

Biometric Voting Integrated with Islamic Political Principles: to Enhance Democracy in Bangladesh's E-Voting System

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ABSTRACT:

This paper addresses the vital importance of fair and transparent elections as the foundation of a robust democracy, crucial for representing citizens' voices and fostering trust in the electoral process. In Bangladesh, the pursuit of fair elections faces significant challenges, including transparency issues, accountability concerns, and instances of voter fraud. This analysis presents a novel approach that combines Quranic principles with biometric voting technology to address the challenges faced by the current voting system. Taking inspiration from Islamic values, particularly those that emphasize justice, equality, and accountability, the proposed framework intends to improve the democratic aspect of e-voting in Bangladesh. By incorporating biometric authentication mechanisms, such as fingerprint or iris scanning, this framework seeks to ensure the integrity of the voting process while adhering to Quranic and Prophetic principles of fairness and transparency. This study explores the feasibility and implications of implementing such a system within Bangladesh's electoral landscape through a multidisciplinary approach that bridges Islamic scholarship, technological innovation, and political theory. By leveraging the potential of biometric voting technology guided by Quranic principles, this research contributes to the ongoing discourse on electoral reform and democratization in Bangladesh, offering valuable insights into how technology and ethical considerations can intersect to strengthen democratic governance.

Keywords: Fair-elections, Transparency, Biometric-voting, Quranic-principles, Bangladesh.

ABSTRAK:

Makalah ini membahas pentingnya pemilu yang adil dan transparan sebagai fondasi demokrasi yang kuat, yang sangat penting untuk mewakili suara warga negara dan menumbuhkan kepercayaan terhadap proses pemilu. Di Bangladesh, upaya mewujudkan pemilu yang adil menghadapi berbagai tantangan yang signifikan, termasuk masalah transparansi, masalah akuntabilitas, dan contoh-contoh kecurangan pemilih. Analisis ini menyajikan pendekatan baru yang menggabungkan prinsip-prinsip Alquran dengan teknologi pemungutan suara biometrik untuk mengatasi tantangan yang dihadapi oleh sistem pemungutan suara saat ini. Mengambil inspirasi dari nilai-nilai Islam, terutama yang menekankan keadilan, kesetaraan, dan akuntabilitas, kerangka kerja yang diusulkan bermaksud untuk meningkatkan aspek demokratis pemungutan suara elektronik di Bangladesh. Dengan memasukkan mekanisme otentikasi biometrik, seperti pemindaian sidik jari atau iris mata, kerangka kerja ini berupaya memastikan integritas proses pemungutan suara dengan tetap mengikuti prinsip-prinsip keadilan dan transparansi dalam Alquran dan hadis. Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi kelayakan dan implikasi dari penerapan sistem tersebut dalam lanskap pemilu Bangladesh melalui pendekatan multidisiplin yang menjembatani

keilmuan Islam, inovasi teknologi, dan teori politik. Dengan memanfaatkan potensi teknologi pemungutan suara biometrik yang dipandu oleh prinsip-prinsip Al-Quran, penelitian ini berkontribusi pada wacana yang sedang berlangsung tentang reformasi pemilu dan demokratisasi di Bangladesh, menawarkan wawasan yang berharga tentang bagaimana teknologi dan pertimbangan etika dapat bersinggungan untuk memperkuat tata kelola pemerintahan yang demokratis.

Kata kunci: Pemilu yang adil, Transparansi, Pemungutan suara biometrik, Prinsip-prinsip Alquran, Bangladesh.

Istinbath: Jurnal Hukum

Website: <http://e-journal.metrouniv.ac.id/index.php/istinbath/index>

Received: 2024-03-28 | Revised: 2024-06-22 | Accepted: 2024-07-24 | Published: 2024-07-31.



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Introduction

The electoral process stands¹ as the cornerstone of any democratic society², embodying the voice and will of the people. In Bangladesh, the Premiership Election System from 1996 to 2024 has witnessed significant evolution and scrutiny. This critical analysis delves into the intricacies of Bangladesh's electoral framework, aiming to discern the strengths, weaknesses³, and underlying democratic essence⁴.

Throughout its democratic journey, Bangladesh has navigated through a series of political transformations, each leaving an indelible mark on its electoral landscape. The period from 1996 to 2024 unfolds a narrative rich with electoral dynamics, societal aspirations, and political exigencies. Against this backdrop, examining Bangladesh's

¹ Kazi Faisal Bin Seraj, 'Asia and the Pacific in 2024: Elections, Economics, and Geopolitics (Bangladesh)', *The Asia Foundation*, 2024, pp. 1–29 <<https://asiafoundation.org/2024/01/10/asia-in-2024-elections-economics-and-geopolitics/>> [accessed 10 January 2024].

² Bashir Uddin Khan and Shashi Kanto Das, 'Extrajudicial Killings : The Violation of Human Rights in Bangladesh', 2.4 (2016), 20–28.

³ Md Nurul Momen, 'Bangladesh's Regulatory Framework for Election Standards: Highlighting and Addressing Its Weaknesses', *Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart Üniversitesi Yönetim Bilimleri Dergisi; Çanakkale*, 12.24 (2014), 131-144,321,331 <<https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/comuybd>>.

⁴ Benjamin Press Thomas Carothers, 'Understanding and Responding to Global Democratic Backsliding', *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, October, 2022 <<https://carnegieendowment.org/2022/10/20/understanding-and-responding-to-global-democratic-backsliding-pub-88173>>.

Premiership Election System becomes imperative, offering insights into the foundational pillars of its democratic ethos⁵.

This critical investigation aims to evaluate the effectiveness and reliability of Bangladesh's Premiership Election System by analyzing its adherence to democratic values and institutional robustness. By thoroughly studying electoral mechanisms, voter engagement strategies, institutional frameworks, and electoral outcomes, this research aims to capture the essence of Bangladesh's democratic journey and establish an Integrated Knowledge (IoK) Democratic Electoral System to elect the state head and the government head.

Many people believe that the Islamic world is experiencing democratic rule for the first time, influenced by Western ideology⁶. However, several scholars argue that Islam has its roots in democracy, both philosophically and practically, and the Quranic injunctions support this view. For example, Allah (SWT.) forbade Prophet Muhammad (SAW.) from deciding without consulting his companions and constantly sought their opinions before making a collective decision.

Therefore, many Islamic Political Scholars referred to this Quranic verse as an example of democracy in Islam, where Allah (SWT.) said, ***“It was thanks to Allah's mercy that you were gentle to them. Had you been rough, hard-hearted, they would surely have scattered away from you. So, pardon them, and pray for their forgiveness, and take counsel from them in matters of importance. And when you are resolved on a course of action place your trust in Allah; surely Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him)”(Surah 3 Ali 'Imran, Ayat 159-159).***

Many clerics and modern Islamic scholars have interpreted the verse mentioned above in the Quran as a representation of Islamic democracy. The reason is that it urges the Prophet (SAW.) to consult his companions and respect and acknowledge their decisions, even in matters of spiritual activities. This consultation is not restricted to just the Prophet and his companions but extends to all Muslims. Moreover, the Glorious Quran inspires Muslims to consult each other in mutual ways in worldly governance and socioeconomic activities. Allah said in holy Quran: ***“who respond to their Lord, establish prayer, conduct their affairs by mutual consultation, and donate from what We have provided for them; and who enforce justice when wronged”(Surah Ash-Shuraa: 42 Verse: 38-39).***

In early Islamic philosophy, democracy was viewed with mixed reactions. While some, like Al Ghazali, saw it as a deviation from the Islamic leadership system, others, like Al Mawardi, believed it was necessary without a pious caliph. Ibn Khaldun saw democracy as compatible with Islam as long as it adhered to Islamic law⁷.

⁵ Murshida Khatun Hossan Md. Alomgir, Md Amirul Islam, ‘Empowering Democracy in Bangladesh : A Roadmap for Enhancing Voter Engagement’, *International Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities*, 9.1 (2024), 9–22 <<https://doi.org/ISSN: 2545-420X>>.

⁶ Ali Abootalebi, ‘The Struggle For Democracy In The Islamic Republic Of Iran’, *MERIA: Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 4.3 (2000), 1–12 <https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/olj/meria/meria00_aba01.html 1/12>.

⁷ Fisher Zulkarnain and others, ‘When the East Meets the West: Analysing Rached Ghannouci’s Synthesis of Democracy in Islam’, *Journal of Al-Tamaddun*, 17.2 (2022), 127–41 <<https://doi.org/10.22452/JAT.vol17no2.10>>.

Furthermore, the study aims to delineate the contours of an ideal democratic electoral framework⁸, drawing from international best practices, constitutional imperatives, and the socio-political fabric of Bangladesh⁹. By juxtaposing theoretical constructs with empirical realities, this research offers pragmatic recommendations for enhancing Bangladesh's electoral processes' inclusivity, transparency, and credibility. This critical analysis is a compass for policymakers, electoral stakeholders, and civil society actors, charting a course toward a more robust, participatory, and democratic electoral framework in Bangladesh¹⁰. Through an introspective examination of the past, this study aspires to illuminate the path toward a more equitable and democratic future for Bangladesh's electoral landscape.

During the 1990s, the Election Commission did not receive the attention it deserved despite being the primary body responsible for conducting free and fair elections. The political urgency of groups advocating for temporary solutions to unfair electoral practices overshadowed the crucial issue of the Commission's capacity. However, the Constitution places considerable emphasis on the Election Commission. The Commission's primary responsibility is to conduct elections for the presidency, parliament, and various local government bodies, including the Union Council and the Municipal and City Corporations. The Election Commission is authorized to supervise, direct, and control the preparation of electoral rolls, the conduct of elections, and the demarcation of electoral constituencies¹¹.

The Representation of the People Order of 1972 outlines the range of responsibilities that the Commission must fulfil, such as appointing and controlling returning officers, approving the electoral code of conduct, forming inquiry committees, and regulating political parties. The Commission has significant power to carry out these essential duties. It can assign and delegate electoral duties, create inquiry committees, summon and compel the production of evidence, require public records, adjudicate electoral disputes, matter commissions for the investigation of eyewitnesses and records, regulate the transfer of judicial and executive officers on election days, cancel candidacies, make rules, and regulate its procedure. Article 119(2) of the Constitution endows the Election Commission's most open-ended mandate to conduct the election "honestly, justly, and fairly." The Commission

⁸ Md Nurul Momen, 'Bangladesh's Regulatory Framework for Election Standards: Highlighting and Addressing Its Weaknesses', *Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart Üniversitesi Yönetim Bilimleri Dergisi*; *Çanakkale*, 12.24 (2014), 131-144,321,331 <[https://search.proquest.com/docview/1619353650/abstract/97204D1B9A24D91PQ/575%0Ahttp://files/540/Momen - 2014 - Bangladesh's Regulatory Framework for Election Sta.pdf](https://search.proquest.com/docview/1619353650/abstract/97204D1B9A24D91PQ/575%0Ahttp://files/540/Momen-2014-Bangladesh's-Regulatory-Framework-for-Election-Sta.pdf)>.

⁹ Md. Mustafizur Rahman and others, 'HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF SECONDARY EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH: COLONIAL PERIOD TO 21st CENTURY', *International Education Studies*, 3.1 (2010), 114-25 <<https://doi.org/10.5539/ies.v3n1p114>>.

¹⁰ Zillur R. Khan, 'Bangladesh's Experiments with Parliamentary Democracy', *University of California Press*, 37.6 (1997), 575-89 <<https://doi.org/113.210.58.237>>.

¹¹ jeremy Eckstein EicherPeter, Zahurul Alam, *Elections in Bangladesh 2006-2009: Transforming Failure into Success*, UNDP (Dhaka, 2010), II <<https://doi.org/10.1080/09700167909425746>>.

has exercised this power on various occasions, filling the legal void, ordering repolling, and upholding or rejecting candidacies¹² and ¹³.

The Constitution of Bangladesh, along with the Representation of the People Order of 1972, has ensured the institutional, budgetary, and functional independence of the Election Commission. The constitutional guarantee of functional independence has been reinforced by imposing a corresponding burden on the executive authorities "to assist the Commission." The Election Commissioners' five-year guaranteed tenure in office has been secured by a procedural requirement to follow the manner and grounds "for removal of a Judge of the Supreme Court." Article 118(3) of the Constitution aims to prevent the Commission's former members from being stuck in career hopelessness by prohibiting their appointment to any other position in the Republic's service¹⁴.

The administrative expenses and pay of officers and servants of the Election Commission have been made a charge on the Consolidated Fund by Articles 88(b) and (c), which means that even the parliament cannot propose amendments to vary the amount of any expenditure charged as remuneration for the Election Commissioners. Section 7(1) of the Election Commission Secretariat Act of 2009 obliges the government to allocate money according to the Election Commission's requirements. Although the government may "consider" the requirement before granting the amount, the Election Commission does not necessarily need permission from the government for its spending¹⁵.

In January 2024, the Awami League, which has ruled Bangladesh for a long time, claimed a significant election victory by reportedly winning 222 out of the 298 seats available. The country's Election Commission, which consists mainly of Awami League members, confirmed this. This win has enabled the Awami League and its leader, Sheikh Hasina, to hold the prime minister's office for the fourth and fifth consecutive terms. However, given Sheikh Hasina's increasingly autocratic behavior, this victory has raised concerns about the state of democracy in Bangladesh. Unfortunately, Sheikh Hasina's tenure saw a rise in crackdowns on opposition, civil society, and media. The ruling party refused to allow a caretaker government during the election period. The main opposition party refused to participate, labeling it neither free nor fair. Thousands of opposition members are detained, and some have lost their lives. The Guardian called it a "sham" to consolidate Hasina's power¹⁶.

¹² ACCORD, *Bangladesh: COI Compilation*, ACCORD - Austrian Centre for Country of Origin & Asylum Research and Documentation (Vienna, 2023) <<http://accord.redcross.at>>.

¹³ Vesselin Popovski G. Shabbir Cheema, *Building Trust in Government: Innovations in Governance Reform in Asia*, ed. by Vesselin Popovski G. Shabbir Cheema, United Nations University Press (Tokyo, 2010), CXXXIX <<http://www.unu.edu>>.

¹⁴ Bangladesh Election Commission, 'The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (ACT NO. OF 1972)', *Bangladesh Election Commission*, (ACT NO. Article 118 (2004) <<https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/bgd117108E.pdf>>.

¹⁵ M. Jashim Ali Chowdhury, *Elections in "Democratic" Bangladesh, Unstable Constitutionalism: Law and Politics in South Asia*, 2015 <<https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107706446.007>>.

¹⁶ Joshua Kurlantzick, 'Bangladesh's Sham Election and the Regression of Democracy in South and Southeast Asia', *Council on Foreign Relations*, 2024, pp. 1–7 <<https://www.cfr.org/article/bangladeshs-sham-election-and-regression-democracy-south-and-southeast-asia>> [accessed 10 January 2024].

Problem Statement:

On 2nd October 2016, the Bangladesh government launched the Smart National ID card and began collecting biometric information from citizens. The NID verification gateway server has been initiated to digitize government services. As biometric technology is extensively used, it is vital to apprehend the dependability and dependability of the biometric systems used in Bangladesh. These systems are primarily integrated with hardware and software, and the biometric system market is predicted to increase at a 15% mixture annual boost rate from 2017 to 2023. Analyzing adoption, satisfactoriness, and reliability reviews could help visualize the market demand for new biometric systems. Since technology depends on personal data, assessing user concerns about data security is crucial. However, hardware failure is a significant issue faced by biometric systems users. Finally, a matrix is generated to compare the performance of popular biometric systems from the users' opinions. This research focuses on system reliability and user satisfaction, which can help biometric service providers identify areas for improvement¹⁷.

Electronic voting systems have many benefits, but they also face challenges. Even minor vulnerabilities can result in significant changes to voting results. Recently, people have been trying to improve electronic voting using new technologies like biometric identification and blockchain. This paper suggests using the internet for voting, with blockchain technology and biometric identification. We would use biometric data, like fingerprints and facial recognition, to check who is voting. We would also use the Hyperledger Fabric framework to create a secure, transparent, and tamper-proof record of the votes. We tested this system with 100 people in a controlled setting where we collected their biometric information. We found that 87% of people could register with their biometric data and that 88% voted using their voter ID and fingerprints or their voter ID and facial recognition. This suggests that our system is easy to use and helps automate identity verification while keeping the voting record secure and transparent. In the future, we will work with election officials and voters to improve the system for real-world use¹⁸.

The study aimed to measure the reliability and satisfaction of various biometric systems from users' perspectives. However, it should have addressed the issues users face while using biometric systems and how to improve the quality of imperfect systems. The study found that 66% of participants had faced hardware failure at times, while 64% experienced authorization failure. 51% of participants used vulnerable software, while 55% reported vulnerable data storage. The study also measured participants' capability to fool biometric systems by asking an imaginary scenario. The results showed that 36% of participants believed it was possible to fool a biometric system, with 26% responding positively to the idea. Around 18% strongly agreed with this, while only 7% of participants believed it was not possible¹⁹.

¹⁷ Shaykh Siddique and others, 'The Reliability and Acceptance of Biometric System in Bangladesh: Users Perspective', *International Journal of Computer Trends and Technology*, 69.6 (2021), 15–21 <<https://doi.org/10.14445/22312803/ijctt-v69i6p103>>.

¹⁸ Md Jobair Hossain Faruk and others, 'Transforming Online Voting: A Novel System Utilizing Blockchain and Biometric Verification for Enhanced Security, Privacy, and Transparency', *Cluster Computing*, 0123456789 (2024) <<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10586-023-04261-x>>.

¹⁹ Siddique and others.

Several allegations of electoral fraud and intimidation marred the 2018 general election in Bangladesh. One such incident involved a voter named Selina Akther, who was surprised when the polling agent entered the booth with her and cast her vote without her consent. The agent selected the "spade" button on the screen of an electronic voting machine, which was the symbol of a minor party in alliance with the ruling Awami League. This incident highlights the vulnerability of electronic voting systems to fraud and manipulation. Despite Ms Akther's protests, her vote was cast for the wrong party. The violence surrounding the poll resulted in the death of at least 17 people. The election was seen as a test case for Bangladeshi democracy after an opposition boycott of the previous election in 2014²⁰.

On November 5, 2023, a polling agent from Bangladesh's ruling Awami League stamped 43 ballots in 57 seconds, setting a new record in election fraudulence. The video of the incident went viral, sparking frustration and sarcasm from Bangladeshi netizens. Some joked that if the individual had focused his talent on cricket, he could have achieved greater fame than Shoaib Akhtar²¹.

On the other hand, Election Commissioner Md. Alamgir stated on Tuesday that it is impossible to manipulate the electronic voting machine (EVM) as the chips used in the machine are made for one-time use only. He added that there is no chance to change the programming or rewrite anything, eliminating the possibility of rigging the election through the machine. He also mentioned that although many believe that the EVM can be used for rigging, experts suggest otherwise. The Commissioner made these remarks to reporters at the Election Commission Secretariat in Dhaka²².

A designed a voting system using Arduino and Fingerprint Scanner to prevent fraudulent votes during the election process in Bangladesh. The system uses biometric data to avoid duplicate or fake votes, making it highly precise and efficient in tallying the results²³.

Therefore, a project uses a biometric system—fingerprint scanning—to ensure accurate, secure voting. A database of eligible voters' thumbprints is created prior to the election. During voting, a voter's thumbprint is matched with the available records in the database. If there is a match, access to cast a vote is granted. If not, access is denied, or the

²⁰ Simon Mundy, 'Sheikh Hasina Denies Bangladesh Poll Fraud as Opposition Cries Foul', *THE FINANCIAL TIMES LTD* (Mumbai, 2 January 2019), pp. 2–6 <<https://www.ft.com/content/94b06576-0d6e-11e9-acdc-4d9976f1533b>>.

²¹ Shamsuddoza Sajen, 'Is This the Model for the 2024 National Election?', *The Daily Star* (Dhaka, 8 November 2023), pp. 1–5 <<https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/views/news/the-model-the-2024-national-election-3464481>>.

²² The Business Standard, 'Manipulation of EVMs Technically Impossible: Commissioner Alamgir', *The Business Standard* (Dhaka, 15 November 2022), pp. 1–3 <<https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/manipulation-evms-technically-impossible-commissioner-alamgir-532478>>.

²³ Rahil Rezwana and others, 'Biometrically Secured Electronic Voting Machine', *5th IEEE Region 10 Humanitarian Technology Conference 2017, R10-HTC 2017*, 2018-Janua (2018), 510–12 <<https://doi.org/10.1109/R10-HTC.2017.8289010>>.

vote is rejected. This reduces the cost of conducting elections and ensures that only legitimate users can access their voting rights²⁴.

A Brief Electoral Background Of Bangladesh:

Bangladesh is preparing for its 12th parliamentary election on January 7, 2024, amidst a highly charged political climate that threatens its stability and draws global attention. The ruling party, Awami League, and the opposition, mainly comprised of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and Jamaat-e-Islami, are at loggerheads, with demands for the concession of the Prime Minister to pave the path for a neutral interim government and concerns about the fairness of the electoral process. Bangladesh has struggled with political upheaval, authoritarianism, and corruption since its independence in 1971. Although the Awami League has dominated, the rise of the BNP as a significant opposition demonstrates the complexities of the country's democratic evolution. However, democratic institutions have not consolidated due to political violence and rampant corruption²⁵.

The country's leadership dynamics, socio-economic conditions, civil society engagement, and external factors like foreign relations and trade partnerships shape the electoral environment. The United States and the European Union advocate for democratic principles, while China and Russia prioritize strategic interests and non-interference in internal affairs. India's stance could be more apparent as it tries to balance its geopolitical priorities and South Asian alliances.

The outcome of the 2024 parliamentary election has significant implications for Bangladesh, including the erosion of democratic norms, economic instability, and social unrest that threaten the country's aspirations for peace, prosperity, and political inclusivity. Bangladesh stands at a critical crossroads, and its future trajectory will depend on the choices made in the coming days. The global community is closely watching as the nation's destiny hangs in the balance, and the outcome will have far-reaching consequences. Located in the Indo-Pacific region and nearly encircled by India, Bangladesh boasts the eighth-largest population in the world. In the half-century following its separation from Pakistan, Bangladesh has made impressive strides in both economic and social realms. Hailed as a "basket case" by the United States government upon gaining independence, the country is now poised to graduate from its least-developed country (LDC) status in 2026. By 2031, the government aims to elevate Bangladesh to higher middle-income status, eradicate poverty, and achieve developed nation status by 2041²⁶.

Although agriculture remains the primary source of employment, Bangladesh has become the world's second-largest garment producer, with the majority of exports (80%) directed towards the European Union (EU) and the United States. The country also receives a substantial amount of remittances from its diaspora. Bangladesh is the most significant contributor of troops to United Nations (UN) peacekeeping missions and has maintained a

²⁴ Nahida Nigar, Mohan Lal Nath, and Md Toufiqul Islam, 'A Proposed Framework for Fingerprint-Based Voting System in Bangladesh', *International Journal on Informatics Visualization*, 4.1 (2020), 22–27 <<https://doi.org/10.30630/joiv.4.1.283>>.

²⁵ Salman Rahman, 'Bangladesh Elections 2024: An Overview', *Consortium of Indo-Pacific Researchers - WordPress Theme by Kadence WP*, 2023, 1–12 <<https://indopacificresearchers.org/bangladesh-elections-2024-2/>>.

²⁶ Madison Minges, 'Understanding Bangladesh ' s Election Results', *American University*, 2024, pp. 1–8 <<https://www.american.edu/sis/news/20230109-understanding-bangladesh-s-election-results.cfm>> [accessed 9 January 2024].

strategically balanced approach among world powers. Additionally, Bangladesh has emerged as a symbol of humanitarianism in the context of the Rohingya Crisis. EU-Bangladesh cooperation has focused primarily on economic development, human rights, good governance, and the environment. Negotiations are underway on a new partnership and cooperation agreement to replace the 2001 one. However, Bangladesh's human rights and democratic situation has drawn international attention. The European Parliament has repeatedly expressed concerns about the country's human rights record. With the mass arrests of opposition leaders and activists ahead of the January 7, 2024, elections to the unicameral parliament, signs point to democratic backsliding. The opposition has declined to participate in the elections, and it seems likely that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will secure a fourth consecutive mandate²⁷.

Democracy:

Democracy emanated from the Greek terms' "demos" and "Kratos," which signifies the power of the people. It is a form of government where the people are directly or indirectly represented by their chosen representatives. However, the definitions of Democracy vary in content and application. According to Aristotle, it is a flawed form of government. Herodotus defines *Democracy* as a government where the ruling power is vested in the community. Bryce characterizes Democracy as a form of government where the ruling power is legally vested in the members of the community as a whole. Seeley defines *Democracy* as a government where everybody has a share. In contrast, Dicey considers it a form of government where the governing body is a relatively large function of the entire nation. Gettell views Democracy as a form of government where the abundance of the inhabitants maintains the right to convey in the practice of sovereign dominion²⁸.

Democratic American values suggest that Islam is not only inconsistent with the West but also poses a direct conflict. This perspective has been widely disseminated in American and European media and endorsed by some government officials who portray Muslims as threats to freedom and democracy. By analyzing the Muslim American Public Opinion Survey (MAPOS) with a substantial sample size (N = 1410), we argue that mosques are critical indicators of Muslim social and political integration in American society. Our findings show that Muslims who regularly attend mosques are more likely to identify as American Muslims rather than by their national origins and believe that mosques encourage integration into U.S. society. Additionally, mosque attendance promotes political participation among American Muslims. Contrary to common belief, we also find that more devout Muslims are significantly more inclined to support political engagement. Thus, our

²⁷ Samy Chahry Enrico D'Ambrogio, *Bangladesh and the 2024 Elections From 'Basket Case' to Rising Star*, *European Parliamentary Research Service* (London, 2023), PE 757.586 <<https://doi.org/PE 757.586>>.

²⁸ M.M. Awal Hossain, 'Democracy in Bangladesh: Problems & Prospects', *Academia.Edu Publishing*, October, 2015, 20 <https://www.academia.edu/23633614/Democracy_in_Bangladesh_Problems_and_Prospects>.

study concludes that there is no inconsistency between mosques and American democracy; religiosity enhances support for American democratic values²⁹.

1971 Bangladesh gained independence and implemented a democratic governance system in 1991. Over the past two decades, the nation has experienced steady economic and social growth. However, the development of its political system has been quite different. Between 2001 and 2008, Bangladesh was considered the world's most corrupt country for four out of eight years. The political authority has been accused of illiberalism, crime, corruption, power abuse, and neglecting the needs of the public and the country as a whole. This paper explores and analyzes three significant barriers hindering Bangladesh from achieving full-fledged democracy: terrorism, corruption, and political interference in the justice system. The author will conduct the research using Samuel P. Huntington's Theory of Modernization. The study concludes that Bangladesh is undergoing a process of modernization, evidenced by its economic and social development. However, the country's political system is controlled by a small elite group that adheres to traditional norms rather than modernized democratic norms, preventing the nation from fully embracing the same modernization process³⁰.

According to the author, the secularization viewpoint on political Islam, particularly in Indonesia, asserts that democracy, the separation of state and religion, and nationalism should be the exclusive framework for governing a state. This argument is frequently employed by many individuals, including scholars in Indonesia, to oppose the idea of an Islamic State. This article utilizes descriptive analysis to explore the secularization perspective on political Islam in Indonesia and critical analysis from an Islamic standpoint. Additionally, it discusses the consequences of employing this perspective when examining the discourse of political Islam. The study found that the reactions of Muslim leaders and the public to political Islam in Indonesia are shaped more by the secularization perspective than by the Islamic viewpoint. The Islamic perspective on political Islam is based on past methodologies established by authoritative scholars. The dominance of the secular perspective in politics has contributed to the decline of Islamic civilization and facilitated Western colonization³¹.

Several Islamic organizations in Malaysia have referenced the concept of Islamic Democracy to validate their political activities, shifting from traditional Political Islamic discourse to a more inclusive approach. This study aims to assess the impact of the Islamic Democracy concept on the Islamic movement in Malaysia, focusing on Pertubuhan Ikram Malaysia (IKRAM) during the PAKATAN HARAPAN administration (2018-2020). This period was selected because IKRAM was reportedly directly involved in Malaysian politics, with some of its members securing parliamentary seats, showing support for Parti Amanah Negara (AMANAH), and backing Pakatan Harapan policies. The study examines IKRAM's

²⁹ Karam Dana, Matt A. Barreto, and Kassra A.R. Oskooii, 'Mosques as American Institutions: Mosque Attendance, Religiosity and Integration into the Political System among American Muslims', *Religions*, 2.4 (2011), 504–24 <<https://doi.org/10.3390/rel2040504>>.

³⁰ Mudar Martin Hill, 'Bangladesh Democratization Process' (Lund University, 2013) <<https://lup.lub.lu.se/luur/download?func=downloadFile&recordOid=4128283&fileOid=4128400>>.

³¹ Hasbi Aswar, 'Secular Perspective on The Islamic Political Discourses in Indonesia: A Critical Analysis', *Jurnal Kajian Peradaban Islam*, 4.2 (2021), 35–41 <<https://doi.org/10.47076/jkpi.v4i2.64>>.

decision-making and political actions in the context of Islamic Democracy as proposed by Rachid Ghannouchi. Ghannouchi is a renowned political activist and thinker who has developed the idea of Islamic Democracy, which integrates democratic principles and values into Islamic beliefs³².

Integration/ Islamization of Knowledge (Iok/ IOK):

Islamization of knowledge pertains to integrating relevant and specific texts from the Glorious Qur'an and Hadith of the apostle of Allah S.W.T. into every discipline. This is done to guide both the teacher and the learner towards comprehending the organic unity, mutual harmony, compatibility, and the total dependence of all branches of human knowledge on the two fundamental sources of the Shariah - Al-Qur'an and the Sunnah. According to Al-Atlas, Islamization involves liberating man from various ancient and modern beliefs and practices. It begins with freeing man from magical, mythological, animistic, and national-cultural traditions and then from secular control over his reason and language³³.

Al-Atlas explains that the Islamization process includes the Islamization of languages, as language, thought, and reason are interdependent in projecting an individual's worldview or vision of reality. When language is Islamized, it leads to the Islamization of thought and reason. The Holy Qur'an exemplifies this fact when it was first revealed among the Arabs³⁴ and³⁵.

Al-Faruqi argues that the Islamization of knowledge is one of the most challenging tasks for Muslims, as it entails the transformation of about 20 academic disciplines to align them with Islamic principles. A. K Brohi proposed that the Islamization of knowledge involves revising standard textbooks in various fields of human learning to make them compatible with the teachings of the Quran. This effort also involves reorganizing modern knowledge by eliminating any elements that may cause believers to have a disjointed personality when practicing religion and other aspects of life. Ibrahim Ragab suggests that

³² HUZAYL BIN MOHAMMAD NOOR SIA, “THE INFLUENCE OF RACHID GHANNOUCHI’S POLITICAL THOUGHTS, ISLAMIC DEMOCRACY ON PERTUBUHAN IKRAM MALAYSIA (IKRAM) DURING THE PAKATAN HARAPAN’S RULING (2018-2020)”, *International Islamic University Malaysia* (International Islamic University Malaysia, 2022) <https://www.academia.edu/74393033/THE_INFLUENCE_OF_RACHID_GHANNOUCHIS_POLITICAL_THOUGHTS_ISLAMIC_DEMOCRACY_ON_PERTUBUHAN_IKRAM_MALAYSIA_IKRAM_DURING_THE_PAKATAN_HARAPANS_RULING_2018_2020_>.

³³ Syed Muhamed Naquib Al-Attas, ‘Islam and Secularism’ (Art Printing Works Sdn. Bhd., 1993), pp. 133–67 <<https://libraryoflights.files.wordpress.com/2011/06/islam-and-secularism-attas.pdf>>.

³⁴ Mohammad Eisa Ruhullah, Ushama Thameem, and Binti Norman Nurul Ain, ‘Integrating Knowledge and Democracy for Practical Reform to Overcome Political Crisis in Bangladesh’, *Khazanah Sosial*, 6.1 (2024), 132–51 <<https://doi.org/10.15575/ks.v6i1.34177>>.

³⁵ Wisber Wiryanto, ‘The Islamization Of Human Resource Management TEXTBOOK FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDONESIA THROUGH AL-FARUQI’S THEORY’, *Ar-Raniry, International Journal of Islamic Studies*, 3.1 (2016), 121 <<https://doi.org/10.20859/jar.v3i1.79>>.

the Islamization of knowledge should be viewed as a movement that seeks to Islamize social sciences, specific disciplines, curriculum, and education³⁶.

Dr. R.I Molla argues that the Islamization of knowledge is a transformational movement aimed at reforming our understanding and commitment to the Islamic worldview. He posits that knowledge founded on divine principles and sound morality is wiser and more efficient. In essence, the call to Islamize knowledge is not new but as old as the Islamic faith itself³⁷.

The paper aims to bridge the gap between Shari'ah sciences and social sciences, highlighting the inadequacy of the literature on extreme secular social sciences and Shari'ah sciences researchers' simplified reading of social sciences. Integrating knowledge should involve taking advantage of global and local traditions and forming a valid theoretical framework. For instance, studying the independence of higher education and universities in different countries requires addressing the issues related to the state's hegemony over universities and the commodification of knowledge and privatization³⁸.

Shuracracy As Islamic Democracy:

Shura is an Arabic term that denotes mutual deliberation and consultation. In Islamic governance, Shuracracy refers to a participatory decision-making system operating within Islamic teachings and values. The system requires leaders to consult with the governed individuals, seek their input, and use consensus-based decision-making as much as possible. The concept of Shura is deeply rooted in Islamic tradition, where consultation is considered a fundamental principle of governance. The Quran emphasizes the importance of Shura in several verses and considers it an essential aspect of Islamic governance³⁹.

Shuracracy is considered a form of Islamic democracy that aligns the principles of democracy, such as participation, representation, and accountability, with Islamic values and teachings. The system prioritizes inclusivity, justice, and the welfare of the community. It can be implemented through various mechanisms, including elected representatives, advisory councils, and community assemblies, all guided by Islamic principles and values. It is important to note that the interpretation and implementation of Shuracracy can vary in

³⁶ Dr. Mohammad Nayamat Ullah, 'Islamic Education and Islamization of Education in Bangladesh : A Critical Study', *The Chittagong University Journal of Arts and Humanities*, XXXV.2019 (2023), 153–76 <<https://ejournal.kopertais4.or.id/madura/index.php/alinsyiroh/article/view/6337/3987>>.

³⁷ Md Helal Uddin and Manjurul Alam Mazumder, 'Islamization of Knowledge: An Exploratory Study of Concepts, Issues and Trends', *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development*, 1.6 (2014), 99–109 <www.allsubjectjournal.com>.

³⁸ Sari Hanafi, 'Islamization of Knowledge and Its Grounding : Appraisal and Alternative', *Islamic Studies Rev*, 1.2 (2022), 135–60 <<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.56529/isr.v1i2.82>>.

³⁹ Abur Hamdi Usman, Mohd Farid Ravi Abdullah, and Mazlan Ibrahim, 'QURANIC VIEWS ON QUALITY OF ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM PANDANGAN AL-QURAN TERHADAP KUALITI SISTEM PENDIDIKAN ISLAM', *Jurnal Pengajian Islam*, 15.1 (2022), 29–41.

different contexts, depending on the understanding and interpretation of Islamic teachings by different groups and communities⁴⁰.

Developing an Islamic democracy⁴¹ in Bangladesh or any other democratic state requires careful consideration of Islamic principles and democratic governance. To achieve this, several steps can be taken, including establishing a constitutional framework that recognizes Islam as the state religion while ensuring the protection of minority rights and freedom of religion for all citizens. According to Zulkarnain (2022) that a system of checks and balances that ensures the alienation of powers among the government's executive, legislative, and judicial departments should also be implemented to prevent any component from evolving too assertive and ensure accountability and transparency in government operations⁴².

Emphasizing the importance of the rule of law and integrating Islamic principles such as justice, equality, compassion, and accountability into the legal and political system are also vital. This can serve as a guiding framework for policymaking and governance while respecting the diversity of interpretations within Islam. The concept of Shura, or consultative decision-making, should be embraced to encourage dialogue and consensus-building among diverse societal stakeholders. This fosters inclusivity and participation in the political process and ensures that decisions reflect the people's will⁴³.

Fostering a vibrant civil society and ensuring freedom of expression and media are also crucial. Civil society organizations, independent media, and grassroots movements play an essential role in maintaining the government liable and advocating for the rights and interests of citizens. Promoting education and awareness about democratic principles, human rights, and Islamic values among citizens from a young age is critical to fostering informed citizenship and promoting tolerance, pluralism, and respect for diversity⁴⁴.

Implementing policies that promote economic development, alleviate poverty, and address social inequalities is also essential. Economic stability and social justice are necessary for building a cohesive and inclusive society where all citizens can thrive. International partnerships and cooperation can support capacity-building efforts and promote democratic values and principles globally⁴⁵. Finally, recognizing that the concept of an Islamic democracy

⁴⁰ Irhamdi Nasda, 'Comparison of the Concepts of Democratic and Shura Systems of Government', *MILRev: Metro Islamic Law Review*, 2.1 (2023), 52 <<https://doi.org/10.32332/milrev.v2i1.6862>>.

⁴¹ Uddin and Mazumder.

⁴² Zulkarnain and others.

⁴³ Gordon P. Means, 'The Role of Islam in the Political Development of Malaysia', *Religions and Missionaries around the Pacific, 1500-1900*, 1.2 (2017), 11–31 <<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315244686-2>>.

⁴⁴ Sella Mita, Rijal Sabri, and Erni Suyani, 'Aspects of Spiritual Intelligence in Islamic Education (Study of Q.S. Al-Ikhlās Verses 1-4)', *Almufida: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman*, 8.2 (2023), 120–31 <<https://doi.org/10.46576/almufida.v8i2.3563>>.

⁴⁵ General Economics Division, *Sustainable Development Goals: Bangladesh Progress Report 2018*, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (Dhaka, 2018) <<https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/migration/bd/259fbc056dceb28d6dbba088c50b310c9f83ea13082196a8922ce43f6fd956b8.pdf>>.

is dynamic and evolving and requires ongoing adaptation to changing social, political, and economic realities is vital⁴⁶.

This research paper proposes a new method for selecting administrative and state councils at different levels of government in Bangladesh. It suggests integrating knowledge and democracy to establish a fair and effective system for future leaders. The Integrated Knowledge of Federal Democracy System (IKOFDS) aims to empower citizens, enhance governance efficiency, and foster collaborative decision-making by combining Federalism with the Integration of Knowledge (IoK) and a robust democratic method⁴⁷.

Democracy In The Perspective Of The Quran And Hadith:

Authoritarian regimes govern many Muslim-majority nations and struggle to meet even the most basic standards of democracy. However, minimal democracy is essential for ensuring morality, ethics, justice, fairness, freedom, equality, and the rule of law. The historical record of Western liberal democracy during both colonialism and postcolonialism cannot be defended in terms of its support for democracy and human rights abroad or its promotion of peace, morality, and ethics worldwide. When it comes to the compatibility of Islam and democracy, Muslim conservatives, fundamentalists, and Orientalists argue that Islam is inconsistent with democracy, while Muslim reformists claim the opposite. Most Islamic laws are specific to the context of early Islam and do not apply to modern times.

According to the ethical-based Shari'a, democracy is the most effective means of serving Islam's moral objectives. It has the potential to promote justice, protect human dignity, and allow for human freedom and liberation. From this perspective, the Shari'a, consisting of ethical virtues, moral norms, and living standards, is permanent, unchanging, and timeless. It represents universal aspects of Islam that strongly support democracy.

Despite the universal recognition of democracy as a system that embodies the principles of justice, equality, and the collective will of the people—as illustrated by the guidance in the Holy Qur'an (4:135 and 16:90) advocating for justice, goodness, and righteousness—the applicability of its liberal model in the Islamic context of Bangladesh is fraught with complexities. The Islamic principles of divine sovereignty, the instrumentality of the world for future happiness, and the societal implementation of religious laws present a unique challenge to harmonizing democratic processes with Islamic values. *“O believers! Stand firm for justice as witnesses for Allah even if it is against yourselves, your parents, or close relatives. Be they rich or poor, Allah is best to ensure their interests. So do not let your desires cause you to deviate from justice”. If you distort the testimony or refuse to give it, then “know that” Allah is certainly All-Aware of what you do” (Qur’an, 4:135).*

“Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, that ye may receive admonition” (Qur’an, 16:90).

This study aims to address this critical challenge by proposing the development of an electoral framework for Bangladesh that harmonizes the principles of Islamisation of Knowledge (IOK) with democratic norms. Focusing on moderation, public interest (*maslahah*), justice (*‘adl*), and consultation (*al-shura*), the framework seeks to present an alternative that privileges Islamic values over Western liberal paradigms. It aspires to serve

⁴⁶ Jeremiah B. Bautista, ‘REEXAMINING ISLAM AND DEMOCRACY THROUGH THE WASATIYYA PERSPECTIVE’ (University of California, Los Angeles, 2014) <<https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/tr/pdf/ADA619662.pdf>>.

⁴⁷ Ruhullah, Thameem, and Nurul Ain.

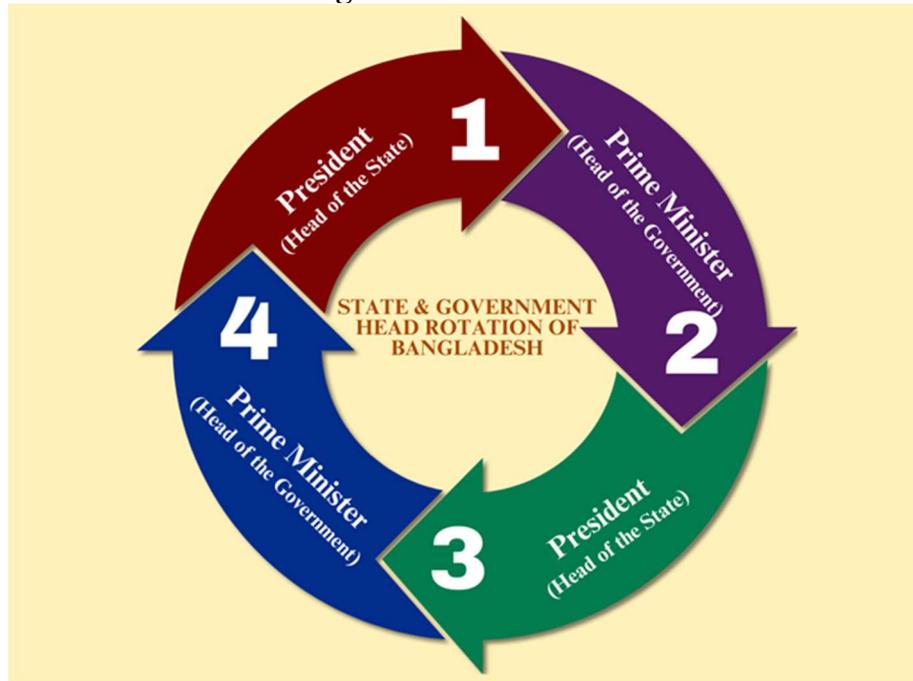
as a reference for national stakeholders, facilitating the assessment and reform of the electoral process in alignment with international obligations and the unique socio-political fabric of Bangladesh.

Method:

This passage thoroughly examines academic literature on Implementing an IOK and democratic biometric e-voting system, which is crucial to ensuring fair elections in Bangladesh and any democratic society. It also examines political ideologies in Bangladesh and the relationship between religion and governance in the country. As a result of this review, the researcher will develop a theoretical foundation and framework⁴⁸ to practice in a Biometric e-voting system⁴⁹. They have used secondary sources and in-depth qualitative discussions to affirm their findings.

Figure Number: One

Current Method of the Bangladesh Government and State head Selection:



50

Recently, the appointment of Bangladesh's state and governmental head has been controversial due to the perceived impracticality of the rotation system implemented. As illustrated in the chart, the rotation system has faced criticism and concern from various stakeholders. The system's transparency, fairness, and effectiveness have been questioned,

⁴⁸ Ruhullah Mohammad Eisa and Ushama Thameem, 'Islamic Epistemology in the Bangladesh Government System (1996–2022): An Analysis of Political Ideologies', *Jurnal Bina Praja*, 15.3 (2023), 479–93 <<https://doi.org/10.21787/jbp.15.2023.479-493>>.

⁴⁹ Masha Borak, 'Bangladesh ' s Government Wins Election Campaigning on DPI', *Www.Biometricupdate.Com*, 2024, pp. 1–2 <<https://www.biometricupdate.com/202401/bangladeshs-government-wins-election-campaigning-on-dpi>> [accessed 11 January 2024].

⁵⁰ Ruhullah, Thameem, and Nurul Ain.

leading to calls for a more rational and objective approach to the appointment process. The matter has received considerable coverage in the media and has become a topic of discussion among the public. The issue is expected to continue to be analyzed and reviewed in the upcoming days⁵¹.

Figure Number: Two

The nature of the states, according to Muslim scholars:

An Overview of the Beliefs on Sovereignty, Nature of the State, Shari'a, and Secularism among the Muslim Political Thinkers

State Issues of Contestation	Islamists Advocating the Divine Sovereignty	Islamists Advocating the Divine Sovereignty	Islamists Advocating the Divine Sovereignty	Islamist Advocating the Sovereignty of Ummah
State's Systems	Hasan Al- Banna	Abul Ala Mawdudi	Syed Qutb	Rachid Ghannouchi
Sovereignty	Subscribes for the sovereignty of God. Banna, however, did not theories it	Mawdudi theorises the divine sovereignty	Qutb accepts divine sovereignty and more vigorously argues for it	Argues for the sovereignty of the <i>Ummah</i>
Nature of state	Stressed on social Islamization that would ultimately culminate into an Islamic state	Theorised and acted for establishing an Islamic state	Theorised and acted for establishing an Islamic state	Argues for a civil state defying the concept of an Islamic state entirely
Secularism	Rejects secularism	Rejects secularism	Rejects secularism	Accepts the American model of secularism
Shari'a	Shari'a as a coded law and an Islamic state must execute those	Shari'a as a coded law and an Islamic state must execute those	Shari'a as a coded law and an Islamic state must execute those	Shari'a as a coded law and an Islamic state must execute those

Source: Authors (2024)

The concept of sovereignty has been a subject of extensive debate since the early days of Islamic political history among Islamist political thinkers. Many Islamists worldwide have adopted various forms of liberal democracy, yet they face a significant normative dilemma: how to reconcile the divine sovereignty of Islam with the popular sovereignty of the nation-state. Proponents of divine sovereignty reject any human-made system that contradicts God's will. However, some Islamists are reinterpreting Islamic beliefs and practices to align with liberal democratic principles⁵².

This study explores the evolving notion of sovereignty in Sunni Islamist political thought, focusing on the shift from divine sovereignty to the sovereignty of the Muslim community (Ummah). It analyzes the theoretical foundations laid by Abul A'la Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb, who assert that God exclusively confers both religious and political authority. Additionally, it examines Rachid Ghannouchi's perspective, which proposes that the Ummah holds political authority while recognizing God's ultimate sovereignty. Ghannouchi's argument is rooted in a metaphysical understanding of Islam and the sharia tradition of Islamic governance. By investigating these perspectives, the study sheds light on the continuity and transformation in modern Islamist thought on sovereignty, particularly in relation to popular sovereignty, and contributes to a deeper understanding of Islamist views on democracy⁵³.

⁵¹ Ruhullah, Thameem, and Nurul Ain.

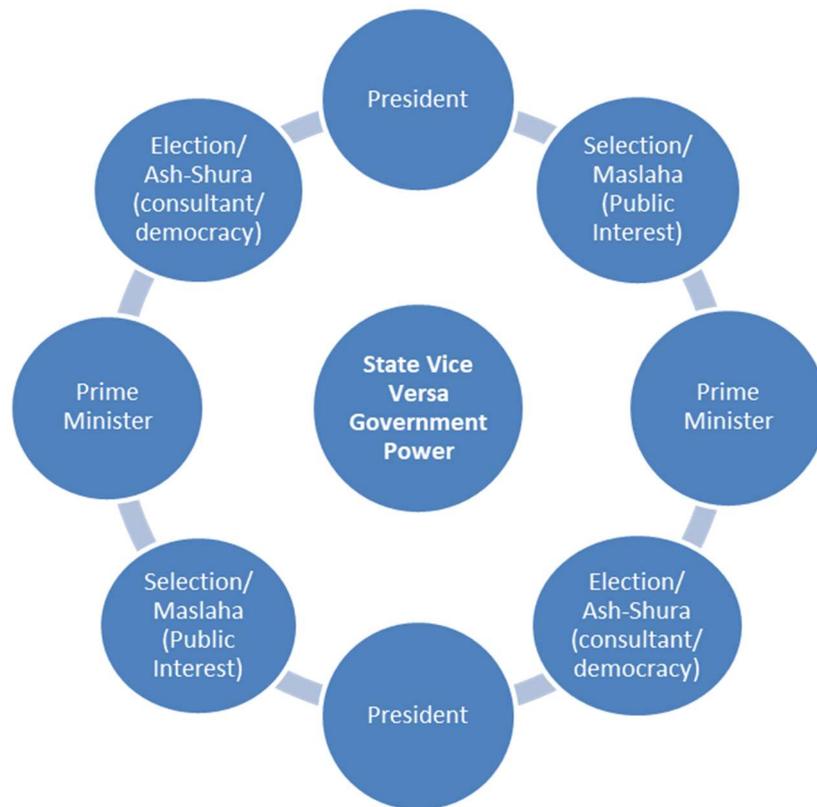
⁵² Md Mizanur Rahman, 'Sovereignty in Islamist Political Thought : Continuity and Change', *Illinois State University* (ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY, 2019) <<https://ir.library.illinoisstate.edu/etd Part>>.

⁵³ Md Mizanur Rahman.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework Based on IoK:

Figure Number: Three

Appointment of Premiership Through Democracy/ Election/ Selection Ash-Shura (consultant/ democracy) in Bangladesh



Source: Authors (2024)

The researcher aims to comprehensively investigate the political democratic practices in Bangladesh's election and appointment method. As per the findings of a prior study, it has been observed that the Prime Minister of Bangladesh has been exploiting unfair and dominating techniques to sustain their position of power. The PM holds a vast array of formal and everyday authorities, which undermine the accountability and responsibility of the democratic regime⁵⁴. This has resulted in a weakened and unstable democratic system in Bangladesh⁵⁵.

Analytical Findings:

The People's Awareness Of Democracy Andbangladesh's Electoral Process:

Democratic elections ensure every citizen's voice is heard and represented in the government. These elections guarantee that everyone has an equivalent opportunity to

⁵⁴ Madison Minges.

⁵⁵ Ridwanul Hoque and Rokeya Chowdhury, *A History of the Constitution of Bangladesh: The Founding, Development, and Way Ahead*, ed. by Ridwanul Hoque and Rokeya Chowdhury, 1st edn (New York: Routledge, 2024) <<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003276814>>.

partake in the political approach and elect leaders who will perform for their welfare. Apart from this, democratic elections are also crucial in defending the essential rights of the citizens, such as the right to free speech, freedom of religion, and the right to assemble peacefully.

Civic education is critical in promoting democratic values and encouraging participation in the electoral process. When citizens are well-informed about the political system and the issues at stake, they are likelier to encounter political arguments and voice their thoughts. This, in turn, guides to a more informed and involved citizenry, which is vital for the functioning of a democratic society.

However, conducting free and fair elections can be a challenging task. Several challenges and obstacles, such as voter suppression, electoral fraud, and disinformation campaigns, can hinder the electoral process. These challenges can be even more pronounced in specific contexts, such as in countries with weak democratic institutions or in regions affected by conflict or instability. Therefore, ensuring that the electoral process is transparent, inclusive, and accountable to all stakeholders, including political parties, civil society organizations, and international observers, is crucial.

Many people in Bangladesh are familiar with the country's electoral system and the method used to appoint the Prime Minister. However, they may not completely understand the implications of democracy or the fair processes for selecting the Prime Minister and President. This lack of wisdom is partly due to the ingrained persuading of powerful families, leading to a lack of transparency in the country's political system since its independence. Therefore, a social trust issue exists in Bangladesh's political landscape, where democratic values and fair appointment procedures are often overlooked in favor of family connections and influence.

The democratic system of governance rests on the fundamental tenet of representation and the free expression of popular will. In Bangladesh, the nexus between democracy and the electoral process is a subject of scrutiny, particularly concerning the consistent emergence of prime ministers from two prominent families. This phenomenon has prompted a critical inquiry into the dynamics shaping Bangladesh's political landscape and the people's awareness of democratic principles within the electoral process.

Since achieving independence in 1971, Bangladesh has navigated a complex political terrain characterized by shifts in power, socio-economic transformations, and institutional evolution. A recurrent feature of this political narrative is the ascendancy of prime ministers from two familial dynasties, raising curiosity and concern regarding the depth of democratic practices and popular representation.

This study aims to unravel the underlying factors contributing to the enduring dominance of specific families in Bangladesh's prime ministerial positions. It examines historical trajectories, electoral dynamics, socio-cultural influences, and institutional frameworks to elucidate the intricate interplay between power structures and democratic ethos within the electoral process.

The pervasive presence of two familial lineages in the prime ministerial domain raises pertinent questions about political inclusivity, meritocracy, and the vibrancy of democratic competition in Bangladesh. Through a nuanced exploration of public perceptions, electoral trends, and socio-political dynamics, this research aims to gauge the people's awareness of democracy vis-à-vis the recurring incumbency of specific families in leadership roles.

Additionally, the study assesses the implications of familial dominance on governance dynamics, policy formulation, and democratic consolidation in Bangladesh. By scrutinizing the mechanisms of political succession, electoral competition, and public discourse, it seeks to shed light on the evolving contours of democratic representation and

the quest for inclusive governance. This inquiry catalyzes introspection, dialogue, and reform within Bangladesh's political landscape. By fostering a deeper understanding of the interplay between democracy, familial dominance, and electoral processes, this study aspires to engender a more informed citizenry, vibrant political discourse, and a strengthened democratic fabric in Bangladesh.

The laborer's responses were indicative of the fact that democracy and development are closely intertwined. We found that ordinary people did not feel that other ordinary people would make good political leaders. To this informant, democracy was not about people like him coming to positions of power. Additionally, the agricultural laborer believed politicians must be affluent, supportive, and helpful to their constituents. Lastly, democracy, to him, was about being respected as one among equals. In conclusion, the interviewee's perception of democracy was not solely about the right to stand for election and be elected but also about safeguarding their interests and dignity from those in power. This perception indicates a fundamentally hierarchical worldview, even though the mechanisms of democracy are in place⁵⁶.

Promoting The Integration Of Knowledge And Democratic Elections In Bangladesh:

The author discusses the integration/Islamization of knowledge within Bangladesh's democratic electoral framework. There is a growing recognition of the need to infuse democratic institutions with values that resonate deeply with Bangladesh's cultural and religious ethos. The integration/Islamization of knowledge represents a holistic approach to governance, aligning democratic ideals with Islamic principles and fostering harmony, inclusivity, and ethical governance. Promoting public awareness regarding the integration/Islamization of knowledge in the electoral process is crucial. Disseminating accurate information that contextualizes within the socio-cultural fabric of Bangladesh plays a significant role in promoting public awareness. Public awareness fosters accountability, transparency, and ethical conduct within Bangladesh's electoral landscape. The integration/Islamization of knowledge within Bangladesh's electoral framework holds immense potential for engendering social cohesion, resilience, and inclusive governance.

Sustainable and inclusive development in Bangladesh can only be achieved through knowledge integration across different sectors and disciplines. We must recognize the challenges and opportunities of such integration in Bangladesh's unique cultural, social, and political landscape and work towards creating innovative solutions. Interdisciplinary research and collaboration are critical strategies for fostering knowledge integration and can lead to transformative change that benefits current and future generations. Let us unite and prioritize knowledge integration to create a brighter, more equitable future for Bangladesh.

Integration/ Islamization of knowledge has been the subject of extensive intellectual and epistemological debate. The IOK project has gained significant attention in contemporary scholarship and literature, with theoretical and practical manifestations. One of the practical applications of this project is the development of 'Islamized' curricula and textbooks for undergraduate programs in various universities across the Muslim and non-Muslim world. The Global Integration/ Islamization of Knowledge (IOK) movements have shown positive trends despite facing criticism and condemnation from opponents. Some scholars consider it the most promising approach to elevate the Ummah out of its decline.

⁵⁶ Arild Engelsen Ruud, *Democracy in Bangladesh: A Village View*, ed. by Stig Toft Madsen and others, *Cambridge University Press* (Anthem Press, 2012) <<https://doi.org/10.7135/UPO9780857288356.005>>.

This paper aims to highlight the basic principles of Integration/ Islamization of knowledge and the movement of this Democratic electoral design, along with a framework of IOK by considering analysis and scholars' views. It is important to note that IOK is a continuous process of moving towards a moving target; it will require proper struggle (Ijtihad) and rooted study for further democratic development in Bangladesh. Substantial editing will be necessary to categorize subjects, coin or redefine terms, and renovate the entire system. This will facilitate further study of learners and researchers within a significant context.

Impact Of Information And Communication Technologies On Democratic Participation:

This essay investigates how digital technologies, such as social media and online platforms, have transformed democratic participation in Bangladesh. It could discuss these technologies' potential benefits and drawbacks, including their impact on political engagement and social mobilization. Additionally, the essay could explore the role of digital and media literacy in promoting responsible and informed use of these technologies.

Countries worldwide have adopted various technologies to enhance the electoral process and facilitate democratic participation in voting. Some of the most common technologies include Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), Biometric Voter Registration, Voter Information Systems, Online Voter Registration, Election Observation Technologies, Blockchain Voting Systems, and Voter Education and Awareness Campaigns. EVMs are used in many countries, including Bangladesh, to automate the casting and counting votes. This can minimize the errors associated with manual counting and reduce the time required for counting votes. Biometric voter registration systems use biometric data such as fingerprints or iris scans to prevent fraud uniquely and ensure the integrity of the electoral roll.

Voter information systems inform voters about polling locations, candidates, and election procedures. These systems can include websites, mobile apps, or SMS services that allow voters to access relevant information easily. Online voter registration systems enable eligible voters to document their vote or modernize their voter information electronically, which can streamline the registration process and make it more accessible to citizens.

Election observation technologies, such as mobile apps and web platforms, enable independent observers and monitors to report on elections in real time. These technologies help ensure transparency and accountability in the electoral process. Blockchain voting systems can enhance the security and transparency of elections by creating an immutable record of votes that cannot be tampered with or altered.

The voting system in Bangladesh has undergone significant technological advancements to combat corruption, enhance democratic participation, and improve the electoral process. Various technologies have been introduced in the country, including Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), Biometric Voter Registration, Voter Information Systems, and Election Observation Technologies, each with unique benefits and challenges.

EVMs have been introduced to automate the process of casting and counting votes, reducing the time required for counting votes and minimizing errors associated with manual counting. Biometric voter registration systems use biometric data to identify voters, ensuring the integrity of the electoral roll and reducing the likelihood of duplicate or false registrations. Voter information systems inform voters about polling locations, candidates, and election procedures, enabling them to access relevant information quickly and make informed decisions. Mobile apps and web platforms are employed for election observation, enhancing transparency and accountability in the electoral process by allowing for the rapid reporting of irregularities and violations.

These technologies have numerous benefits, including enhanced transparency, reduced fraud and manipulation, increased voter confidence, and greater accessibility. By improving the integrity and efficiency of the voting process, these technologies can enhance voter confidence in the fairness and legitimacy of elections. They can also make the electoral process more accessible to citizens, particularly those in remote or marginalized communities.

However, the effectiveness of these technologies depends on various factors, such as their proper implementation, cybersecurity measures, and the capacity of electoral authorities to manage and maintain the technology. Moreover, while these technologies can help mitigate certain forms of corruption, they may also introduce new challenges and vulnerabilities, such as concerns about data privacy and cybersecurity threats.

In summary, adopting and implementing technology in Bangladesh's voting system has significant potential to improve democratic participation and combat corruption. Still, it is essential to carefully consider the advantages and conceivable risks associated with their use. Ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and adaptation are necessary to ensure that these technologies strengthen democratic processes and institutions in Bangladesh and beyond.

Finally, voter education and awareness campaigns leverage various communication channels, including social media, to inform citizens about their rights and responsibilities as voters and encourage participation in the electoral process. The significance of these technologies relies on multifarious characteristics, including the context in which they are implemented, the level of public trust in the electoral process, and the capacity of electoral authorities to manage and maintain the technology.

Integration Of Knowledge And Biometric Voting For Bangladesh's Democracy:

In the digital age, the integrity of electoral processes is paramount to upholding democracy. Bangladesh, with its vibrant democracy, faces the challenge of ensuring fair elections amidst technological advancements and evolving threats. In this essay, we explore the concept of fair e-elections, emphasizing the integration of knowledge and biometric voting as a robust solution for safeguarding the democratic process in Bangladesh.

Understanding Fair E-Elections:

Fair e-elections refer to electronic means to conduct voting transparently, securely, and inclusively. They entail leveraging technology to enhance the electoral process while upholding the principles of democracy, including transparency, accountability, and representation.

The Role of Knowledge in E-Elections:

Knowledge is the cornerstone of fair e-elections, encompassing voter education, electoral administration, and cybersecurity measures. Voter education programs are essential to familiarize citizens with e-voting procedures, ensuring their active participation and confidence in the electoral process. Furthermore, electoral administrators must possess comprehensive knowledge of e-voting systems to effectively manage elections, mitigate risks, and address technical challenges. Moreover, robust cybersecurity measures, backed by advanced knowledge in digital security, are imperative to safeguard e-elections from cyber threats and manipulation.

The Significance of Biometric Voting:

Biometric voting, leveraging uncommon physiological features such as fingerprints or iris scans for voter identification, offers a secure and reliable means of authentication in e-elections. By linking voter identities to biometric data, the risk of impersonation and electoral fraud is significantly reduced, enhancing the integrity of the electoral process.

Additionally, biometric authentication enhances inclusivity by ensuring eligible voters, including those in remote or marginalized areas, can participate without hindrance.

IOK Biometric Voting for Bangladesh's Democracy:

Integrating knowledge and biometric voting holds immense potential for fortifying the democratic process. A comprehensive approach that combines voter education initiatives, capacity building for electoral officials, and adopting biometric authentication technologies can address the electoral system's existing challenges and vulnerabilities.

Voter education campaigns should focus on raising awareness about e-voting procedures, emphasizing the importance of civic engagement, and debunking misinformation surrounding electronic voting systems. Concurrently, electoral officials must receive specialized training on implementing and managing biometric voting systems, ensuring smooth execution and adherence to international standards of electoral integrity.

Furthermore, adopting biometric voting technology across polling stations nationwide can significantly enhance the credibility and transparency of elections in Bangladesh. By integrating biometric authentication into voter registration processes and ballot casting, the risk of electoral fraud, including multiple voting and voter impersonation, can be effectively mitigated.

Challenges and Considerations:

While integrating knowledge and biometric voting presents promising prospects for Bangladesh's democracy, several challenges must be addressed. These include ensuring the accessibility of e-voting systems to all citizens, particularly those in rural or underserved areas, and safeguarding the privacy and security of biometric data against misuse or breaches.

Additionally, concerted efforts are needed to build public trust in e-elections and address concerns regarding the reliability and integrity of electronic voting systems. Transparency in the procurement and deployment of e-voting technology, independent audits of electoral processes, and robust legal frameworks governing data protection and electoral practices are essential for fostering stakeholder confidence.

In short: Fair e-elections, anchored in integrating knowledge and biometric voting, offer a transformative pathway toward strengthening democracy in Bangladesh. By leveraging technology to enhance transparency, inclusivity, and security in the electoral process, Bangladesh can uphold the principles of democratic governance and ensure that people's will is accurately reflected in electoral outcomes. Embracing innovation while safeguarding against risks and vulnerabilities is imperative in advancing the integrity and credibility of Bangladesh's democracy in the digital age.

The Iokdemocratic Electoral Framework To Implement In Bangladesh:

The IOK and Democratic electoral system is a promising framework for fair and inclusive elections in Bangladesh. It emphasizes inclusivity, transparency, and informed decision-making. The system has the potential to overcome traditional electoral process challenges by incorporating mechanisms such as proportional representation, citizen participation, and access to reliable information, empowering the citizens of Bangladesh. Implementing the IOK and democratic electoral system in Bangladesh requires collaborative efforts. This starts with policymakers, electoral authorities, and the general public being widely aware of and understanding the system's principles and mechanisms. This can be accomplished through educational campaigns, workshops, and consultations, assuring everyone feels active and adored.

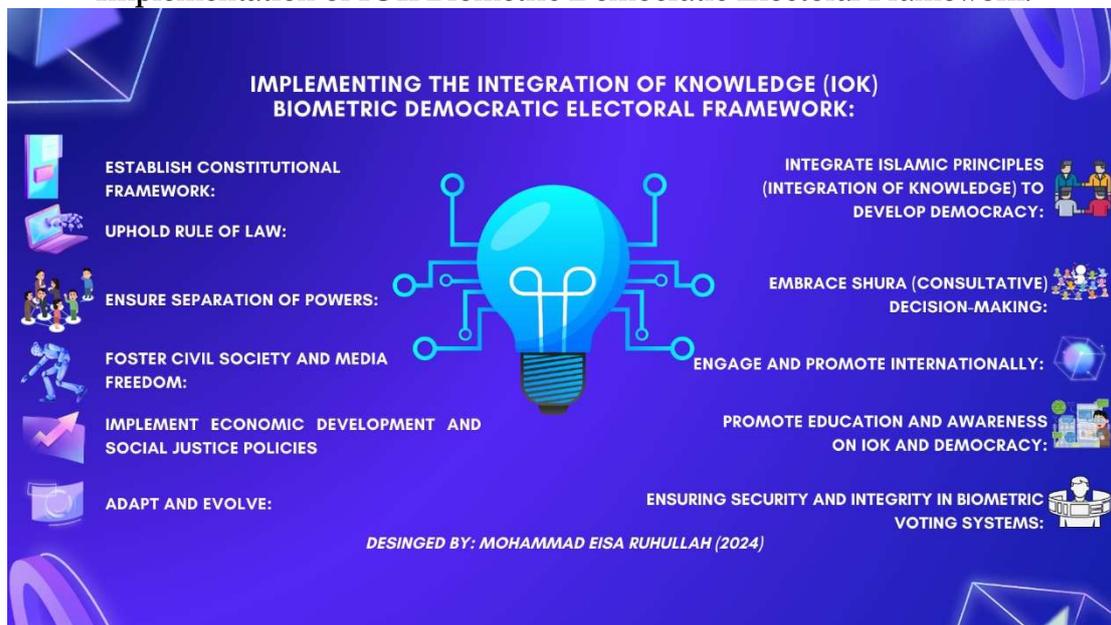
Reforms to existing electoral laws and regulations must align them with inclusivity, openness, and knowledge principles. Such reforms include changes to voting procedures,

candidate nomination processes, and campaign finance regulations. Robust voter instruction and attention mechanisms are essential to execute the IOK and democratic electoral method successfully. This ensures that all citizens can participate meaningfully in the electoral process. Initiatives such as voter registration drives, civic education programs, and technology to facilitate voter information dissemination can be used.

Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be implemented to assess the effectiveness and fairness of the IOK and democratic system over time, with adjustments to address any challenges or shortcomings. Implementing the IOK and democratic electoral system in Bangladesh would represent a significant step towards building a more inclusive and transparent democracy that better conforms to the conditions and appeals of all nationals.

Figure Number: Four

Implementation of IOK Biometric Democratic Electoral Framework:



Source: Authors (2024)

Implementing the Integration of Knowledge (IOK) Biometric Democratic Electoral Framework adopts a comprehensive strategy to improve democratic governance and processes. This framework aims to stimulate international cooperation and support by engaging globally. It underscores the significance of educating and raising awareness about IOK and democratic principles, ensuring that citizens are knowledgeable and actively engaged in the democratic process. Incorporating Shura (consultative) decision-making promotes inclusive and participatory governance. Additionally, the framework prioritizes the development of civil society and media freedom, maintaining the rule of law, and adapting and evolving in response to changing circumstances. It calls for implementing policies that support economic development and social justice, asserting power separation, and establishing a solid constitutional foundation. Integrating Islamic principles within a democratic framework strives to create an ethical and practical governance system. Central to this framework is the security and integrity of biometric voting systems, offering a secure and unalterable method for voter identification. This framework, designed by Mohammad Eisa Ruhullah (2024), aims to establish a robust and inclusive democratic environment by integrating Islamic Political Principles.

Conclusion:

This chart presents a comprehensive overview of the intricate process of developing an Islamic democracy. It highlights the critical steps for establishing robust constitutional principles, effective governance structures, meaningful civic engagement, high-quality education, sustainable economic development, and fruitful international cooperation. One of these stages plays a vital role in fostering democratic values and principles while simultaneously infusing Islamic ethics and principles into the political and social fabric of the country. By following these steps, a country can build a strong foundation for a thriving Islamic democracy that serves the needs and aspirations of its people.

Bangladesh operates under a parliamentary system of government, similar to other Commonwealth nations. The President is a symbolic figurehead in this system, while the Prime Minister holds executive powers. The President is elected indirectly by national parliament members, Jatiya Sangsad, to serve a five-year term. On the other hand, the Prime Minister is appointed by the President and leads the majority party or coalition in the Jatiya Sangsad. The Prime Minister is responsible for running the government and implementing laws.

The democratic process in Bangladesh involves general elections where members of parliament (MPs) are elected through universal adult suffrage. The party or coalition that secures most seats in the Jatiya Sangsad usually forms the government, and its leader becomes the Prime Minister.

However, Bangladesh has faced criticisms and controversies over allegations of voter intimidation, restrictions on opposition parties, and concerns about the independence of the judiciary and the media. It's important to note that political systems and processes can evolve, and there may have been changes or developments in Bangladesh's electoral system since the last update. Therefore, it's recommended to consult recent sources or news updates to obtain the most current information on Bangladesh's political system and electoral processes.

Following the successful national elections on January 7, the Awami League returned to power for an unprecedented fifth term. Despite the absence of a significant opposition party, the democratic process was inclusive and largely uncontested. Although the nation faces a looming economic downturn, there is no doubt that stability will be promptly achieved after the elections. Therefore, the danger of a financial crisis exacerbating a political crisis is not a real possibility⁵⁷.

Moreover, Bangladesh is at the crossroads of geopolitical interests, and global powers have shown keen interest in the nation's strategic potential. However, Bangladesh can easily manage the interplay of these interests, and any potential tensions between these players will not complicate the domestic situation. At this critical juncture, the interplay of elections, economics, and geopolitics will undoubtedly shape the nation's trajectory in 2024. Nonetheless, Bangladesh is well-equipped to navigate these challenges and emerge more vital than ever before⁵⁸.

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⁵⁷ Madison Mingos.

⁵⁸ Kazi Faisal Bin Seraj.

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