

## A Survey of Public Perception on Political Crisis in Bangladesh

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### Abstract

*This article demonstrates public perception's on crucial political issues of Bangladesh, which dominated the political atmosphere in 2013. To conduct this study several important issues chronologically have been discussed including the people's views and opinions on the issue of violence against minority, the trend of prolonged Hartal, emergence of Gono Jagoron Mancha or Shahbag Movement for the capital punishment of convicted criminals at International Crimes Tribunal (ICT), the perception on Islamic politics which has been more visible through the rise of Hefajat-e-Islam, foreign influence into the concurrent political crisis, the interference of foreign diplomats into the internal matters and the threat to the national sovereignty and interest, police raid into the central office of key opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), and suppressive actions of law enforcing agencies on the opposition political parties during political agitations, thinking of general people about the role of civil society to settle the dispute between major political parties also has been discussed. Finally, how people think about the negotiated settlement between or among major political parties have been discussed. To elaborate all crucial issues which dominated the politics of Bangladesh in 2013 has categorically analyzed based on the primary data collected through survey methodology. Most of the people think that violence against minority is a political game of political parties and major political parties including the incumbent can't eschew its responsibility to protect religious minoritie. Moreover, Sahbag Movement negatively affected the political scenario of the country and lead to the emergence of Hefajat-e-Islam (a religious platform on 13 point demand including the capital punishment for atheist bloggers and the imposition of Shariah Law) as a new fundamentalist force and created division among political parties and general people. Suppressive actions of law enforcing agencies on opposition political parties' protests don't reflect absence of healthy democracy associated with intolerance*

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*and hostility. Furthermore, arbitrary police raid into the central office of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) was pejorative for democracy and tremendously breaches the democratic norms. Majority percent of respondents said that foreign interference into the internal matters of the country is unacceptable. To overcome the ongoing political crisis, civil society personnel can play vital role, but cooperative negotiated settlement of disputes among major political parties is the most viable option to resolve concurrent political deadlock.*

**Keywords:** Political Crisis, Violence against Minority, Shabag Movement, Hartal, Hefajat-e-Islam, Islamic Politics, Civil Society, Mediation and Negotiation.

## **Introduction**

Political atmosphere of Bangladesh is passing a crucial moment at present time. The situation is marked by election-centered violence against religious minorities; frequent imposition of day-long hartals (shutdown) for restoration of interim non-partisan or care-taker government by opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)-led alliances and by Jamat-e-Islami to protest against the judgments of life imprisonment or death sentences of its leaders; and the emergence of Gono-Jagoron Mancha or Sahbag movement for the demand of capital punishment of convicted personnel at Internal Crimes Tribunal (ICT); the rise of Hefajat-e-Islam, a religious political platform with 13 points demands including the capital punishment of atheist bloggers and impositions of Shariah laws; excessive use of forces to suppress oppositions agitations and police raid into the central office of key opposition BNP; external influences and interference into the political matter of the country and so on. In essence, the country falls into a deadly political impasse with a set of issues, which impede the overall development of the nation and created a sharp sense of insecurity and uncertainty in the physic of denizens. Instead of persisting intense political quagmires, incumbents and oppositions alleges each other for being responsible for these impasses, but any concerted efforts to overcome these deadlocks is merely invisible. Our myopic and long-sighted views see no immediate political consensus to resolve crises. In such circumstances of national crisis general people are the driving force of solutions. So this survey was designed and conducted to find out the popular perceptions of general people through a set of open-ended and close ended set of questionnaire. The main objectives are to reach at a process of solution to escape from these political quagmires. In essence, this study will explore the perception and thinking of general people on

different crucial political and national issues, and how to overcome these problems.

### **Significance of the Study**

Political instability has a negative correlation with overall economy of any country.<sup>1</sup> Since the inception of Bangladesh in 1971 political upheaval marked by assassinations, coup and counter-coup.<sup>2</sup> But since 1990s new dimension of political confrontation started which marked by frequent imposing of hartal. Though, Hartal is a common phenomenon in this subcontinent since 1947.<sup>3</sup> But, it has serious repercussion on overall economy of Bangladesh. Major political parties of Bangladesh are Awami League and Bangladesh Nationalist Party. Often they engaged in serious political confrontation and play blame game against each other. Recently the country is passing a crucial moment with widespread political upheaval.

Outrageous attack on the minority population's houses, prayers houses are common phenomenon at present time. Law enforcing agencies are launching firing and killing many people in different part of the country and also been killed by the opposition party's attack or by the mob violence. Police or law enforcing agencies continuously attacking on the opposition' demonstration to suppress their protest movement including beating, throwing tear shell, pepper spray, spring stick, mass arrest and imprisonment, launching fire, etc. Country wide day long shut down negatively affecting the country's overall development have become a political weapon of opposition to fulfill their demand. Shahbag movement has been arranged for the demand of capital punishment for all criminals who committed crimes against humanity in 1971 and also demanded for the permanent ban on Islamic politics. On the other hand Hefajat-e-Islam has risen as another popular movement for the implementation of their 13 points demand where most of the demands are related to Islam and also demanded to enact law containing the capital punishment for the atheist anti-Islamic bloggers who assaulted Islam and its Prophet Muhammad (sm) in their blogs. The major political parties' especially the ruling and opposition alliance are at a confronting position over the issue of interim time care government for the next national

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<sup>1</sup> See, Alesina, A., Azlar, S., Roubini, N. and Swagal, P., (1992) Political Instability and Economic Growth, *National Bureau of Economic Research*, September 1992;

<sup>2</sup> See, Kaji Siam Ahmed, (2011), *Economic Development of Bangladesh- Problems and Solutions*, Arcada University, ARCADA, Helsinki.

<sup>3</sup> See, Debapriya Bhattacharya, (2013), *Bangladesh 2013: Assessing Economic Implications of the Present Political Shocks* Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD).

election. Latter, the issues of external interventions into the internal matter of the politics of Bangladesh, civil society's initiatives in resolving the political crisis and the issue of negotiation between major political parties have been significant aspects of the study, what yet is crucial matters of the current politics of Bangladesh. As this article contains above important aspects of national matters of Bangladesh, so these all are its significant aspects in conducting this study.

### **Methodology and Data Collection Procedure**

This research is preceded on applying scientific approaches of Social Sciences, such as survey method, observational method, and interview method and in qualitative method. This paper is mainly based on primary data like interview by setting up a set of questionnaire on the basis of both open-ended and close ended. The data comprises only the events of 2013. The data has been collected on the same year. We have following procedures in a collecting the data:

- We have randomly selected 20 personnel form different professions including Bankers, Doctors, Teachers, Students and small businessmen and collected data through a prescribed interview method (questionnaire). Each questionnaire poses 11 questions (5 open & close ended mixed and 6 close ended) formed on the basis of the objectives of research.
- We collected data through face to face interview and sometimes filled by the respondents.
- We have collected data by observation method also.

### **Sample Size**

To show the public perception on the contemporary political violence of Bangladesh, we have chosen out the people from different professions including doctors, teachers, small businessman, students and others. We have randomly selected 5 people from all professions as respondents of our research questionnaire.

### **Research Questions**

Research Questions are very much important as questionnaire formed in accordance to with hypothesis and objectives of the study. Research questions are technique and questionnaire is a tool of the research. Some questions of our research as follows: \*Do you think that the violence against minority in Bangladesh is to gain political benefit? \*Do you agree with the trend of 'Hartal' in the present politics of Bangladesh? \*What's your opinion on Islamic politics in Bangladesh? \*How do you evaluate

the ‘Shahbagh Movement’? Do you think external intervention breaches the national interest and sovereignty of the country? Do support the ban on religion based political parties? Etc.

### **Problems of Data Collection**

We have faced several problems when collecting the data. Many respondents have felt hesitant after observing the questionnaire or when asked crucial questions related directly with political matters. Many of them avoided and did not agree to comment on the matter. Some government hospital doctor denied becoming as a respondent of our questionnaire. Because of political turmoil and widespread fear about the current political crisis of Bangladesh many respondent were concerned about their security. The perception of fear, threat and security were major problem of data collection.

### **Historical Background of the Political Crisis of Bangladesh**

Since the birth of Bangladesh, political culture marked by one-party ruling system, military coup and counter coup, dictatorial regimes and weak democratic institutional practice and democracy. Democratic regimes also been marked by non-democratic culture and game of blame between major political parties. Political parties’ consensus over vital national interests and issues have little reached since the inception of democracy after 1990s. The fate of nation and politics have been determined on the street by protest movement, which was marked by violent clash between major political parties, sporadic violence over the whole country, vehicles vandalism, continuous day long country wide shut down, mass imprisonment and violations of oppositions political rights by the government forces, torture and killing by the law enforcing agencies, disappearance and so on. In the phases of extreme political culture now the nation is passing a black time with sporadic and outrageous violence from the law enforcing agencies and oppositions parties. Government determined to suppress opposition movement and their demands on the street by using forces. No symbols of consensus among major political parties are exists in the political atmosphere of Bangladesh. The turning point of the crisis started through the 15<sup>th</sup> amendment of the constitution where the election time care taker government system have been removed from the constitution on the basis of an order of Supreme Court but the opposition parties and alliances demanded its existence through passing bill at the National Assembly and set it as a precondition to participate at national election. The mass killing and by the law enforcing agencies occurred on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2013

following the capital punishment of a Jamat-e-Islami leader by International Crimes Tribunal. Now the opposition party is waging movement for the reemergence the care taker system under which the next election will be held. Furthermore, after the declaration of Judgment of capital punishment of a Jamat leader by ICT, the indiscriminate attacks on the minority populations are occurring sporadically. In such as situation the general people want peace and consensus between major political parties on controversial and conflicting issues.

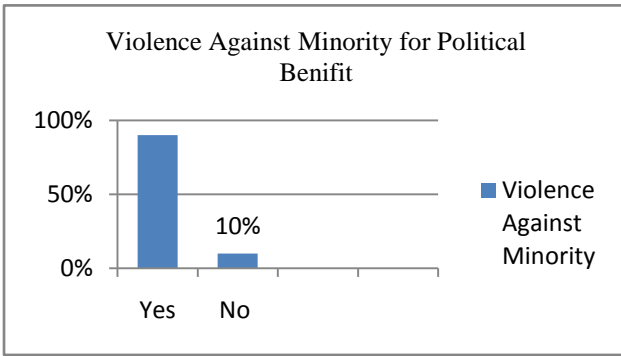
### **People's Perception on Different Burning Issues of Crisis in Bangladesh**

General people of Bangladesh are concerned and worried about the current political crisis of Bangladesh. In democratic system of politics, the will of people can reflect by their opinion. Their perceptions on major crucial issues at this time have been collected by the study. Their thinking is described as follows:

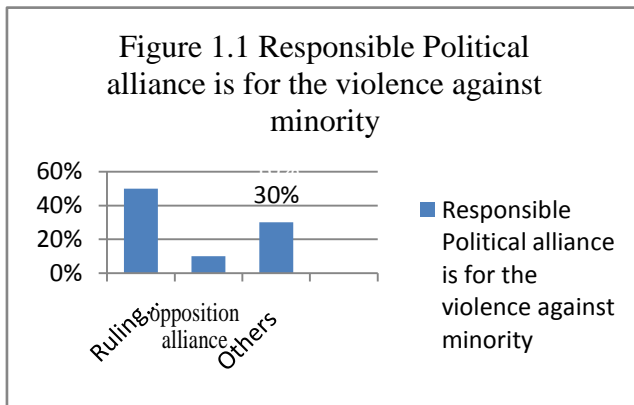
#### **Violence against Minority**

The violence against minority populations is not new in the South Asia, but the present style and scope of violence on the minority population in Bangladesh have crossed all previous records of history since the inception of Bangladesh. It should be noted that, the ruling government blamed the opposition parties like Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and Jamat-e-Islami for such countrywide outrageous attack. Government also claimed that opposition parties see the minority populations as their opponent or enemy and do not respect their rights. On the other hand opposition parties claimed those government supporters systematically want to blame the opposition for political benefit by doing such outrageous activities like firing on minority's houses, prayer houses etc. General people's perception on this violence is that, these all violence against minority is for political benefits. 90% people think that violence against minority is for political benefit and 10% do not agree with others opinion. Furthermore majority percent people (who said that violence against minority is to gain political benefit also stated that ruling alliance is responsible for attack on minority populations. 50% people's perception towards the ruling alliance and 10% said that opposition is responsible and 30% people said that both political alliance (ruling and opposition) are responsible for such attack.

Figure-1: People’s Perception on Violence against Minority:



Explanation: Figure 1 shows that 90% people said that violence against minority in Bangladesh is for political benefit and 10% people disagree with the statement that violence against minority population is not for political benefit.



Explanation: Figure 1.1 shows that 50% people said that ruling alliance is responsible for the violence against minority over the whole country but 10% people said opposition alliance is responsible for attack on minority and 30% expressed different opinion where

majority of them said that both alliances (ruling and opposition) are responsible for violence against minority in the recent time.

### Trend of Hartal

Since the democratic initiation of Bangladesh since 1991 the historical evidence shows that average Hartal per years has been more than three times higher (46 per year) compared to earlier regime.

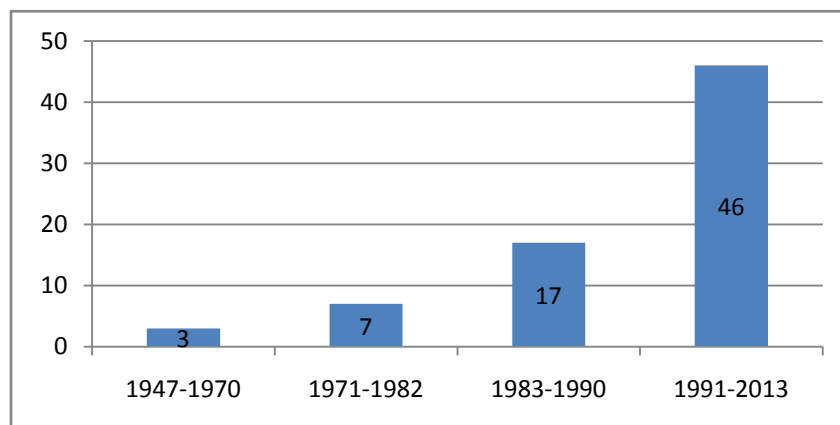
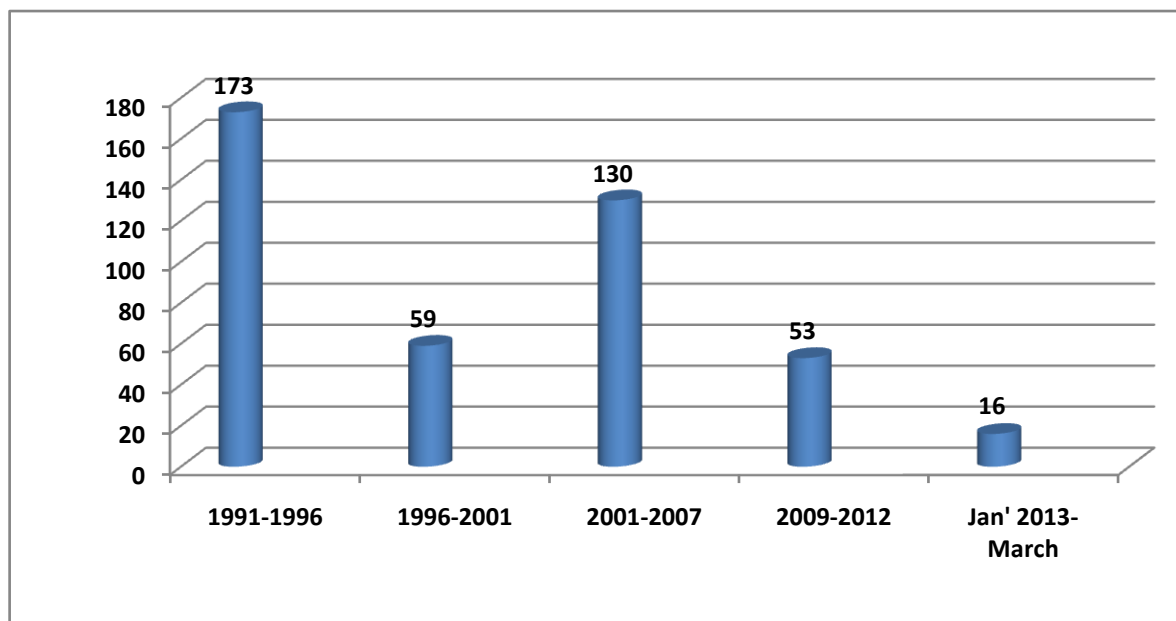


Figure 1- Average Hartal per Year<sup>4</sup> [Source: Ajay Das Gupta (2001); Imtiaz (2011); Odhikar; cited in Bhattacharya, (2013) and updated by the Author]

<sup>4</sup> Source: Sangbadpatre HartalChitra by Ajay Das Gupta (2001); Ahmed, Imtiaz (2011); Odhikar; CPD; cited in Debapriya Bhattacharya, (2013), Bangladesh 2013: Assessing Economic Implications of the Present Political Shocks op. cit.

Day long country wide shutdown (hartal) is a common political program by the opposition political parties in Bangladesh. The total number of hartal since 1991-2013 will make the following figure clear.



Source: *Textiletoday.com*.<sup>5</sup>

It impedes the overall development of the country including economy, education, industry, and transportation and communication system.<sup>6</sup> Because of such extreme political program sporadic violence and indiscriminate vandalism of vehicles take place. Some time thousands of opposition activists become injured and imprisoned. Incidents of death of civilian and law enforcing agencies are also common in terms of Hartal. The fishplates of train line have been uprooted in many places of the country and lead to the train accident which injured a lot of people at different time. Educational system hampered and the day laborers suffer from hunger because of such program. In one sentence, Hartal has negative relations with the overall development of the country including negative impact on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and the image of Bangladesh in international arena.<sup>7</sup>

In this case 60% people don't support hartal and think it should be permanently banned and rest 40% think it should not be banned.

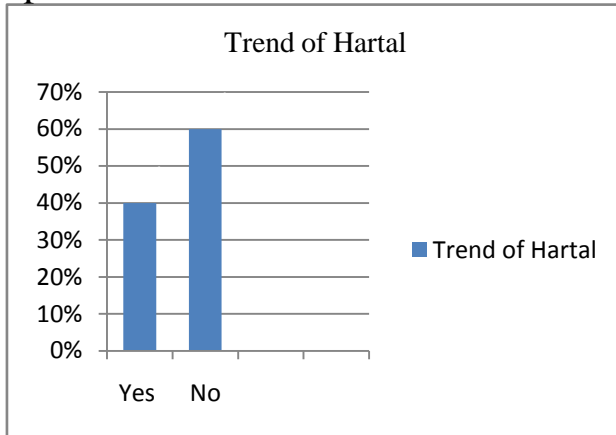
<sup>5</sup> 'Hartal' a curse for the economy. <http://www.textiletoday.com.bd/magazine/print/619> and modified by the author.

<sup>6</sup> See, World Bank Periodical Economic Updates April 2001: 13 cited in <http://www.textiletoday.com.bd/magazine/print/619>.

<sup>7</sup> See; in Debapriya Bhattacharya, (2013), Bangladesh 2013: Assessing Economic Implications of the Present Political Shocks op. cit.;



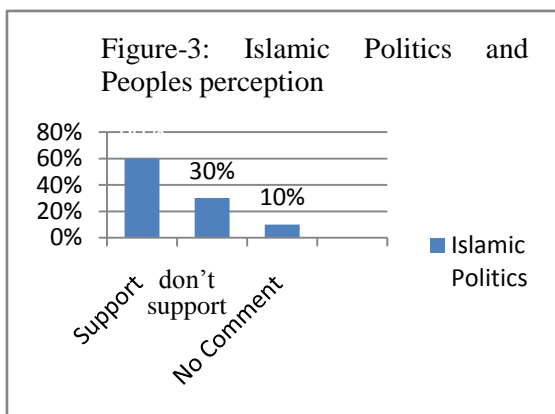
Figure-2: Trend of Hartal in the Politics of Bangladesh and public opinion.



Explanation: Figure-2 shows that 40% people support the current trend of Hartal and rest 60% people disagree with the trend of hartal. Majority people think it is negative for the overall development of the country. For that reason, they think it should be banned.

### Controversy over Islamic Politics:

After the independence of Bangladesh Islamic politics or religious based politics was banned by the Mujib Government. But after the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, President Ziaur Rahman permitted the multiparty democratic system including religious based politics. But since the inception of the birth of Bangladesh, the debate over Islamic Politic exists. One segment of the population raised their voice for the ban on Islamic Politics but other segment raised their voice for the inherent rights of religious based politics. Now our study found that 60% people support the religious based politics, 30% don't support and rest 10% did not agree to comment on this matter.



Description: Figure-3 shows that 60% people support the existence of Islamic politics and 30% people don't support it. Another 10% did no comment on this issue.

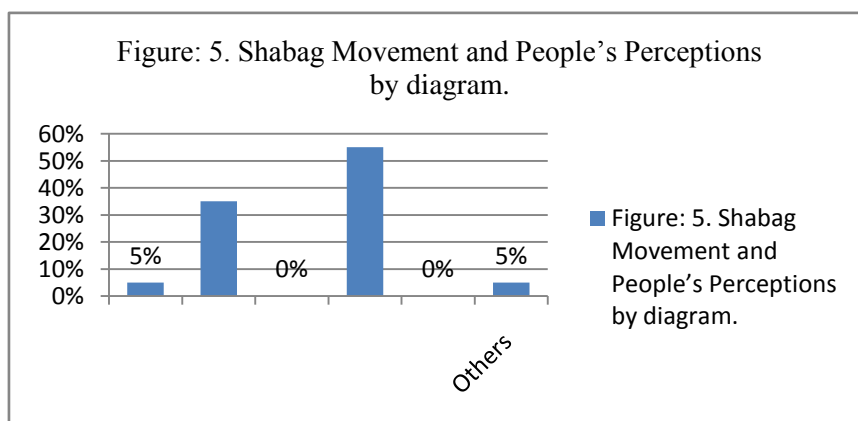
### Shahbag Movement

Shahbag Movemnt firstly started at the 1<sup>st</sup> week of February 3013 for the demand of capital punishment for war criminals who committed crimes against humanity in 1971. But latter the movement demanded the ban on Islamic Politics including the Ban on Jamat-e-Islami and its student wing Islami Chatra Shibir. Later their demands also included the confiscation of the property of Jamat led economic institutions and ban some print and electronic media. The main opposition BNP claimed that Shabag Movement is being operating by the government and it's ally leftist organizations and demanded its abolition. And also claimed that

government arranged a drama for their benefit and using its student wing Chatra League to implement their agenda. The Opposition leader Khaleda Zia claimed at her press briefing, that the Shabag Movement made a confrontation between Islam and Liberation war and alleged the government for such activities. On the other hand the pro-supporter of Shabag movement claimed that it is the second freedom movement after 1971 and termed as “Gono-Jagoron” or mass-emergence. According to them, this movement really bears the symbol and inspiration of the Liberation war and unified the nation under the umbrella of the feelings of independence. Furthermore, someone argued that, the rise of Hefajat-e-Islam as another movement which demanded capital punishment and enactment of law for the insult of religion and demanded immediate arrest of so-called atheist, anti-islamic atheist bloggers who insulted islam and its prophet and Almighty God (Allah). Some respondent think that it was arranged by the government sponsorship for popular acceptance of the capital punishment for the convicted at ICT. For example 5% people think its contributing for better politics. 35% people said that it created division in the politics of Bangladesh and 55% people said government is trying ensuring their benefit from this movement. Other 5% said it is arranged to make pressure on ICT for capital punishment for the convicted criminals. (Figure 4)

Figure-4: Shabag Movement and People’s Perceptions by table.

Contributing for Better Politics	Created Division in Bangladesh Politics	Rise of Hefajat-e-Islam as another movement	Government is trying to ensure their benefit	Ensuring Opposition Parties Interest	Others (to create pressure on ICT for Capital Punishment arranged by government to get popular Support)	Total
1	7	0	11	0	1	20
5%	35%	0%	55%	0%	5%	100%



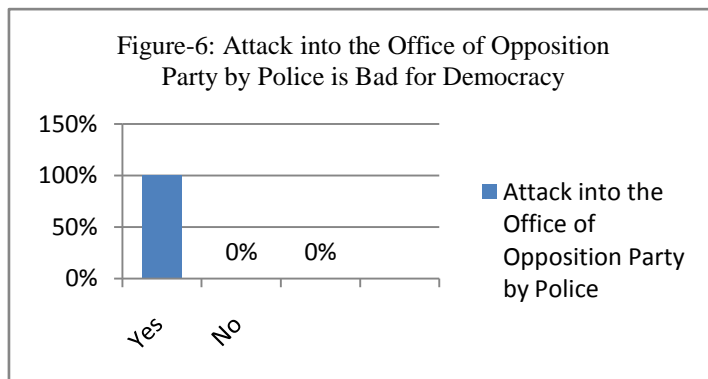
Description: Figure 5- shows that 5% people said Shabag Movement is contributing for better politics in Bangladesh. 35% people said it has created division

in the politics of Bangladesh. 55% people said that government is trying to ensure their benefit by using this movement. 5% people said that the

movement has been arranged to create pressure on ICT for the capital punishment of the convicted alleged personnel.

### **Police Raid into the Central Office of the main Opposition Party BNP and Democracy**

Police on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2013 raided at the central office of main opposition party BNP and arrested about 150 leaders including its Secretary General Mirja Fakhurul Islam Almagir. Such raid by law enforcing agencies into the central political office of opposition condemned by several human rights organizations and civil society personnel. General people of Bangladesh did not take it easily and expressed negative opinion for such incident and termed it conflicting and alarming and disimilar with the culture of democracy. In conducting the research 100% people said that the raid or attack by police into the central office of BNP is bad for democracy.

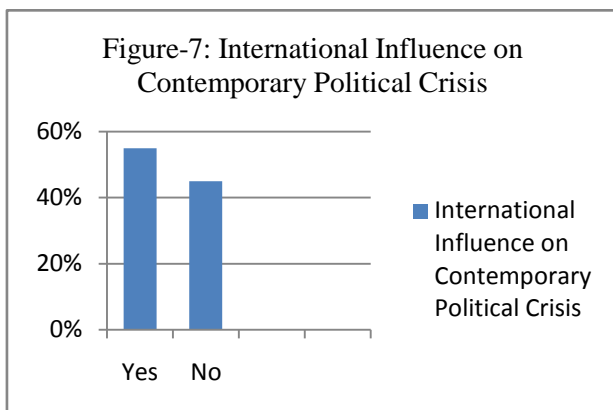


Explanation: Figure -6 shows that 100% people responded that the attack or raid by police into the central office of main opposition party BNP is bad for the democracy of Bangladesh.

### **International Influence on Contemporary Political Crisis**

In this age of globalization international influence into the internal matter of Bangladesh are not out of concern of general people. They think or feel about the international influence in the political crisis of Bangladesh. Some respondents states that neighboring countries like India want to achieve its benefit by using this political crisis and some people said some countries don't want the wellbeing of Bangladesh. Furthermore to prove Bangladesh as failed states and to make a negative image at international arena some countries may influence in the contemporary political crisis of Bangladesh. Our study states that 55% people recognized about the international influence in contemporary crisis and 45% people don't think so. Now the supporters of international influence states that neighboring and some states influencing the Shahbag movement and want its victory like the President Pranab Mukharji of India. Some Middle Eastern or Arab countries statement on ICT like the Chief of Brotherhood of Egypt asked to release the Jamat-e-Islami leader's from the conviction including the ruling party of Tunisia and

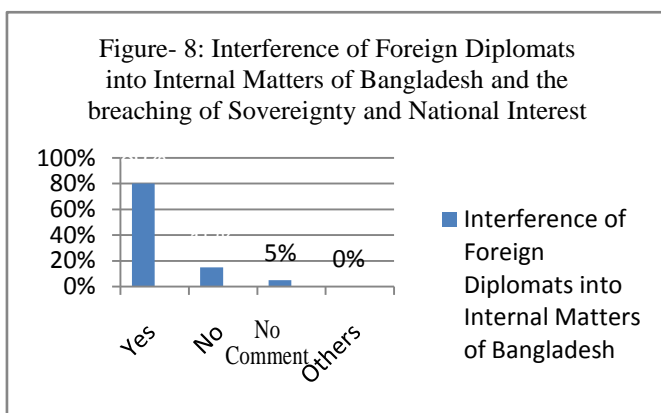
Turkey. Many international Human Rights organizations are influencing the political crisis of Bangladesh at present time by their statement and report.



Description: Figure-7: 55% people said about the international influence into the current political crisis in Bangladesh. Another 45% people don't think and believe about the international influence in the internal political crisis of Bangladesh.

### Interference of Foreign Diplomats into Internal Matters of Bangladesh

The interference of foreign diplomat into the internal matters in terms of political crisis is a general phenomenon for the country like Bangladesh. But most of the people said that the interference of foreign diplomats into the internal matters of Bangladesh is a threat for the sovereignty and independence of Bangladesh. But some people said that the interference of foreign diplomats will not threaten the sovereignty and national interest of Bangladesh if their interference resolves the crisis. Our research shows that 80% said that the interference of foreign diplomats is a threat for sovereignty and national of Bangladesh but another 15% don't think so. 5% people did not make any comment on the issue.

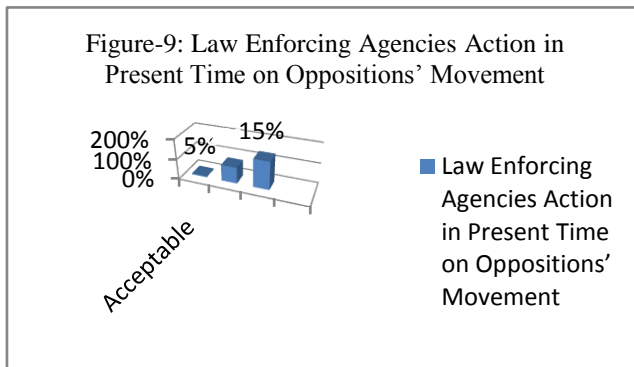


Explanation: Figure-8 shows that the 80% people said that interference of foreign diplomats is breaching the sovereignty and national interest of Bangladesh and 15% people did not think so. 5% people did not make any comment.

### Law Enforcing Agencies Action on Oppositions' Movement

In present time the opposition movements have been responded by the government oppression and suppression by using the law enforcing agencies. Police have been indiscriminately attacking on the opposition movement using tear gas, rubber bullet, light weapons and fire, pepper spray, mass arrest and imprisonment and so forth. The role of police has

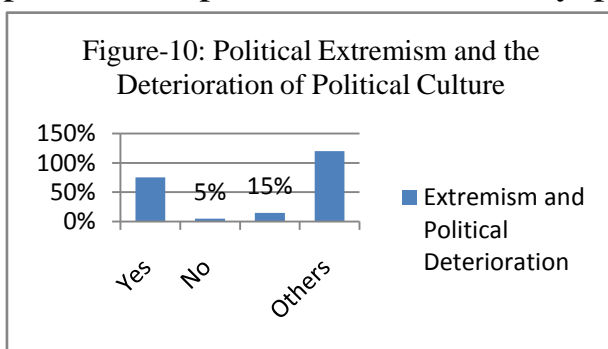
been severely criticized by opposition parties and termed police as the “Awami-Force” like Rokkhi Bahini. But government and police alleged that police is using force in terms of necessity to save their lives and the property of people and termed the police action as “legal and appropriate”. Many human rights organizations including Human Rights Watch have criticized the role of law enforcing agencies and raised questions about their neutrality. Our study shows that 80% people said that the police action in present time to suppress the opposition movement is not at all acceptable and 5 percent people said it as acceptable and 15% did not comment.



Explanation: Figure-9 shows that the action of law enforcing agencies at the opposition movement is unacceptable to 80% people and acceptable to 5% people. Further the 15% people did not make any comment on this issue.

### Extremism in Politics and Deterioration of Democratic Culture

The term ‘Consensus’, ‘compromise’, ‘negotiation’, ‘mediation’ all has been adjusted with democratic culture and being used in terms of crisis or controversial issue. The culture of sacrifice has been lost from the democratic culture of Bangladesh. There is no word of tolerance to the political parties of Bangladesh. The ‘clash of power’ and ‘greed for power’ made them blind and have been forgotten the condition of general people of Bangladesh. Such extreme position and practice of extremism by political parties certainly is deteriorating the democratic political culture of Bangladesh. In such circumstances the ruin of democracy is nearer to destruction. Our study states that 75% people said that the practice of political extremism by political parties will deteriorate the



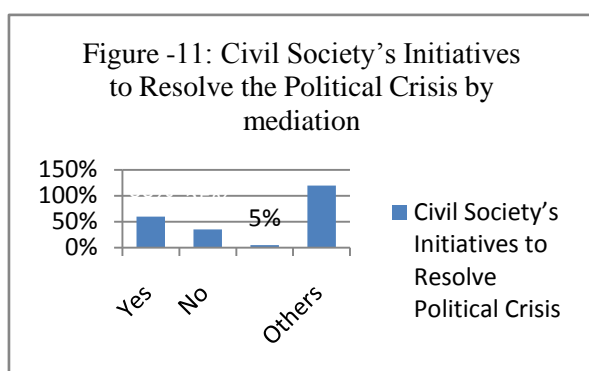
democratic political culture of Bangladesh.

Explanation: Figure 10 shows that 75% people said that the practice of extremism by political parties will deteriorate the democratic political culture of Bangladesh and 5% did not think

so. Another 15% people did not make any comment on this issue.

## Mediation by the Civil Society and the Resolution of Present Political Crisis:

When conflict is explicit the question of resolution comes to forefront. Now to understand political conflict and its management or resolution we have to know what conflict is. There are multiple definitions of conflict including “perceived differences in interests, views, or goals opposing preference”<sup>8</sup> or “a belief that parties current aspirations cannot be achieved simultaneously”,<sup>9</sup> and the process which begins when one party perceives that another has frustrate, some concern of theirs.”<sup>10</sup> Thus in all forms an explicit conflict prevails in Bangladesh between major political parties. Therefore, civil society organizations like Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), Citizen for Good Governance (SHUJAN) and Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) have expressed their opinion and formula to reach at a consensus to resolve the crisis and invited the political parties to agree on these formulas. But ruling party rejected stubbornly and termed these as conspiracy against them to keep them out of election. In such a situation general people think that civil society organizations can take the initiatives of mediation to resolve the problem between major political parties and can help to resolve the controversial dispute and crisis of Bangladesh at present time. Our study shows that majority percent (60%) people think that civil society can take initiatives to resolve the current political crisis by mediating among major political parties. But more than 35% people don’t think so and expressed different views that civil society’s is not able to solve the dispute and present crisis by mediating between major political parties or alliance.



Explanation: Figure-11 shows that 60% people said that civil society can take effective role to solve the political crisis by mediating among major political parties and 35% people think Civil Society is not able to resolve the difference between political parties and is not possible for them and the rest 5%

did not make any comment.

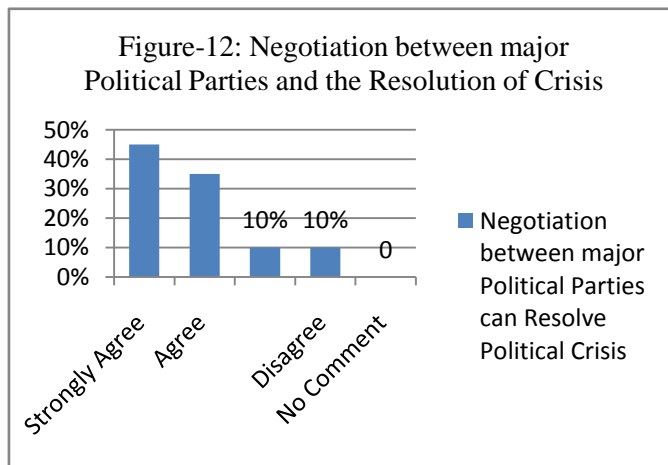
<sup>8</sup> Carneval, P.J., & Pruitt, D.G. (1992), Negotiation and Mediation. Annual Review of Psychology, 43 cited in Daniel J. Christie, Richard v. Wagner, Deborah Dunnan Winter, (2001), *op. cit.p. 194*.

<sup>9</sup> Rubin, J. Z. , & Pruitt, D.G. & Kim, S.H. Social Conflict; Escalation, stalement and settlement (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). New York. McGraw-Hill. Cited in Daniel J. Christie, Richard v. Wagner, Deborah Dunnan Winter, (2001), *op. cit.p. 194*.

<sup>10</sup> Daniel J. Christie, Richard v. Wagner, Deborah Dunnan Winter, (2001), *op. cit.p. 194*

## Negotiation between major Political Parties and the Resolution of Political Crisis

There are a lot of examples of internal conflict resolution through negotiation between disputing parties in whole over the **world, Ireland is one of the earlier example.**<sup>11</sup> So the general people of Bangladesh believe that the negotiation between major political parties of Bangladesh could resolve the current political crisis of Bangladesh. As the dispute is solely political, so the consensus between political parties through negotiation is the easy way of resolution the contemporary crisis. Our study states that majority percent people (45%) strongly and 35% generally believe that negotiation between major political parties could resolve the crisis.



Explanation: Figure-12 shows that 45% people strongly and 35% people generally agree with the statement that negotiation between major political parties could resolve the current political crisis of Bangladesh. On the other hand 10% people strongly disagree and another 10% generally disagree with the

statement that negotiation between political parties can resolve the political crisis of Bangladesh in present time. Here the figure shows that 80% people think negotiation among major political parties is the appropriate way to resolve the dispute and crisis of Bangladesh.

### Conclusion

The above analysis clearly delineates the popular perceptions and opinion of general inhabitants of Bangladesh on key political and national issues, which were prevalent in 2013. Most of the respondents state that violence against religious minorities before and after national elections have direct political affiliations. Outrageous violence against them including firing on their shelters and torn prayer houses like temples merely waged to gain political interests. They are being used as trum-card for national elections. Political parties of the country couldn't avoid their responsibilities to ensure their protection. Furthermore, hartals have

<sup>11</sup> See, Daniel J. Christie, Richard v. Wagner, Deborah Dunnan Winter, (2001), *Peace, Conflict and Violence, Peace Psychology for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Prentice-Hall, Inc, New Jersey.

immense economic, social and political repercussions on the nation. It impedes overall national development of the country and discourages Foreign Direct Investment. Education and life of general people become stagnant and financial institutions reach a position likely to collapse. Most of the respondents don't support violent hartal and opined for its ban. Another issue is the rise of Sahbag Movement which is popularly known as Gono-Jagoron Mancha. The movement was assembled for the demand of capital punishment of convicted Jamat-e-Islami leaders at ICT and for the abolition of religious based politics in Bangladesh including other important issues. General people opined that the movement was largely sponsored by the incumbent government and created more divisions across the nations. On the contrary, the emergence of the Hehajat-e-Islam, a religious based platform was formed to counter the atheist bloggers, basically the key activists of Gono-Jagoron Mancha, some of them were allegedly involved in writing against Islam and its prophet. The fundamentalist platform waged a large procession in the capital city and demanded implementation of its thirteen point's demands including the capital punishments of atheist's bloggers who writes against Islam and the imposition of Shariah law. General people said that Sahbag Movement largely contributed to the rise of such fundamentalist force in the country.

Excessive use of force to overrule the opposition alliances movement for the restoration of care-taker government is direct violation of democratic norms. Most of the people opined for the restoration for interim non-partisan government to hold national elections. Simultaneously, they condemn the use of violence by political parties to achieve their political goals. In addition, police raid at the central office of BNP and arresting its Secretary-General was glaring breaches of political norms.

Finally, people suggested to a process of peaceful solution of political disputes. The most viable option is the negotiated settlement. But, they also believe that civil society can play vital role to resolve the crisis. Though, incumbent shows very cynic view towards the integrity of civil society, but opposition shows reverence and trust on the group. Moreover, people said external interferences certainly breach the national sovereignty and interest. But, United Nations can take very effective role to settle the disputes through non-amicable principles. In essence, the problems are internal and national. Most of the people agreed that internal solution through negotiated settlement among political parties is the viable option to resolve crisis.