective in government” (Gettle, 2002: 209).

Generation-Z (GEN-Z):

The young people born between 1997 and 2012 are generally termed Generation Z (GEN-Z). The leading group of this generation are teenagers. The main character of this generation is socio-political consciousness. They are more aware of social injustice than their comfortable future and self-care. In Bangladesh, the generation played an active role in the Safe-Road movement, Quota reformation and the movement against VAT in private universities. “Just as superheroes find moral, personal, or ethical reasons to fight supervillains, Gen-Zers fight, too. They might not engage in the physical confrontations or fisticuffs that superheroes typically do. They often get involved by being physically present or vocal regarding relevant issues, leveraging social media, videos, live events and marches. When they align themselves with causes on social media, they join groups, chat, or follow hashtags in online forums or with their school peers” (Luttrell and McGrath, 2021: 33).

Fascism:

The word ‘Fascism’ is derived from the Italian word ‘Fascism’ and ‘fascio’. The word ‘fascia’ is derived from the Latin word- Fasces. Fasces means- a bundle of sticks or rods. The autocratic rule is the central theme of Fascism. Benito Mussolini, Leader of Italy from 1922 to 1942, is the father of Fascism. The term was introduced in Italy after the World War I. After the war, it spread to Germany and other countries in Europe. Nazism, a form of Fascism, was introduced by Adolf Hitler in Germany. “A single-party political system that used terror, a secret police, and a strong military established a dictatorship controlled by a social elite representative of the party” (Darity,2008:103).

Quota:

A quota is a system where a specific number of posts or positions in a job have to be reserved for the unprivileged and marginalised people. Before 1934, the Quota system was inaugurated in the South Asian region. In British India, the Quota system in the Indian Civil Service- ICS for the minority was introduced in 1943.

In British- India, the Quota system in the Indian Civil Service- ICS for the minority was introduced in 1943. In Pakistan, quotas were reserved for government jobs in some regions from 1948. The civil service experts described this quota threat to meritocracy and advised the government to reform it. “Quota or a variant of affirmative action has been in vogue in many developing and developed countries. Nonetheless, the quota system in Bangladesh is exceptional in two ways. First, with 64 vertical, four horizontal quotas and a separate merit quota (total 257 types of Quota), Bangladesh has one of the most complex quota systems in the world”(Khan Ali Akbor, 2022: 155).

Rajakar:

The word 'Razakar' originated from the Urdu word- Rezakar. Razakar means volunteer or helper. The auxiliary forces, Who collaborated with the Pakistan army against Bangladesh in 1971, is called Razakar. In Bangladesh, the word is used to humiliate someone. The government unveiled the list of Razakars in 2019. The total number of collaborators was 10,789. However, the list was not accepted by all because it included many freedom fighters like Razakar.

THE CONTEXT OF JULY REVOLUTION

Bangladesh, which has 18 crore people, has unemployment problems (Chowdury, 2024). The alarming picture of unemployment is clear to all based on the results of many surveys. The alarming picture of unemployment is clear to all based on the results of many surveys. A finding from an Online Survey conducted by a prominent research organisation- Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies-BIDS, has shown that the unemployment rate among educated youth is 33.2% in Bangladesh. According to the QUARTERLY LABOUR FORCE SURVEY-2024, conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 3.65% of the qualified workforce is unemployed. Despite this dangerous unemployment rate in Bangladesh, most recruitment was based on quotas. Meritocracy was denied in all recruitment. After the independence of Bangladesh, the new government introduced an 80% quota and 20% merit-based recruitment in jobs. The 30% quota was reserved for freedom fighters, 40% for the underrepresented districts and 10% quota for women. In 1976, the Quota for the underrepresented districts was reduced from 40% to 20%. In 1985, the Quota was also rearranged to 55%. During the first regime of Sheikh Hasina, freedom fighters' quotas were extended to their ancestors. In 2018, there was a 56% quota for government jobs in Bangladesh. The ratio was divided into 30% for Freedom Fighters, 10% for Women, 10% for Underrepresented district quota, 5% for Indigenous and 1% for physically challenged people.

The matter of concern was that a 30% quota for freedom fighters was extended to their sons, daughters, grandsons, and granddaughters.

With such a decision, discrimination in public service recruitment was carried out from age to age. As a result of the Quota reformation movement, Ex-Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina abolished all kinds of quotas by executive order in 2018. However, the job seekers demanded the reformation of the quota system. In 2024, the quota system was revived by an apex court order. On the other hand, job seekers wanted a permanent solution from the executive. The university students started their agitation with the demand to reform the discriminatory quota system.

The ruling party, Awami League, ordered their political forces, youth and student wing to defend the protestors. In Dhaka University campus, the Leading educational institution of the country, a brutal attack with arms was conducted by the ruling party student wing- Bangladesh Chatrালেague. The ruling party supporters attacked the students all over the country. A lot of deaths and casualties have occurred. In addition to that, the government tried to control the youth uprising by taking action on the protesters with law enforcement agencies like the police. As a result, many students like- Abu Sayed and Mir Mahfuzur Rahman Mugdho were killed. Six movement coordinators were picked up by the detective branch of the police from hospitals during the movement. They were beaten up seriously and forced to give false

statements. As a result, students from various educational institutions like schools, colleges, madrasahs and universities joined the protest.

2009-2024, The opposition political parties were barred from regular activities. The general elections of 2024 and 2024 were held without the main opposition party. The transparency of the Election Commission was widely questioned. Many politically motivated cases were filed against the opposition and jailed from year to year, including the main opposition party- Bangladesh Nationalist Party's chairperson and ex-prime minister Begum Khaleda Zia and the acting chairman Tareque Rahman.

On the other hand, there was a lack of freedom of speech and right to vote. The opposition parties termed the ruling period of the Awami League as fascist rule. The political parties and the masses were fed up with irregularities, crimes, and corruption—the high price of all daily goods concerned people from all classes. The reserve of dollars in a central bank, Bangladesh Bank, decreased daily. The government's supporters laundered significant amounts of money from the country abroad through illegal channels, such as hundi. The inflation rate was high, and it crossed the single digits. A notable number of citizens from the opposition party had to face extra-judicial killing. Law-enforcing agencies picked up many people. In that situation, people of all ages and professions continued the demand for one point- the government's resignation. In that situation, people of all ages and professions continued the demand for one point- the government's resignation. On August 5, people from around the country marched to Dhaka, especially to the residence of the prime minister Sheikh Hasina-Gonobhban.

On August 5, the people from around the country marched to Dhaka, especially to the residence of the prime minister Sheikh Hasina-Gonobhban. Sheikh Hasina resigned and fled to Neighbouring country- India. This movement is known as the July Revolution.

Noble Laureate professor Muhammad Yunus formed an interim government. The students assigned the reformations in all sectors of the country to the new government. The government is walking towards arranging a fair, accessible and credible election. This study will analyse the role of the existing political parties in the July movement and how the stakeholders treated the parties's roles.

POLITICAL PARTIES'S VIEWS ON JULY REVOLUTION

A political party is one of the most vibrant components of democracy. Political parties always play a significant role in the election and formation of government. According to the Election Commission of Bangladesh, there are 53 registered political parties in Bangladesh. In the political history of Bangladesh, three political parties- Bangladesh Awami League, Bangladesh Nationalist Party-BNP and Jatiya Party formed the government at different times. The other parties, like Bangladesh Jamat-e-Islami, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, and Workers Party, were part of various governments as an ally party.

BANGLADESH AWAMI LEAGUE:

The Bangladesh Awami League was one of Bangladesh's prominent and popular political parties. Its political position is centre to centre left. The party was founded by Moulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani (President) and Shamsul Hoque (General Secretary) in Dhaka on June 23 1949. In 1955, the word 'Muslim' was deleted from the full name- East-Pakistan Awami

Muslim League. The party played a vital role in the liberation war of Bangladesh under the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1971. In 1973, the party won the first election with a 73.20% vote and 293 seats out of 300. In 1973, the party won the first election with a 73.20% vote and 293 seats out of 300.

A dangerous famine occurred in 1974 due to different types of crime and corruption. The freedom of the press was limited to only four government-owned newspapers. One party role named- BAKSAL was introduced in the newly independent country. The freedom of the press was limited to only four government-owned newspapers. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was killed on August 15, 1975. “The exact number of secret political killings during that period is not known. One government estimate put the figure at over 6000, including four Awami League MPs.

Along with secret killings, there was a sharp rise in armed robberies from private houses, looting of banks and shops, and attacks on police stations” (Ahamed 1980:157). Sheikh Hasina became the President of the party in 1981. Awami League won the general elections of 1996 and 2008. “The election of 2014 was a shambles: they took place after a chaotic period of nationwide strikes, violence, shutting down of media, the ban of the largest Islamist party (Jamaat-e-Islami) and a crackdown on other opposition parties. As a result, the BNP boycotted the elections, allowing the Awami League to sweep back into power with questionable legitimacy” (Riaz,2014:119-130). “The elections of 2018- marred by violence, voter intimidation, accusations of vote-rigging and other irregularities- resulted in the Awami League winning 96 per cent of parliamentary seats amid, once again, serious concerns about the validity of the results and the growth of civilian autocracy” (Schendel,2020:227). Although the party won the general elections of 2024, its legitimacy was widely questioned due to the boycott of the main opposition party- Bangladesh Nationalist Party -BNP.

On June 5, 2024, the Court revived the 30% quota for the freedom fighters in all first and second-class government jobs by making the 2018 circular dormant. It was alleged that the Awami League government used the Court to reinstate the quota system. The Awami League marked the issue of quota reformation as the jurisdiction of the apex court’s decision. When the students demanded a solution to a quota from the executive division, the party termed the activities of the students as illogical and a waste of study time. The President of Awami League and Ex-Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said, ‘There was no logic to staging such a movement against the apex court verdict regarding the restoration of the quota system in the public services leaving the study. What is now going on in the name of movement [against Quota] is to waste study time. I do not think it has any logic’ (The Daily New Age: 2024, July 8).

Bangladesh Awami League treated the quota reformation movement as an anti-state attempt by oppositions like BNP and Jamaat. On July 12, the general secretary of Awami Jubo League, Mainul Hossain Khan, said that the Bangladesh Nationalist Party- BNP and Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami have fielded their children in the name of the quota reform movement. “They have fielded their children in the name of quota reform. They could not achieve success waging movements under the party banner for so long. Now they are trying to destabilise the country in the name of reforming the quota system” (The Daily Prothom Alo:2024, July 12).

The agitators alleged that Sheikh Hasina, Ex-prime Minister and President of the Awami League, had slandered them as Razakars (collaborators of the Pakistani army). Although she

denied the accusation by saying she did not term the protesters as Rajakars, the protesters termed themselves Rajakars on their own. He said that her statement was intentionally distorted. On the night of July 14, the students of Dhaka University chanted “Who are you? Who am I? Rajakar! Rajakar!” slogan in protest of Sheikh Hasina’s speech.

On July 15, The General Secretary of Bangladesh Awami League, Obaidul Quader, ordered their student wing to face the protesters with a fitting reply on campus. On July 16, the Bangladesh Chatra League gathered workers from different parts of the capital city on the Dhaka University campus. When the Protesters started their program under the banner of the Anti-discrimination Student Movement, then the activists of Bangladesh Chatra League launched a brutal attack on the protesters, including female students from different renowned educational institutions at the Dhaka University campus. As a result, 350 quota protesters were injured by the BCL’s attacks. Also, the ministers and parliamentarians from the ruling party made many undesirable comments about the agitators. Also, the ministers and parliamentarians from the ruling party made many undesirable comments about the agitators. For example, the state minister for information and broadcasting, Mohammad Ali Arafat, termed the protesters as drugged. The former state minister for ICT, Zunaid Ahmed Palak, turned off the internet entirely for over five days.

An order, shoot on sight, was given by issuing a curfew order after the meeting of 14 parties led by the ruling party- Bangladesh Awami League, on July 19. “In extreme cases, police officers have been granted powers to open fire on those violating the curfew, confirmed Obaidul Quader, the general secretary of the ruling Awami League party” (The Gurdian:2024, July 20).

After the Revolution, many victims and their relatives filed cases against the Awami League leaders in connection with participation in student killings. Nationalist Democratic Movement, a political party, filed a case at the International Crimes Tribunal against Awami League and its 14-party allies like- Samyabadi Dal, Democratic Labor Party, Jasad (INU), Workers Party of Bangladesh (Menon), Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal, Tarikat Federation, Gonotrantri Party, National Awami Party (NAP), Ganazadi League, Communist Kendra, Basad and Jatiya Party-JP on charges of genocide in the anti-discrimination student movement. Around 100 cases have been filed against the central and local leaders of the Awami League, including the party president and former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and Secretary General Obaidul Qader, accusing them of disappearances, murders and killings during the movement by the Victims and their relatives. On October 17, The International Crimes Tribunal- ICT issued an arrest order for 44 Awami League leaders, including the party chief, Sheikh Hasina and second in command, Obaidul Qader, in their connection with genocide during the Revolution. Many social organisations and non-political platforms seem to believe that the role of the Awami League during the movement was not only questionable but also against the desire of the majority. Many political parties like Islami andolon Bangladesh demanded that the Awami League be barred from the national election for their questionable activities in the July movement. Many political parties, including Jamaat-e-Islami, Liberal Democratic Party-LDP, and Gonoodhikar Parishad, demanded that the Awami League be banned. “The AL has carried out continuous acts of terrorism, killed thousands of opposition party members without trial and looted billions of taka. The party should be banned immediately” (The Business Standard: 2024, August 15).

The six critical coordinators of the Anti-discrimination Student Movement were picked up by the law-enforcing agencies from the hospital. They were forced to read an announcement, directed and written by the detective branch of the police, about the withdrawal of the movement. The coordinators said in a statement after release from custody that the Awami League leaders and government ministers were behind it. “We were unjustly detained on the orders of the home minister. The government has put the law enforcers face to face with the students and citizens” (The Daily Star: 2024, August 2). A lot of pictures and videos of an open fire and brutal attacks on the protesting students by the Awami league leaders were published in many newspapers and on television.

The Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, Inqilab Monch, and Daily Amar Desh editor Mahmudur Rahman demanded that the Bangladesh Chatrleague, the student wing of Bangladesh Awami League, should be banned for their terrorist activities like genocide during the uprising. The organisations requested the interim government to issue a ban notification for Bangladesh Chatrleague. According to the Home Ministry gazette notification published on October 23 2024, Bangladesh Chatrleague was involved in terrorist and destructive activities like- general student killings during the July revolution. According to the Anti-Terrorism Act-2009, The interim government issued a ban notification for Bangladesh Chatrleague in their connection with murder, rape and sexual harassment. “Since the start of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement on July 15, leaders and activists of the Bangladesh Chhatra League have violently and recklessly attacked protesting students and the general public, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of innocent students and individuals and endangering the lives of many others” (The Daily Prothom Alo: 2024, October 23)

BANGLDESH NATIONALIST PARTY- BNP

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party is one of the most popular political parties in the country. The party believes in Bangladeshi Nationalism. General Ziaur Rahman founded the party in 1978. He announced the declaration of independence of Bangladesh from the Kalurghat radio station in Chittagong. The party chief was elected as the President of Bangladesh in 1978. “He (Ziaur Rahman) also initiated several participatory programs such as canal digging and eradicating illiteracy through literacy squads established in early 1979. He introduced a multi-party system in the country” (Ahmed: 2004, 101-118). In 1981, Ziaur Rahman was assassinated in Chittagong. After the death of Ziaur Rahman, his wife, Begum Khaleda Zia, became the party’s chairperson in 1982. In 1990, The authoritarian rule of General Hussain Muhammad Ershad ended with an uprising led by Begum Khaleda Zia. The party won the general elections of 1991 and 2001. Begum Khaleda Zia ascended the throne of Prime Minister of Bangladesh for two times.

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party’s leader, workers and supporters engaged in the movement. The senior members of the party’s standing committee, Nazrul Islam Khan and Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury were also arrested and sent to jail. The opposition leaders like- BNP senior joint secretary general Advocate Ruhul Kabir Rizvi Ahmed, member secretary of Dhaka North & prominent footballer- Aminul Haque, Former President of the student wing, central publicity secretary Sultan Salauddin Tuku and organising Secretary Qazi Sayedul Alam Babul were arrested and granted for remand alleging their involvement with the movement.

Before the Quota Reformation movement, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party's Acting Chairman, Tareque Rahman, called the student's demands fair and just. On June 15, in a speech to the nation, he said, "Many of you will remember that during the quota-reform movement in 2018, the autocratic Hasina promised to abolish the quota system. Now, she has used the courts to reinstate it. This is a betrayal of the students. Hasina, being a deceiver, repeatedly cheats the people. 'Quota' can never be a substitute for merit. I believe that the demands of the students and young people regarding job quota reform are fair and just. If the BNP is elected to form the government, it will certainly implement any reasonable and just demands of the students and young people. The state will also consider the issues of disabled individuals with due importance" (Tareque Rahman's speech: 2024, June 15).

Not only that, during the quota reform movement in 2018, Tarique Rahman marked the movement as genuine and the students as brilliant. The party's acting chairman claimed that Awami League is liable for depriving the brilliants of the misuse of the quota system in government jobs. He asked the Dhaka University teacher, Professor Mamun Ahmed, to support the agitating students. "Their (agitators) demand is genuine. The majority of the brilliant students have joined the movement. Haven't they? I think common people have also expressed solidarity with the movement. The Awami League government abused Quota for the last couple of years. The white (BNP-Jamaat) panel teacher like you should support the agitators in an organised way" (The Daily Sun: 2018, April 11).

The party requested that all the people of the country continue the movement. Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, Secretary General of BNP, said, "The demand for the resignation of the government is being voiced from house to house today" (The Daily New Age: 2024, August 2). When the Anti-discrimination Student Movement announced their one-point demand for the government's resignation, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party aligned with the needs of the students. The Secretary General of the BNP also said in a statement that Democracy-loving people and the leaders, workers, supporters, and well-wishers of the BNP and its affiliated bodies at all levels should take to the streets and unite with the students to accelerate the fall of the government in the more significant interest of the country and the nation" (The Financial Express: 2024, August, 4). The Bangladesh Nationalist Party said that the government should apologise to the mass people for genocide during the movement and resign immediately. The party alleged that the ruling party leaders were destroying the signs of the massacres. He also said that the violence against the students has surpassed the brutality of the Pakistani occupation forces.

According to a formal statement of the secretary general of the party, "a total of 875 people had been martyred across the country in the July-August massacre. At least 422 of them were involved in politics of the BNP" (The Daily Prothom Alo: 2024, September 15). Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Chatra Dal, the student wing of BNP, was actively engaged in the movement. The student organisation claimed with a list that at least 49 Chatra Dal activists from the different units of the organisation sacrificed their lives during the July Revolution. "During the movement, around 2,100 Chhatra Dal leaders and activists were arrested, all of whom suffered torture in police custody" (Dhaka Tribune: 2024, August 21). BNP's publicity secretary, Sultan Salahuddin Tuku, said there is no opportunity to underestimate the contribution of members and associates of Bangladesh Nationalist Party-BNP in the anti-discrimination

movement. A social movement becomes successful when it secures the support and participation of a political party. The Bangladesh Nationalist Party claimed that the second man, who sacrificed his life during the movement in Chattogram, was from Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Chatra Dal. Chattogram City BNP former committee's office secretary Idris Ali said: "Wasim Akram, joint convener of Chittagong College Chhatra Dal, was shot dead by the Chhatra League. His body is at Chittagong Medical College Hospital. He was a third-year honours student in the Political Science Department of Chittagong College and lived in Bahaddarhat." (The Dhaka Tribune: 2024, July 16).

According to some leaders of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party-BNP, the party's acting chairman, Tarique Rahman, was the mastermind behind the Revolution. They claimed that the Revolution was not a matter of short-term movement but the result of the BNP's relentless effort over the 16 years against the Awami League government. Shamsuzzaman Dudu, BNP's vice chairman, said, "The sole mastermind behind this movement is Tarique Rahman. He has done everything necessary to build an effective movement. Nothing happens in just one month. It takes nine months to give birth to a child. If a child is born in one month, it is stillborn. For 16 years, the people of this country have shed blood. For 16 years, students, workers, and farmers have disappeared or are missing. For 16 years, people have been imprisoned. If you consider the movement of one month, that is not right" (The Daily Dhaka Tribune: 2014, October 12).

Another group of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party- BNP leaders, the July Revolution is not the achievement of any single group; it is the result of the combined sacrifice of the country's democracy-loving people like- political party leaders, students, teachers and professionals from all classes. According to Zainul Abedin Faruk, adviser to the party's chairperson, said, "We, the leaders of the anti-discrimination movement, were on the streets. The masterminds were Tarique Rahman, BNP and the 12-party alliance" (Barta24: 2024, October 27)

BANGLADESH JAMAAT -E- ISLAMI

The party was founded by Maulana Sayyid Abul Ala Maududi in 1941. The most prominent Islamist party, Bangladesh Jamaat e Islami (BJI), is said to be the third most influential party (Hasan:2012, 61). The party wanted a united Pakistan and supported the Pakistan army against the independence of Bangladesh in 1971. "The ideology of the Jamaat is all-inclusive Islam, the content of it is specific, and their beauty, the explanation of its rules and it is laws so that men would accept its rationality and take it into the depths of their hearts" (Binder:1963, 87). After the liberation war, the party was banned. When General Ziaur Rahman, the founder of BNP, introduced multi-party democracy in the country, the Jamaat-e-Islami restarted their political activities publicly in 1979. The party, including all other political parties, joined the anti-Ershad movement and forced the government to resign. The BJI played a role in introducing the caretaker government. The system operated comparatively fair, free and credible elections in 1991. "The BJI received 12.13% and 8.63% of votes during the 1991 and 1996 parliamentary elections. In the 2001 election, the BJI won seventeen seats as part of the centre-right coalition of four-party alliances headed by the BNP" (Ahmad: 2008, 61). When the BNP formed a government with the BJI in 2001, the Islamist BJI, once banned after independence, was granted two ministries. (Hasan:2012, 66). The registration and election sign

for Jamat-e-Islami was cancelled. Also, the party was again banned during the rule of Awami League in 2024. The interim government lifted the order of ban after the fall of Sheikh Hasina's government in the same year.

The party extended their moral support to the movement. The activists and supporters of the party actively engaged themselves in the protest. During the movement, the party's General Secretary, Professor Mia Golam Parwar, was arrested, and the Court granted a three-day remand for him in connection with the Bridge Building (Setu Bhaban) vandalism in Banani.

Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami's central executive council member and the Amir of Dhaka Metropolitan North, Mohammad Salim Uddin, claimed that the party played an important role in this movement. The party extended their financial assistance to the martyr's family, who sacrificed their life in the Anti-discrimination Student Movement. Each family got 1 to 2 lak taka from the Jamaat-e-Islami's party fund. Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman demanded that "The names and stories of all those who fought and sacrificed their lives against fascism between 2006 and 2024 must be included in the textbooks for students so that the next generation can learn about their contributions" (The Daily Business Standard:2024. October 27).

The Bangladesh Islami ChatraShibir, the student wing of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, played a vital role in the movement. On July 9, Bangladesh Islami ChhatraShibir's President and secretary general issued a joint statement demanding the immediate reformation of the quota system in government jobs. In the statement, the organisation said that the reinstatement of the quota system is absurd and a farce with deserving students. They noted that Chhatra Shibir raised the demand for quota reformation for the first time in 1996. Then, in 2008 and 2013, Chhatra Shibir protested on various country campuses. Because of this, numerous leaders and workers of Chhatra Shibir were subjected to torture by police and the Chhatra League. In that continuation, this demand for quota reform in 2018 became popular among ordinary students. They said that Chhatra Shibir raised the demand for quota reformation for the first time in 1996.

The Dhaka University chapter of this student organisation led the movement from the back—the Dhaka University chapter's President of Bangladesh Islami ChatraShibir. Md Abu Sadik Kayem was a vital coordinator of the Anti-discrimination Student Movement (Mahmud & Al Mahmud, 2024). "Shadik Kayem, whom general students identified as an organiser of the anti-discrimination student movement, was the president of the DU unit of Islami Chhatra Shibir, the student wing of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami" (The Daily New Age: 2024, September 23). According to Abdul Kader, one of the vital coordinators of the Anti-discrimination Student Movement, the 9-point demands of the anti-discrimination student movement, which paved the way for one point of Hasina's resignation, were prepared with the consultation of the secretary of the Dhaka University unit of ChatraShibir. In a Facebook post, coordinator Kader shared the backstory of creating the 'nine demands,' writing: "Shibir played an important role in spreading the nine demands. Since there was no internet and amid gunfire and curfews, they risked their lives to deliver the demands house to house. They also arranged for them to reach foreign journalists" (bdnews24.com:2024, September 23).

JATIYA PARTY

The Jatiya Party is a known political party in Bangladesh. The party was founded by General Hussain Muhammad Ershad in 1986. It is a conservative party by nature. “In May 1986, despite a boycott by the BNP, parliamentary elections were held, and Ershad’s Jatiya party won a majority” (Sahoo & Vishwanathan:2023),65-83). The Jatiya Party formed a government after the elections in 1986 by securing 153 out of 300 seats. The chief of the party, Hussain Muhammad Ershad, became the President of Bangladesh. In 1988, the party won the national elections. However, the election was widely questionable due to a boycott by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party- BNP& Awami League and mass-scale vote rigging. However, the election was widely questionable due to a boycott by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party- BNP& Awami League and mass-scale vote rigging. BNP& Awami League and mass scale vote rigging. The uprising of 1990 led by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party- BNP and Awami League ousted Hussain Muhammad Ershad. Hussain Muhammad Ershad was the party’s chief until he died in 2019. His brother, Golam Muhammad Qader, became the chairman after the death of Ershad.

The Jatiya Party played a mysterious role during the movement. The party claimed that they had extended their support to the movement. However, the coordinators of the movement alleged that the Jatiya Party was a collaborator of the ousted fascist government. The party did not get any invitation for dialogue from the newly formed interim government after the Revolution. The Special Assistant to the Chief Adviser, Mahfuz Alam, disclosed the reasons for this. He said: “Jatiya Party was a silent supporter of Awami Fascism. They had given it some form of legitimacy by participating in the illegal election. That is why we are not considering Jatiya Party now” (The Daily Bangladesh Pratidin: 2024, October 20).

The party played a double role in the 10, 11, 12th parliament. Although the party termed itself opposition, they joined the government and became cabinet members. As a result, the party was termed as a domestic opposition party. Many political platforms demanded that the party should be banned for their silent support of fascism. The Anti-Discrimination Student Movement’s chief organiser- Abdul Hannan Masud, said: “We believe a ban will come through a judicial process. But before that, we have urged the government to suspend the activities of the Jatiya Party” (The Daily Dhaka Tribune: 2024, November 3). A case was filed against the Party Chairman, Golam Mohammed Quader, and praesidium member Sharifa Quader. It is mentioned in the case file that these two leaders of the party were involved in the murder of a child in the Capital at Jatrabari during the anti-discrimination student movement.

COMMUNIST PARTY OF BANGLADESH- CPB

The Communist Party of India was established in 1948. After Bangladesh’s independence, the party’s name was changed from the Communist Party of East Pakistan to the communist Party of Bangladesh. Its political position is Far-left. The party belongs to the ideology of Marxist and Leninist communism. The party played a vital role in the liberation war of Bangladesh in 1971. Moni Sing, a prominent leader of the communist party, became a member of the advisory council of foreign government during the liberation war. The party got five seats by participating in the General Elections of 1986 and 1991.

On July 7, the CPB Leaders Urged, by issuing a statement, to take necessary steps to reform the discriminatory quota system. They alleged that reserving a 30 per cent quota till the third generation of freedom fighters does not increase the honour of the freedom fighters.

They strongly condemned the attacks on the students. In the statement, the party leaders demanded to stop the attacks on the students and arrest the culprits after being identified. CPB demanded the withdrawal of false cases filed in the name of anti-quota students and Chatra Union leaders. On August 3, CPB called on Sheikh Hasina to resign immediately for not being able to prevent the commemorative massacre and the destruction of state property.

ISLAMI ANDOLON BANGLADESH

Islami Andolan Bangladesh (Islamic Movement of Bangladesh) is a known political party in Bangladesh. The party was founded by Syed Fazlul Karim, primarily known as Chormonai Pir 1987. In the early stage, the party was known as Islami shasontontro andolan-ISA (Islamic constitutional movement). “ISA has developed a sort of antipathy toward the modern, secular, and liberal values and elements not only because of their parochial and inadequate knowledge vis-a-vis the modern sectors of the society, but also because they see that they are falling behind socially and economically” (Kobir: 2006, 92). In the eighth national election, the party allied with the Jatiya party. The three directly nominated candidates got 0.01% votes in the same election. The party got 1.47% votes in the general election of 2018. “The party is led by the Ameer, who has enormous authority and power over decision-making processes. There are three councils to steer organisational activities, they are Majlish-e-Sadrat (Presidium Council), Majlish-e-Shura (Consultative Council), and Majlish-e-Amela (Executive Council). The members of the Presidium Council are appointed by the Ameer” (Riaz:2011, 56).

From the beginning, the party expressed solidarity with the Anti-discrimination Student Movement and demanded reforming the discriminatory quota system. During the movement, the party wanted the government’s resignation for their involvement in genocide. The party activists and supporters actively engaged themselves in the movement. On August 4, the leaders and activists of Islami Andolan Bangladesh participated in a protest march and rally in Dhaka, supporting the demand of the Anti-discrimination Student Government and the cabinet’s resignation. Islami Andolan Bangladesh’s Senior Naib Amir Mufti Syed Muhammad Faizul Karim inspired the students by giving a speech that, carry on the movement, the victory is on the door. The student wing of IAB, Islami Chatra Adolan, participated in the programs of the Anti-discrimination Student Movement in many educational institution campuses. On August 5, the party announced a mass march at Baitul Mukarram North Gate of Dhaka and in the districts and cities of the whole country with a one-point demand for Hasina’s resignation (Chowdury, 2024). Finally, they supported the March to Dhaka program of the Anti-discrimination Student Movement and condemned countless deaths by the terrorist attacks on peaceful student protests. After the Revolution, the party claimed that many supporters and workers sacrificed their lives in the movement. “At least 18 leaders and activists of Islami Andolan Bangladesh lost their lives in the anti-discrimination student movement in July and August. Additionally, more than a thousand have been injured, with over 150 seriously injured and receiving treatment in various hospitals” (The Daily Dhaka Tribune: 2024, August 20).

GONO ODHIKAR PARISHAD

The Gono Odhikar Parishad (People's Rights Council) is Bangladesh's newly formed political party. Nurul Haq Nur, former vice-president of Dhaka University Central Student union-DUCSU, is the party's founder. In 2018, a group of students started a movement demanding quota reformation in government jobs under the leadership of Bangladesh Sadharon Chatra Odhkar Sonrookon Parishad. The student organisation participated in the DUCSU election 2019 and won two posts: vice president-VP and social welfare secretary. After the DUCSU election, the student organisation focused on national politics and formed a political party named- Gono Odhikar Parishad in 2021. Before the 12th national election, the party applied for formal registration, but the Bangladesh Election Commission denied the application. The party boycotted its first election in demand of the election under a neutral government. The Election Commission listed Gono Odhikar Parishad as a registered political party after the fall of Sheikh Hasina's government.

The Gono Odhikar Parishad played a remarkable role in the Anti-discrimination Student Movement. The party's central leaders started a movement demanding quota reformation in 2018. Asif Mahmud Sojib Bhuiyan, a key coordinator of the Anti-discrimination Student Movement, was elected as the President of the Gono Odhikar Parishad's student wing- Chatra Odhikar Parishad of Dhaka University unit in 2023. One of the key coordinators of the movement, Nahid Islam, competed in the DUCSU election from Nur-Rashed's panel. The party chief, Nurul Haq Nur, was picked up by the law-enforcing agency during the Anti-discrimination Student Movement. Nur had to face extreme torture during the remand period. The Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police claimed in a press conference that VP Nur was funded 4 lakh taka during the movement to help the protesters.

The investigating officer of the case filed at Banani police station and the inspector of the cantonment zonal team of the DB Police, Abu Said Mia, mentioned that when the Court ruled on the Quota in government jobs then Gono-Adhikari Parishad president Nurul haq Noor contacted the coordinators- Nahid Islam, Nasanat Abdullah, Sargis Alam, Asif Mahmud, Akhtar Hossain and Ahnaf. On the night of July 18, Nahid Islam and Sargis Alam discussed the reform of quotas in government jobs and the overthrow of the Awami League government on mobile phones and messages. "Detectives have found that Gono Odhikar Parishad President Nurul Haque Nur was in close contact with at least six of the key coordinators of the quota reform movement and suggested some political demands they should press, centring the complete shutdown enforced on July 19. Based on his suggestions, the student leaders pressed eight demands as preconditions to negotiate quota reforms when the government representatives, led by Law Minister Anisul Haq, sat with them after fatal clashes across the country on July 18" (The Dhaka Tribune: 2024, July 27).

AMAR BANGLADESH PARTY

The Amar Bangladesh Party (My Bangladesh Party), shortly known as AB Party, was founded by a former group of Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami ChatraShibir leaders in 2020. It is called the B team of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami because of their connection with the highly discussed party. The AB party bears the Equality, Human Dignity and Social Justice slogan. The party wanted to register before the General Election of 2024, but the Election Commission

refused to register the party. The Court issued an order to register the AB party after the Hasina government's resignation. As a result, the party was allotted to the Eagle as its election symbol.

On July 6, when the Quota system was revived, the AB Party protested the attempt. They proposed reserving only a 5% quota in government jobs. The party leaders claimed that the Awami League is trying to implement its plan using the Court. The party condemned the brutal attack on the students at Dhaka University Campus by the Bangladesh Chatra League. They said that, due to the brutality of the Awami League, the student movement turned into a mass movement. The ruling party should take responsibility for the loss of lives in the violence during the quota reformation movement- The party leaders added.

The Member Secretary of the party, Mojibur Rahman Monju, was picked by the law enforcement agencies for his role in favour of the movement. On August 10, the party leaders met with Gwen Lewis, Resident Coordinator of the UN Mission to Bangladesh. They claimed that, during the uprising of students in July and August, genocide and human rights violations took place on the orders of Sheikh Hasina. They called on the United Nations to lead a fair investigation into these incidents. AB Party demanded that the interim government prioritise the treatment and rehabilitation of the injured during the movement.

GANATANTRA MANCHA

The Ganatantra Mancha (Stage of Democracy), a political alliance of six political parties, was formed in 2022. The Revolutionary Workers Party, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal- JSD, Bhasani Anusari Parishad, Nagrik Oikya, Rastro Songskar Andolon and Ganosanhati Andolan are the members of this alliance. The alliance supported the student protest the quota system. The President of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal- JSD, a partner of Ganatantra Mancha, ASM Abdur Rob, said that the ruling Awami League was leading the country towards civil war by not fulfilling the justified demands of the quota protesters" (The Daily New Age: 2024, July 17). On July 29, the Ganatantra Mancha demanded the government's resignation by taking liability for the genocide. On August 3, the Mancha called to support and participate actively in the student movement to ensure the government's resignation.

LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY

The Liberal Democratic Party, known as LDP, was founded by Dr. Colonel (retd.) Oli Ahmad Bir Bikram in 2006. It is a registered political party in the Election Commission. The party is an ally of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party- BNP. LDP participated in the national election of 2008 for the first time. The party boycotted the election of 2014 and also participated in the election of 2018 under the banner of Jatiya Oikya Front (National Unity Front) led by BNP.

The LDP extended full support to the anti-quota movement. The President of the party, Dr. Colonel (retd.) Oli Ahmad Bir Bikram said in a statement on July 8 that there is no alternative to establishing a merit-based state system. LDP agrees with the fair and logical demands of the student quota reform movement.

OTHER PARTIES

The Krishak Sramik Janata League criticised the decision of curfew. The party president, Kader Siddique, said freedom fighters do not want Quotas; they want respect. He also noted that Dropping bombs from helicopters—cannot be the behaviour of a democratic country. The President of Bangladesh Jatiya Part- BJP, Andale eve Rahman Partho, made various posts on social media, such as Facebook, on behalf of the protesting students demanding quota reformation. “DB sources said Partho was arrested for allegedly inciting the quota reform movement” (The Daily Star: 2024, July 25).

Kamal Hossain, the founder and emeritus President of Ganoforum, expressed full support for the demands of the protesting students. He said that Excessive use of force and lethal weapons by law enforcement forces against unarmed students participating in a peaceful protest demanding quota reform, resulting in the loss of lives and severe injuries to many students and ordinary people, is contrary to democracy and justice. He also said It was a clear violation of human rights. Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis, Khelafat Majlis and Bangladesh Suprem party Called to accept the fair demands of students in Quota reform.

As a part of 14 party alliance, the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, Workers Party of Bangladesh, Jatiya Party (Manju), Bangladesh Tarikat Federation and Bangladesher Samyabadi Dal (Marksbadi-Leninbadi) supported the role of the Awami League government. The government imposed a curfew and banned Jamaat-Shibir by following their suggestions.

CONCLUSION

The July Revolution opened the door to a new Bangladesh. Bangladesh’s existing political parties tried to mark the movement through their lens. As a ruling party, Bangladesh Awami League took many steps to neutralise the uprising. The party attempted to mark the student’s demand as a matter of the apex court’s decision and fielded the party workers to face the student protesters. The Awami League government deployed law-enforcing agencies against the protesters. The agencies picked up the movement coordinators, which was criticised broadly at home and abroad. A series of brutal attacks on student protesters by the ruling party’s workers was published in the national and international mass media, including daily newspapers and television. A stream of protests arose on social media platforms in favour of the protest and against the ruling party’s role. The ruling party imposed a countrywide curfew and issued a banning order to the main Islamist party- Jamaat-e -Islami, with the suggestion of their 14-party grand alliance. They had to face criticism of the decision. Sheikh Hasina’s government was ousted. Many cases were filed against the central leaders of the party, including Sheikh Hasina, for their involvement in genocide. As a result, the opportunity for politics has been limited for the Awami League. The political forces from the opposition side, like- the Bangladesh Nationalist Party- BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami, tried to make the movement successful. The opposition parties extended their formal support to the movement. Many supporters of the parties not only participated in the movement but also sacrificed their lives. Parties like the BNP and Jamaat could not practice their democratic rights easily during the Awami League rule but could do it freely after the Revolution. The people were deprived of their voting rights, and an attempt to bring them rights was possible due to the Revolution. The state was broken during the autocratic rule; the Revolution paved the way for reformation.

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