

# THE WAYS TO ENSURE SOUND STUDENT POLITICS: A BANGLADESH PERSPECTIVE

MD YASIR ARAFAT<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>UG Student, Department of Political Science, University of Rajshahi. University of Rajshahi, BANGLADESH.

## ABSTRACT

*Bangladesh is a developing nation as well as a democratic state. The people of young generation in every particular country of the earth play the most pivotal role on the most influential issues of the state. Bangladesh is not different from it. From the history of liberation till now, the students are playing the most significant role on politics at the perspective of Bangladesh. But, the way the term "Politics" is exercised, this word just has lost its credibility on the basis of student politics in Bangladesh. They get involved into ruling or opposing political parties with a view to looting at name of protecting the party interests that results in clashes, killings and political instability. Actually, the ruling party gets dominance on the every educational institutions of state, suppressing other political parties which has impact on distorting the democratic principles. This research paper is based on logical explanation of the situations of student politics in Bangladesh, an estimated figure on when they get into politics and why and what is the way to ensure sound student politics in Bangladesh.*

**KEYWORDS :** Student Politics, Party Politics, Model Government, Sound Student Politics.

## INTRODUCTION

Student politics is a buzzword in Bangladesh for various aspects. But the aspects are negative in almost every cases. Though, the importance of the students and their engagement in the movements related to the liberation of Bangladesh can not be denied, but the contemporary scenario is totally different. Educational institutions are failing to ensure quality education for the students as well as they are unable to keep the students in touch of proper education, to make them efficient in a certain field or to ensure their career opportunities. Again, the political pressure from the ruling party is apparent on the educational institutions to control and implement their interests. As a result, most of students are engaging with politics so that they can be specialized by the ruling party and can develop the pathway of a secured job through nepotism and corruption influenced by the ruling party's leaders. But there is hope as well. Educational institutions can ensure sound student politics to be concerned about political exercises in a disciplined way.

## CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL SITUATIONS

Contemporary student politics in Bangladesh is highly significant yet teeming with different significant challenges. Historically, student politics has played a crucial role in the country's key political movements such as the Liberation War and the removal of military dictatorship in the 1990s. There's no doubt that student organizations continue to be very influential in upholding for justice and democracy. Moreover, in recent times,

*1: Corresponding Author*

student politics has become increasingly involved with anomalies, violence, corruption, and unethical behavior. Student wings of major political parties, particularly the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), have been criticized for their involvement in violent activities, extortion, and controlling campus amenities through intimidation and force. These practices have led to a fearful environment on campuses, where students feel pressured to align with ruling party politics to avoid repercussions. The current situation of student politics is totally related to gain the political interest of a certain party by suppressing them, to make it an economic and earning sector, to establish politics as the most profitable organization. Now, the general students in Bangladesh fear all kind of political organizations for their dominating and vicious activities. Actually, it has been found that the students, in the universities, engage with party politics, are the actual dropouts or painfully surviving at their academic life. There is a chain of command in the every political units of the universities where a student has to suffer a lot at their beginning for the never ending pressures from the political leaders or seniors of that party. It brutally hampers their educational life and career. Moreover, the frustrated political leaders or members do something terrible acts those come at the newspapers everyday. In 2009, there were at least 141 student violence in different higher institutions which caused 3 students died and 1463 injured. Among 141clashes 57 were committed due to intra conflict of the student wing of the ruling party, 22 were between Chhatra League and Chhatra Shibir, 7 between Chhatra Dal and Chhatra League and the rest

incidents were held among other organizations and student-police conflict. During the time between January 2009 to June 2010, at least 9 students were killed in different institutions. During this period 4 universities including Rajshahi And Comilla universities had to be closed for 287 days. In July – August 2010 more than one thousand violence were occurred in different Institutions. At least 10 students were killed in these incidents. Only in the Jahangirnagar University about 60 clashes were held within 19 months. The clashes and anomalies are not over yet. In recent time, a leader of a major political party at the Jahangirnagar University has raped a woman by calling the woman with her husband in the university area. Recently in 2024, Dr. Sultan Mahmud Rana, a professor of the University of Rajshahi has shown the control over halls of that university by the Chhatraleague. Establishing the supremacy in the campuses, hall occupation, extortion, tender manipulation, admission trade are the major causes for student violence. The major reasons for this type of perverted political exercises are intra party conflict, intolerant attitude towards opposite organizations, monetary affairs and supremacy over the institution, irresponsible role of the policy-makers, formulation of the committees of political parties irregularly and undemocratically, negligence of the authority of universities, lack of good will, contradictory teachers’ politics, central control over the institutions etc. Despite these issues, student politics remains a vital platform for grooming future leaders and providing young people with experience in democratic engagement and civic responsibilities. Some student organizations have also demonstrated their capacity for positive impact, such as the BCL’s efforts to assist communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. The debate over the role of student politics is ongoing, with some advocating for campuses free from political influence to ensure a safer and more focused academic environment. This debate was highlighted by recent events at the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), where the High Court overturned a ban on political groups, raising concerns about potential increases in campus violence. Overall, while student politics in Bangladesh faces significant challenges, it continues to be an essential part of the nation’s political landscape, offering both opportunities and obstacles for the country’s future leaders.

**PERCENTAGE OF POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT**

The students mostly join at any political party at the time of securing the undergraduate degrees at the national or public universities. Moreover, it happens for having a sit of living at the halls at university, poverty or rather for gaining certain interests. In fact, the engagement in the political parties starts from the high school level for local pressure, impact of other friends, curiosity for student politics, allurements by the political members. The estimated engagement of students in

political parties at their different age is given below from the total participation in party politics:

Institution	Age	Percentage
High School	14-17	10%
College	17-20	18%
University	20-26	72%

**MAJOR DISADVANTAGES**

Though, the parties try to show their diligence and patriotism by several activities and functions, but these are nothing against the chaos they create. Moreover, these are nominal and only for creating a good impression on the public. But, the internal anomalies are known to each and every people of Bangladesh. A study on 100 people of Bangladesh by asking a common question that is:

“What is your perception on the student politics of Bangladesh?”

There was three major options there including:

- Very emerging
- I fear
- Rather not answer.

The result of that study is given below on percentage basis:

Percentage of People	Answers
60%	I Fear
15%	Very Emerging
25%	Rather Not Answer

The results from those people are taken anonymously and they were quite assured that their names will never be revealed though 25% people did not answer. It is also a result of political fear in case of Bangladesh. A research survey shows that 91% of the respondents (students, guardians, and teachers) opined that student teacher politics should not exist. About 93% of the respondents were of opinion that subservient party politics of teachers and students should be stopped. Furthermore, the prime concern is regarding on the constraint as a result from the student politics, that was placed by the unrest and other inevitable circumstances in which it has deteriorated the quality of education. The whole political program, activities, actions and committees are formulated by the political units of University of Dhaka, which control the other universities and institutions. As it is mentioned before that to do politics at student level requires much time and one has to tolerate many things by the political leaders and the seniors. As a result, it hampers the educational and career opportunities of a student. Moreover, at the level of higher education, it is necessary to know more about sound and effective politics and then to implement them whereas a student involved in student politics stays far, far away from his academic education. Finally, it makes a student forget to be worthy for his

family, society and nation rather impulses to do anything illegally and forcefully. Another anomaly is related to the appointment of the highest ranked officials and administrators in the universities. At present, it has become our culture that V.C., Pro-V.C. and other members of the important bodies are appointed considering their activities in the ruling party supporter group.

### WAYS TO ENSURE SOUND STUDENT POLITICS

There is certainly necessity of student politics for the demand of political awareness and competent leadership. But for student politics, it is necessary to create such an environment from where students can speak out against corruption, nepotism and other injustices and prepare to run the country with competent and just leadership. That is why politics needs to be practiced within a certain framework and law. There are certain conditions for implementing that healthy stream of student politics. The conditions are as follows:

#### 1. Administrative Controls:

All political practices should be done under the strict control of educational institutions. As in various clubs or organizations (e.g.: Model United Nations).

#### 2. Selection and Training:

Selection of members of political practice based on some determinants related to leadership qualities like ideological and mental status test, public speaking, communication skills and some other basic qualities. If someone has a strong desire, he should be provided training in that regard. If possible, it is better to start a course on politics.

#### 3. Practicing Anonymous Politics:

Ideological political parties should be formed without practicing the politics of any party in power or opposition (e.g.: justice party, socialist party, progressive party, conservative party, etc.) so that political conflict does not arise. Later, members can join political parties or form new political parties according to their choice and conscience.

#### 4. Model Government Formation:

They should be given the opportunity to form governments for a fixed term by holding regular debates, discussions and appropriate elections where they exercise powers similar to the Model United Nations under the supervision of institutions.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Members of successful governments or successful opposition parties should be recognized by certificates or other

means so that they can later be employed in the national political arena.

5. Above all, all decisions should be taken based on the principles of transparency, accountability, justice, rule of law, absolute tolerance etc.
6. The UGC and the commission of national universities and other institutions must enact laws and policies for the controlled, sound and effective exercise of student politics in Bangladesh

Ensuring sound student politics in Bangladesh involves creating a robust regulatory framework with clear guidelines and a code of conduct for student political activities. This framework should promote ethical behavior and hold students accountable for their actions. Encouraging a non-partisan approach is crucial, where student organizations focus on campus-specific issues rather than national political agendas, limiting the involvement of national political parties in student politics to ensure autonomy. Leadership training is essential, offering workshops, seminars, and mentorship programs to equip student leaders with the skills needed for ethical governance and effective leadership. Conflict resolution mechanisms should be established, including mediation services and dialogue forums, to peacefully resolve disputes among student groups and foster a culture of cooperation and understanding. Democratic processes must be upheld through transparent and fair elections, with independent oversight to prevent malpractice. Voter education campaigns are necessary to ensure students are informed and engaged participants in the electoral process. Accountability and oversight can be maintained by establishing independent bodies to monitor student organizations and conduct regular audits of their activities and finances. Inclusivity and representation are key, promoting the participation of students from diverse backgrounds, including marginalized groups, to ensure equal opportunities for all. Balancing academic responsibilities with political engagement is vital, with support services available to help student leaders manage their roles effectively. Civic engagement programs should be developed to involve students in community service and foster a sense of social responsibility. Civic education can be incorporated into the curriculum to teach students about their rights, responsibilities, and the importance of active citizenship. Collaboration with university authorities is also important, fostering partnerships to address common concerns and improve campus life. Regular meetings between student representatives and university officials can help resolve issues collaboratively, ensuring a more positive and constructive environment for student politics. At present the government must be promise-bound to minimize the criminalized activities of student politics. To check the terrorist, government and police administration must play neutral and effective role. Government

agencies must do their duties sincerely without any discrimination whether terrorists are belonging to ruling party or oppositions. If the practice of student politics is so necessary, it should not be suppressed by any particular party interest. I must be carried out in a healthy manner through further additions and subtractions of these principles and conditions. If it is not implemented, then it should be understood that no one is concerned about political awareness, spread of political education, establishment of justice in the country, proper implementation of democracy, etc. The headache is only about party interests. University is an autonomous institution ( There are four in Bangladesh). Establishing a healthy stream of student politics there is very possible if the administration wants it. Otherwise, it is only a nominally autonomous institution and the country is a nominally democratic state.

### CONCLUSION

The students are the emerging, significant and most vital part for the development of a certain nation. It is not different in case of Bangladesh as well. It is a densely populated country with the young generation at the peak of the percentage of the population. But, this stigma named “Student Politics” is hindrance to educational, developmental and socio-economic improvement of this country as it is not exercised in a just and proper democratic manner. So, it is high time to take some appropriate initiatives to bring structural and functional changes in this body. The steps are provided above, but the basic thing to do is to control it legally and make it an effective and non-violent organization. Students are tend to curiosity and unknowns. If they are provided with actual and proper democratic and political knowledge and practices through a disciplined and organized way, the state will have a peaceful and developing environment which will allow efficient leadership, better governance and continuous development. No one was harmed while doing this research. The information taken by the participants are confidential and it has their consent. It is also

declared by them to not mention their names in any case. The research article is based on data collection from the 100 participants, an estimated figure of the participant in student politics at their different age. Finally, the article reveals possible ways to ensure effective and sound student politics in the perspective of Bangladesh.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am indebted to the true and bold work of Md. Enayet Ullah Patwary, Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Chittagong, Chittagong-4331, Bangladesh and Dr. Sultan Mahmud Rana, Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Rajshahi, Rajshahi-6205, Bangladesh.

### REFERENCES

- Akhter, Muhammd Yeahia Akhter, *Corruption in Public Universities: Nature and Remedies*, A.H. Development Publishing House, Dhaka, 2008, P, 22.
- Alam, Gazi Mahbubul: *National development and student politics in Bangladesh*.
- Collected from features of the Daily Prothom Alo, the Samokal, the Naya Diganta, the Sangbad).
- Khaborer Kagoj*, 29 May, 2024.
- Packer, Helen: *Bangladeshi students urge end to violent campus politics*, Times Higher Education.
- Patwary, Md. Enayet Ullah: *Recent trends of student politics of Bangladesh*.
- The daily Jugantor*, 23 March, 2010.
- The Daily Star*, 4 February, 2024.
- The Janakantha*, 23 September, 2010.
- The Naya Diganta*, 22 July, 2010.