

The Role Of Emerging Political Parties In Restoration Of Bangladesh Democracy: Insights From 2009-2024 Perspective

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Abstract: *This research has been conducted to find out the role of emerging political parties challenging the de facto authoritarian rule and also the dominance of the bi-polar political structure like Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and Bangladesh Awami League. Here the emerging parties have been considered on the basis of rise and advance of the new parties, their political activities, staging protests, developing narrative among the people and creating the anti-incumbency psyche against the ruling Bangladesh Awami League (BAL) who have been in power since December 29, 2009 until the downing of August 5, 2024. Only four parties have been considered in this case namely Gono Odhikar Parisad, Amar Bangladesh (AB) Party, Gono Samhati Andolon and Nagorik Oikko as because initially those parties were acting like political forces rather than political parties. Organizationally these parties are not in colossal size but they have paved the way to demonstrate signficatory argumenta discourse against the AL-led authoritarian rule. It is not a denial argument that other parties have no contributions to fall of authoritarian rule but admitting those huge contribution of the parties it is only to endeavor to address the role and contribution of these targeted four parties. This article delivers the ingenious insights into the political strife and transitional dynamics of democracy in Bangladesh politics which offers future studies of country's political unrest and political reformation.*

Key Words— *emerging parties; political narrative; despotic rule; transition; strife; restoration.*

INTRODUCTION

Democracy in Bangladesh has been described in many features by conflict and turbulence, splitting, polarization and alliance process in election period. The country has experienced military rule, authoritarian regimes, short-termed democratic starting, non-party caretaker government as well as interim government. The flowing journey and democratic revival of democracy started in the early 1990s with the initiation of non-party care-taker government system. This newly-introduced government ensured a free, fair and internally acclaimed electoral process for the first time in Bangladesh after the independence where one of big parties Bangladesh Nationalist Party had been able to secure seats in the parliament to form the government in 1991. Another archival Bangladesh Awami League (BAL) ascended the main opposition party in the parliament. However, BAL came to power in 2009 through many political upheavals and continued its term until the fall of Augus 5, 2024. The country had witnessed a systematic and coordinated decay of democratic norms and practice that led to authoritarian or hybrid regime (Freedom House, 2023; Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2018). Although BAL throned in power through a multi-party participatory election under Army-backed Fakhruddin Ahmed interim government in 2009, the successive general parliamentary elections were held under the incumbent government headed by Sheikh Hasina abolishing the provision of the caretaker government system from the constitution. This is how she had been able to conduct the

three successive general elections under her premiership and finished her terms more than 15 years from 2009-2024. The opposition political activities, behaves, voice of dissents, role of free media and independence of judiciary had been diminished leading to the text book example of authoritarianism in the country. In the discourse of political philosophy authoritarianism denotes to a political process where state powers are centralized in the hands of few elites, amassing the wealth and assets to the hands of few oligarchs and the civic rights are awfully curtailed by the law-enforcing agencies by introducing some draconian laws. Henceforth, the AL government enacted Digital Security Act (DSA-2018) and ICT Act amendments which curtailed the freedom of mass media, tapped the social media and denied the civil liberties in the real political fields and social media platforms. The above discussion about authoritarian rule of Awami League was focused from the classical study perspective. Besides, a significant number of studies and critical analysis were developed over the last decades around the world in different socio-religious and political aspects including Bangladesh as a case (Mostofa & Subedi, 2020; Jackman, 2020; Mostofa, 2024; Sheikh & Ahmed, 2019; Hossain, 2020; Kukreja, 2008; Riaz 2024; Zaman, 2022; Hossain, 2024; Miaji & Islam, 2023; Blair, 2020). Those studies, however, lacks comprehensive and systematic analysis about Sheikh Hasina's entire journey of rule from 2009-2024, and this study strongly investigates the emergence new political party challenging the incumbent party of Awami League.

Focusing the anti-reservation movement in government service which is also popularly known quota reform movement and safe road movement Jackman (2020) interprets how a social and non-political movement might be the threat to an authoritarian government. Student movements, he continues, have a tremendous role shaping the political history. It was under the banner of *Bangladesh Sadharon Chhatra Odhikar Songrokkhon Parishad* (Bangladesh General Students' Right Conservation Council) where general students and job seekers staged demonstration demanding of the existing quota system in government recruitment tests at Shahbagh and Dhaka University areas on April 8, 2018. Several hundreds of demonstrators halted the traffic movement there as part of their nationwide demonstration to further push the government to their five demands (Fahim, 2018). After spreading countrywide protest and demonstration the government launched massive arrest, student wing of BAL – Chatra League activists continued attacks on general students, female students indiscriminately as the pro-government academicians, intellectuals narrated the movement was against the government. On the other hand, right activists, human right organizations expressed their concerns for exercising extra-force by police and Chatra League. The Embassy of Germany, USA, Norway, Switzerland and few other countries in Dhaka expressed their concerns over the 'brutal attacks' on peaceful demonstration of the quota reform protesters (2024, December 20). The main opposition party BNP was forced to perform their politics either in their party office or in the press conference due to huge control of the law enforcing agencies. They were not given enough space in the political field while other small emerging party like Amar Bangladesh (AB) Party, Nagorik Oikko, Gonosamhati Andolon and Gono Odhikar Parishad were able to ensure their shares through the political activities. AL government wanted to take those parties forefront instead of BNP-Jama'at ally so that it might be presented that political rights prevailed in the country. Gono Odhikar Parishad, initially Chatra Odhikar Parishad pioneered quota reform movements in 2018. AB Party, Gonosamhati Andolon and Nagorik Oikko had performed their activities on the streets, avenues or in other premises. They built narrative and political discourse that challenged the AL government about their ruling legitimacy among the people. These emerging parties were consistently presenting the autocratic control and misrule before their political audience by holding street programs, TV talk-shows, seminar-symposiums, rallies and influencing the people by social media. The common people were much more aware of the voting rights that were massively rigged and manipulated which was responsible to destroy confidence and credibility of the state institutions. The aforesaid parties were successfully describing the electoral irregularities in their speeches and in campaigns. Moreover, they presented new form of political model instead of traditional opposition against the ruling authority. They were focusing about daily life issues of the city dwellers, policy debates, micro- and macro-economic affairs, citizen rights and other people-centric issues. They were bringing a

new topic of new settlement in politics that would curb the old and traditional practice of politics. Those parties bear more or less the Equality, Human Dignity and Social Justice slogan. The study will broadly analyze the role of the parties during the period and how they evaluate their roles and contributions to restore the democracy.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research design to examine the roles of emerging political parties and responses of restoring the democratic values and governance during this period of 2009-2024 in Bangladesh. The research investigates the nuanced interaction between incumbent AL government and aforementioned parties - two major actors - within the broader context of governance, authoritarianism and democratic transition. The study is based on KII and IDI approach that allow for in-depth analysis to understand the scenario. This approach helps comprehend the insights and dynamics of political behavior and interaction that were highly participatory of the girls, students and youth-folks.

We used both primary and secondary sources to formulate this article. For the primary sources, we used eminent media reports and coverages including dailies, magazines and televised broadcast from home and abroad that help to figure out the political milieu and activities during the period. Apart from the mainstream sources, we used academic articles, cites from the reference books, historical notes as well as pertinent theories referred for secondary sources to relate the state response and the increasing role of the very parties to meet the challenge.

RESULTS

We have used some specific theories like Theory of Revolution that examines the socio-economic and political conditions approached by those rising parties. How the people cherished the outline of the structural reforms of the state and politics. In this article, we have used another theory i.e., Theory of Resistance. By analyzing this theory, we have found how the people and the parties have responded against the systematic process of state repression and violence. This theory also investigates the model of public defiance and tapping to dissents by government mechanism. And finally, however, we have used the Theory of Authoritarianism review the political behaves and to understand the behavioral nature of the institutions.

Feature of Emerging Parties

Political parties are the main pillars to ensure the governance and to establish the rule of law. The research explores the

functions and programs of the registered parties although the targeted four parties were not offered registration by the Election Commission of Bangladesh. The parties had submitted their constitutions maintaining the, organizational capacities, terms and conditions of EC. Organizing the people though the ideology and the orientation of aware to the needs of the people reflecting their opinions too. "It is the most elaborate and comprehensive form in which public opinion is organized and effective" (Gettle, 2002). These parties focused specially on two aspects – one is political and other is public interest leaving the ongoing traditional party culture and the narratives to the allegiance of the leaderships. The new parties set comparatively new programs in their charters where they challenge dynasty politics process rather they advocate a fresh political settlement where public demands and opinions are highlighted. The state and administration will be the welfare apparatuses for the people– not be a coercive organ.

Political Parties' Movement Against The Regime

According to the Election Commission of Bangladesh, there are 53 registered political parties in Bangladesh. Of them, Amar Bangladesh Party (AB Party), Gono Odhikar Parishad, Nagarik Oikko and Gonosamhati Andolon have been selected for their contribution to the anti-regime movement and consensus building role among the people in political sphere.

Amar Bangladesh Party

Popularly known as AB Party was founded by former Jamaat-e-Islami and Chatra Shibir leaders in the year of 2020 (Ahmed, 2025). The new political party has denounced Jamaat's role during the Liberation War of 1971 and aims to unite Jamaat and Shibir activists who believed in the principles of Bangladesh's liberation (Dhaka Tribune, 2023). AB Party stands slogan Equality, Human Dignity and Social Justice differentiating the traditional political ideologies like religion and War of Liberation in 1971. Party General Secretary Asaduzzaman Fuad told those two features were the most sensitive issues in the politics of Bangladesh and the leaderships very consciously kept them aloof from the party slogan and emphasized the two are the most venerated assets in the life of Bengali people. So, they focused on the welfare programs of the citizens, their daily life-based problems and ensuring the service by the state (A. Fuad, personal communication, July 19 C.E., 2025). In the same interview, he stressed on building the new narrative for the new generation popularly known Gen Z. The AB Party is working with a seven-point agenda and aims to ensure national consensus, democratic and fundamental rights, increase motivation, research and development, flourish leadership, enact social and state reforms, and form a welfare state. He opined that the new generation were not interested in the bully of 1971 as because the Awami government made it a shield to continue their rule without any accountability and to divide the nation. Therefore, AB Party had not opposed against the government merely not for political ground rather they made political arguments and narratives that strengthened the

political consciousness among the youths including students, academicians, commoners, artists etc. They staged rally, seminar, discussion meetings, using social media campaign to spread their political discourse. In the latest development of students' protest After a move by the High Court Division (HC), when quota system revived in the government service on July 6, the AB Party had protested against the attempt (Ahmed, 2025). As an emerging political party, they have no big organizational strength across the country but they have successfully been able to mobilize the movement onwards through the narrative building process. Narratives are used as strategy in political processes, that is, intentionally or intuitively to further relatively specific goals (Groth, 2019). AB Party leaderships were continuously trying to develop the agenda.

Gono Odhikar Parishad

One of the other leading anti-autocratic parties is Gono Odhikar Parishad (People's Rights Council), a newly formed political party by the students headed by former vice-president of Dhaka University Central Student Union-DUCSU. This party came to the political spotlight for the first time in 2018, when a group of general students started a movement at the DU campus demanding reforms the reservation system (Quota) in the government under the leadership of Bangladesh Sadharon Chatra Odhikar Sonrookon Parishad. Contesting in the DUCSU election in 2019, the student organization focused on national politics and formed a political party named- Gono Odhikar Parishad in 2021. After successful victory in DUCSU, the party leadership applied for registration to the EC just moment before 12th national parliament election but was denied. After being rejected from the EC the GOP Boycotted the election and demanded fresh election the neutral caretaker government. The GOP is one of notable parties that played role curbing quota seats in the government service triggering other social forces into the anti-government movement. On the other hand, the students wing of GOP – Chhatra Odhikar Parishad leaders and activists were brutally beaten by Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) when they were organizing third death anniversary of BUET student Abrar Fahad who was beaten to death by some BCL men (Prothom Alo, 2022). This attack made GOP more popular among the students in different educational institutions as they concentrated their focus on the interest of the students. This is how they made their position in the political arena and they were a factor party during Hasina's period. In an interview, party leaders and activists said they did not perform their struggle alone on the street rather they had held joint movement with other like-minded parties in that period (R. Khan, personal communication, July 22, 2025).

Nagorik Oikko

Among the four parties Nagorik Oikko (NO) is comparatively old and it was established in 2012. Its founder is Mahmudur Rahman Manna, former organizational secretary of the Bangladesh Awami League. NO along with other parties

were observing demonstration and other political programs demanding fresh political reforms to avoid political stalemate in Hasina period. The main opposition BNP activists and partymen were tortured both administratively and by using judiciary. The police department used excessive forces against the opposition. The BNP and other opposition parties have declared hartals in two phases and blockades in six phases since the incident on 28 October. 'The leaders and activists of the Ganatantra Mancha brought out processions and held brief rallies in each of these programmes. The activists of Nagorik Oikko are also taking part in these programmes' (Sarkar, 2023). So, NO and its leaders including Ganatantra Mancha were always advocating political and state reforms. He stressed on law enforcing agencies specially the police forces. In a personal interview Manna said, "When (is) spoken about the reforms everything will come like media, bureaucracy, business class but I think right now specially after mass uprising reforms are highly essential for police department. Police were the most oppressing forces in this period although it is thought RAB was the most culprit force. RAB was a terrified force by its outfit and other appearances but Police committed many crossfires than that of RAB in AL-period. Police were immersed in bribery and corruption up to their throats and other forces are need to be reformed as well. And administration is still now working by taking bribery, so reforms are required for them and for political parties also. And what happens in a social revolution - the entire society stands with a consciousness. Here we have this consciousness misguided. The first consciousness was the consciousness of democracy (M.R. Manna, personal communication, July 15, 2025).

Ganosamhati Andolon

Ganosamhati Andolon (GA), a key-member party of Ganatantra Mancha – a joint opposition platform against AL-led regime was founded in November, 2015. The goals of the party are people's democratic state, sovereignty, non-communal Bangladesh desiring War of Independence in 1971 and develop the humanity and equity. The GA party proposed a new national charter to overcome ongoing political impasse and conflict. Experiencing last three national elections of 2014, 2018 and 2024, the party leadership expressed their concerns that people had no confidence on the key institutions like EC, law enforcing agencies, service providing agencies and even judiciary too. The party has also addressed some constitutional articles responsible for tyrannic structure specially from Article 70, 55 etc. The party placed their demands for permanent democratic structure. And to ensure that they pledged to reform Article 55 of the constitution with a view to securing the checks and balances among the legislature, executives and judiciary. One of the key sources of Unitary government system is Floor Crossing which is protected by Article 70. It is essential to establish a balanced power structure between President and Prime Minister. The GA expressed that all parties should be at one to ensure the rights of the citizens and ensure the justice of the persons who were forced disappearance, killing, crossfire and extra judicial

killings. The leaderships were very vocal about this point that reign of terror existed in the country (Ganosamhati Andolon Charter, 2015)

DISCUSSION

The journey of democracy in Bangladesh, after having experienced one-party rule from one party dominance and martial law administrations, starts in post-90 era when President General Hussein Muhammad Ershad's government stepped down on the face of massive protest and movement on December 6, 1990. It was a milestone achievement in the political history of Bangladesh as because Bangladesh's birth was against the tyranny, militocracy, oligarchy and bureaucratic governance of Pakistan. The legacy of establishing democratic governance in Bangladesh was cherished from the statehood in 1971 seceding from Pakistan with a view to emancipating from the clutch of Pakistani junta rulers. After 1971, establishing democracy and pluralism in politics, emancipation from economic and social injustice etc became loosened when Sheikh Mujibur Rahman adopted some economic and financial policies aligning to socialism like nationalization of the mills and factories, compulsory multi-purpose co-operatives in every village and banning all the political parties through the fourth amendment of the constitution and forming only one nation party Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League - BAKSAL (Moudud, 1983/2015). After the bloodshed coup d'état assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on August 15, 1975, Bangladesh experienced consecutive military rules under General Ziaur Rahman, later he became President from Chief Military Martial Law Administrator (CMLA) and formed a political party called Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), and General Hussein Muhammad Ershad who also formed a political party named Jatiya Party. Both Zia and Ershad adopted party-building strategy by breaking existing party to pick up support of factional groups or individuals (Rounaq, 2015). After successful effort of toppling the Ershad government, first free fair and credible 5th parliament under HM Ershad's succeeding acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed held on 27 February, 1991. BNP achieved 140 parliamentary seats while AL became main opposition party winning 88 seats in the parliament (HISTORICAL ARCHIVE OF PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION RESULTS, 1991). Political experts thanked to Begum Khaleda Zia's uncompromising battle against military rule for her victory. She was sworn in as the first woman Prime Minister of Bangladesh, on 20 March, heading a BNP Council of Ministers and thereupon announcing that the immediate task of her civilian Government would be the management and restoration of the ailing national economy. The fifth parliament dissolved on November 24, 1995. In the existing system narrated before we can find both presidential and parliamentary forms of government and the nature of opposition also differ due to a number of factors like structure of constitution, party system, socio-economic structural gap, electoral system etc (Hasanuzzaman, n.d., p. 13). By this process there exists rivalry politics in Bangladesh both in

parliament and in the street. There are many forms of opposition in the parliament like walking out from the session, parliament abstention program, bringing no-confidence motions etc. Those were overall confrontational politics during different regimes. The extra-constitutional role played by the opposition was not a one way phenomenon. The party in power was also criticized for its indifference to strengthening the nascent democratic system (Hasanuzzaman, n.d., p. 167). There was, however, a culture of criticism, accountability, confrontation and dissenting voices in politics. The power party maintained totalitarian practice while they attempt to control every aspect of public and private life. authoritarian regimes may allow some degree of individual autonomy, but they suppress political pluralism and constrain opposition participation (Hasan, 2025). Another study examines the digital mechanism of authoritarianism and how authoritarianism is being implemented through technical, legal, and extralegal means (Zaman, 2022). Recent past events—including the use of law enforcement for political suppression, increased attacks on opposition, monopolization of media narratives, and the weakening of civil society—further underscore the urgency of re-examining Bangladesh's political trajectory. Juan Linz's classic definition frames authoritarianism as a regime characterized by "limited political pluralism, political legitimacy based on emotion and fear, minimal political mobilization, and ill-defined but predictable limits on executive power" (Linz, 2000). Excessive use of administrative forces, manipulation the electoral process, repress opposition, filing suits on opposition activists are the façade of democratic fascism (Hasan, 2025).

Key Features of Democratic Erosion

Democratic erosion or decay is a process of systematic deteriorating the democratic institutions gradually, very often in the shape of legality and public order (Levitsky & Ziblatt, 2018). Some key indicators of democratic decay are mentioned.

- **Erosion of Electoral Integrity:** Lack of a level playing field, including manipulation of electoral mechanism such as malpractice of laws, targeted harassment of opposition candidates, and interference by security forces during elections (Norris, 2014).
- **Constitutional Manipulation:** Keeping the election in mind, the power party is often curious to amend some clauses of the constitution related to electoral process (e.g., withholding term limits, diminishing judicial independence).
- **Media Suppression:** Imposing direct or indirect control over mainstream and social media platforms, criminalizing dissent, and enacting repressive laws like digital security acts (DSA).

- **Judicial Capture:** Curtailing the independence of the judiciary through partisan appointments, intimidation, or so-called institutional reforms (Helmke, 2005).

In Bangladesh, almost all of the criteria are vividly occurring: from the constitutional abolition of the caretaker government system to the use of the Digital Security Act against journalists, academics, and activists (Riaz, 2016; Ahmed, 2022). These developments indicate a systematic move away from competitive pluralism toward controlled authoritarianism or to be called guided democracy. In Bangladesh, political leadership is increasingly hereditary, consolidating power within a tightly knit circle of elite families, particularly that of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Parliamentary seats and key positions within the Awami League are predominantly occupied by relatives of current or former leaders (Hasan, 2025). This lineage practice of politics is especially evident in the southern regions e.g., Barishal and Bagerhat, for instance, Sheikh Helal Uddin and his son Sheikh Tonmoy of Bagerhat, both of them close to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's blood line. Almost all the relatives of Sheikh family hold seats in Parliament. the pervasive culture of political vengeance and antagonism exacerbate this crisis, where transitions of power are characterized not by peaceful handovers but by retaliation, killing, violent clash, and muscle power. After the independence, Bangladesh has experienced the assassinations of two presidents triggered frequent surge of political violence. The ruling party often uses state machinery to clear legal charges against its own leaders and activists while filing fresh cases against opposition figures. This cyclical persecution entrenches distrust and polarizes society (Jahan, 2014). Meanwhile, civil society and media, once considered potential bulwarks against authoritarian drift, have largely been co-opted. The AL regime has licensed numerous media outlets loyal to the party and shut down those critical of its actions.

Connection Between Authoritarianism and Political Crumbliness

Political stability refers to a regime's capacity to maintain legitimacy, institutional functionality, and adaptability in the face of societal pressures over time (Grindle, 2004). While authoritarian regimes may offer short-term stability, their long-term political sustainability is often precarious. The causes of political fragility are –

Legitimacy Crisis

Authoritarian government is trying to stick in power by making some stories of development syndrome and continuity of the governmental process. During Hasina regime some pro-

AL academicians compared her economic model to South East Asian Tiger economy calling it Hasinomics (Kabir, 2025). This is how an emblem of cult is created that Hasina's governance means development governance. Much development, less democracy was much talked phrase during her period. As there was lacking of electoral consent and the voting rights of the people, there came development story forefront. In Bangladesh, the lack of free, fair, and credible elections and the suppression of dissent have led to growing public cynicism, especially among youth (International Crisis Group, 2018).

Suppression of Dissents

Leadership changeover becomes the core point for instability in many authoritarian regimes. With power centered around a single leader, the absence of transparent and smooth succession mechanisms can lead to infighting, elite fragmentations, or power vacuums. In case of Bangladesh, dynastic politics raises concerns about the future of the Awami League in post-Hasina period, given the excessive concentration of power within her family members and distant relatives (Ahmed, 2022).

Controlling Free Judiciary

The court specially the Supreme Court (SC) is the guardian of the constitution and the constitution guarantees the basic rights of the citizen with some clauses. The appointment, transfer, promotion, punishment could have been by SC administration. But the Law Ministry was holding the SC in their grip even the sitting Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha was fired (or 'resigned') from his chair as the full court of SC delivered the verdict cancelling government's appeal in 16th Amendment Case. The former chief justice claimed that the prime minister was "enraged" and "could not tolerate it" because she wanted the courts "to be used as instruments to serve the government's purpose" (Bergman, 2018). In an autobiography "A Broken Dream: Rule of Law, Human Rights & Democracy" Justice Sinha stated the scene of the judiciary during Hasina regime.

Contributory Role of Restoring Democracy

The political parties are the key pillars to advance the democratic journey in several periods. During the Ershad regime, two major political alliances emerged playing the vital role of anti-Ershad movement (Hasanuzzaman, 1998). As a major main rival political party BNP has sacrificed their workers and activists during last 15 years with untold sufferings. Many of them succumbed to death or being victims of enforced disappeared. Main BNP leader Begum Khaleda Zia was put behind the bar and BNP was dysfunctional by acute and excessive use of administrative and judicial process. Top leaders of another opposition party Jamaat-e-Islami were hanged in charge Crime Against Humanity during the War of Independence in 1971. Consequently, Badruddin Omar opined the emerging parties could have spaced on the ground and mobilized the people as because they do not have such crime records or other political

fault like BNP and Jamaat connecting to Liberation War. He also noted the working class of people and peasants are the main actors in anti-Hasina movement led by students' youth leadership (B. Omor, personal communication, July 19, 2025). In a question of the role of emerging parties like GOP, AB Party, Gono Samhati Andolon and Nagorik Oikko – Professor Dr. Sabbir Ahmed replied BNP had more contribution against the Hasina regime because these parties (EP) have no strong organizational capacities. They have influence on the youths, students' community, urban educated class but have little influence on huge rural voters (S. Ahmed, personal communication, July 17, 2025). Bangladeshi politics is basically an electoral politics. But another political scientist Rashed Bhuiyan sees bright future for the new party because Gen Z is going to tomorrow's main political factors. Although Quota reform movement Safe Road Movement are social and career related movement but it turned into political movement (R. Bhuiyan, personal communication, July 17, 2025). On the other hand, these parties have successfully created silent but politically conscious youth group of citizens who contributed mostly against authoritarian rule. There are more dynamics of the movement causing the end of the autocratic rule.

Revolutionary Model: Structural Preconditions

The theories of Theda Skocpol in *States and Social Revolutions* highlight how structural crises, elite disunity, and mass mobilization drive revolutions. This framework fits the July Revolution, where corruption, economic hardship, and repression weakened the Awami League regime. From 2008–2024, reliance on bureaucratic control alienated society, creating conditions for unrest. Student demands for quota reform became the tipping point, showing how non-political grievances can spark broader movements (Skocpol, 1979). Similarly, Crane Brinton in *The Anatomy of Revolution* outlines stages of revolution: collapse, radicalization, and stabilization. The July Revolution followed this path, with protests evolving into demands for systemic change and ending Sheikh Hasina's government. Brinton's "revolutionary crisis"—marked by state breakdown and mass unity—is reflected in the broad coalition of students and groups like the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, and Communist Party of Bangladesh. The decentralized leadership of the Anti-discrimination Students Movement also reflects how revolutionary leadership organizes collective resistance (Brinton, 1938).

CONCLUSION

This article examines the political, social, and religious forces behind the catalyst role of the parties against AL government's autocratic power. Elected in 2008, the government gradually turned authoritarian, facing allegations of election rigging, human rights abuses, and corruption. Suppression of opposition and claims of one-sided elections eroded public trust and disenfranchised citizens. The turning point came during the 2018 student-led quota reform protests. Rather than addressing demands, the government used force, causing violence and casualties, which intensified public

anger. This drew support from political, Islamic groups whose involvement linked religious ideals of justice with political resistance and helped unify a mass uprising that forced the government to step down. It highlights the strength of grassroots resistance against authoritarian rule and offers a key case for studying modern revolutions and future democratic development in Bangladesh.

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