

The Role of Political Parties in Bangladesh's July Revolution of 2024: Insights from Sufi Perspectives

Dr. Saeyd Rashed Hasan Chowdury*

*Assistant Professor, Department of Basic Islamic Sciences (Sufism), Faculty of Islamic Sciences, Bartın University, Bartın, Turkey

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the role and political dynamics of Bangladeshi political parties, particularly Sufi-based parties, during the widespread student and public protests against the Awami League government from July 1 to August 5, 2024. The objective is to understand how these parties influenced the uprising, known as the July Revolution, which culminated in over 1,500 deaths and 31,000 injuries and ultimately led to the fall of the Awami League's 16-year rule. The study employs a qualitative methodology with the theory of revolutions, theory of resistances and theory of authoritarianism, analysing primary and secondary sources to explore the political, social, and human rights issues surrounding the uprising. Findings indicate that public frustration with the authoritarian governance, allegations of human rights violations, and significant events—including the BDR rebellion, Sufi-based Hefazat-e-Islam Bangladesh's clashes at Shapla Chattar, and targeted actions against opposition figures—intensified public dissent. The study discusses the implications of the uprising for Bangladesh's political landscape, emphasising the influential role of Sufi-based parties and their grassroots mobilisation efforts. This article provides original insights into the intersection of religious and political activism in Bangladesh, offering a foundation for future studies on the region's civil unrest and political reform.

Keywords: Sufism, Bangladesh, Awami League Regime, July Revolution, Student Movement.

INTRODUCTION

The July Revolution of Bangladesh, which spanned from July 1 to August 5, 2024, was achieved through 36 days of struggle and the sacrifice of countless young lives. The historic revolution and victory came on August 5, 2024, when the authoritarian Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina resigned after ruling the country for over fifteen years and fled. This victory was a triumph for the students and the people, for the youth, for the oppressed humanity against the tyrannical ruler, and good governance against misrule. It was a victory for the long-suffering people, who had endured the oppressive rule of the tyrant, reminiscent of a massive boulder crushing the nation's spirit. This victory achieved what powerful political parties had failed to accomplish — it was the triumph of the student and public uprising.

On December 29, 2008, the Awami League-led Grand Alliance came to power based on democracy with the support of the people. Over time, however, this party became increasingly alienated from the public. Most promises made before the elections went unfulfilled, and the small group of elites benefitted from whatever promises were partially met. The critical factors identified behind the fall of the ruling party include unilateral or rigged elections, suppression of opposition and dissenting voices, irregularities and corruption, and a reliance on bureaucrats and administrative control to maintain power. Although the Awami League initially came to power through a democratic election, it eventually became a de facto authoritarian government. Over the past 15 years, the Awami League systematically weakened most constitutional institutions (Human Rights Watch, 2024). While these institutions remained under government control, they became increasingly isolated from the people. The foundations of the Awami League's power were inherently unsustainable, as the party had become primarily disconnected from the public.

The student quota reform movement began on July 1, 2024. For the ruling Awami League, the situation became critical after Awami League President Sheikh Hasina and General Secretary Obaidul Quader referred to the

protesting students as “Razakars” (collaborators in Pakistani), a term with historical connotations in Bangladesh. This led to an escalation in the movement, sparking violent protests nationwide. The first reported casualty occurred when Abu Sayeed, a 12th-batch student of the English department from Begum Rokeya University in Rangpur, was shot and killed by the police. This incident intensified the nationwide protests of the Awami League, with parents, Islamic Scholars, Spiritual leaders and followers, Doctors, labourers, rickshaw pullers, and other members of society joining the movement. The unrest led to the loss of lives, affecting children, students, law enforcement officers, and bystanders alike. The Awami League government was accused of causing numerous deaths and injuries, leading to widespread devastation across Bangladesh. Ultimately, Sheikh Hasina, along with other leaders, faced widespread condemnation for the alleged violent tactics employed by affiliates such as the Bangladesh Chhatra League and The Bangladesh Awami Jubo League. Unable to withstand the public outcry, Sheikh Hasina resigned from office and sought refuge abroad (Human Rights Watch, 2024).

Bangladesh has witnessed three significant uprisings so far: the January 24, 1969, uprising against Ayub Khan, Former President of Pakistan; the December 6, 1990, uprising against the Hussain Muhammad Ershad government; and, after a 34-year gap, the rebellion on August 5, 2024, against Sheikh Hasina. The 2024 uprising was far more violent, terrifying, and bloody than the previous two. While Ayub Khan and Ershad did not flee the country, Sheikh Hasina had to leave within 45 minutes of being given the notice. The 2024 uprising saw a level of bloodshed unprecedented in Bangladesh’s history.

Many consider August 5, 2024, the day of Sheikh Hasina’s downfall, as a second independence for the country, akin to the victory in Bangladesh’s 1971 Liberation War. Others call this unprecedented event a revolution. This people’s uprising defeated the state’s power to use force. It marked the rise of political and moral authority among the students, different political groups and sufi-based political parties and organisations, especially those involved in the movement against discrimination. The youth created a wave of awakening against inequality, forming a public opinion that led to a dramatic change in the old system of governance, which holds revolutionary potential (Prothom Alo, 2024).

This article provides a comprehensive analysis of the Awami League government’s use of state-sanctioned violence, extrajudicial killings, and systemic oppression against ordinary citizens. It also examines the political opposition’s movements and resistance strategies within the broader sociopolitical context. Employing a multidisciplinary framework, the study draws upon the theory of revolutions, the theory of resistance, and the theory of authoritarianism to explore the dynamics of the July Revolution of 2024.

The analysis critically investigates the underlying factors that compelled the general population to rise against the regime, highlighting structural grievances such as corruption, repression, and the erosion of democratic norms. Additionally, it evaluates the government’s reliance on coercive mechanisms, including using force, suppression of dissent, and the systematic targeting of opposition figures, as strategies to maintain power. This inquiry is further enriched by incorporating a Sufi philosophical perspective, reflecting on ethical and spiritual dimensions of justice, resistance, and community welfare. Through this multidimensional approach, the article seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of the interplay between authoritarian governance and revolutionary resistance in contemporary Bangladesh.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative methodology incorporating content analysis to examine Bangladesh’s July Revolution 2024. The approach is designed to provide a nuanced understanding of the events by critically analysing diverse sources and situating the findings within established theoretical frameworks. The methodology is delineated as follows:

1. Data Collection: We used primary and secondary sources to prepare this article. For the Primary sources, we used a comprehensive review of media coverage, including reports from newspapers, magazines, and domestic and international television broadcasts, which was undertaken to document the protests and state responses between July 1 and August 5, 2024. We used academic articles, historical texts, and relevant theories consulted for secondary sources to contextualise the uprising and offer interpretive depth.

2. Analytical Frameworks: In this article, we used the Theory of Revolutions. This framework examines the socio-political and economic conditions precipitating collective action during the uprising. We also used the theory of resistance to analyse the dynamics of public defiance against systemic repression and state violence. We also used the theory of authoritarianism to interrogate the state's control mechanisms, including violence and suppression of dissent.

3. Sufi Philosophical Lens: The research explores the Tasawwuf (Sufi) perspective, leveraging the works and teachings of prominent Sufi figures such as Junayd al-Baghdadi, Mansur al-Hallaj, Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi (Futuh al-Makkiyah), Imam Rabbani Ahmad Sirhindi (Maktubat-e-Imam Rabbani), and Shah Waliullah Dehlawi (Hujjat Allah al-Balighah). These texts provide a moral and spiritual framework for understanding justice, resistance, and communal welfare. Including Sufi perspectives aims to uncover alternative moral and ethical dimensions of the uprising, emphasising principles such as self-sacrifice, justice, and community service.

4. Limitations: The study acknowledges significant constraints due to the recency of the events. A lack of comprehensive academic research and precise statistical data on casualties and injuries has posed challenges, requiring reliance on media sources and preliminary reports.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review establishes the conceptual and historical foundation for analysing the July Revolution by synthesising works on revolutionary theory, authoritarianism, resistance, and Sufism.

1. Revolutionary Dynamics: Foundational theories of revolution, such as those by Theda Skocpol (States and Social Revolutions) and Crane Brinton (The Anatomy of Revolution), provide a structural analysis of the economic, political, and societal precursors to revolutionary movements. These works illuminate how grievances against authoritarian governance escalate into collective action.

2. Resistance in Authoritarian Contexts: Literature on authoritarianism, including the writings of Hannah Arendt (The Origins of Totalitarianism) and James C. Scott (Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance), examines how authoritarian states maintain control through coercion and propaganda. These works further explore how resistance emerges as an organic response to oppression.

3. The Role of Sufism in Social Movements: The ethical and spiritual dimensions of Sufism have been extensively articulated in Junayd al-Baghdadi (d. 910), Mansur al-Hallaj (d. 922), Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi (d. 1240) and his work 'Futuh al-Makkiyah', Imam Rabbani Ahmad Sirhindi (d. 1624) and his work 'Maktubat E Imam Rabbani' in which emphasise principles of moral accountability, justice, and communal welfare. These texts provide a framework for examining how Sufi philosophies can inform resistance against oppression and promote societal well-being.

4. Tasawwuf and Modern Political Thought: Recent scholarship on Sufism, such as the writings of Shah Waliullah Dehlawi (d. 1762) through his writing 'Hujjat Allah Al-Balighah', Said Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (d. 1960) and Abdul Hakim Murad and other contemporary scholars, highlights the relevance of Tasawwuf in addressing modern socio-political crises. These works underscore Sufism's emphasis on ethical leadership, social cohesion, and communal service.

5. Media's Role in Contemporary Movements: The role of media in documenting and influencing uprisings has been explored in studies of the Arab Spring and other modern protests. This body of work highlights how media narratives shape public perception, mobilise resistance, and preserve the historical record of such movements.

6. Research Gaps: Despite the extensive literature on revolutions and resistance, a shortage of studies integrates spiritual or philosophical perspectives, such as Tasawwuf, into analysing contemporary uprisings. This study addresses this gap by applying a Sufi lens to understand the ethical and spiritual dimensions of the July Revolution.

This research adopts a multidisciplinary approach to analyse the July Revolution of 2024, integrating theoretical

and spiritual frameworks to understand the uprising comprehensively. This study contributes to emerging scholarship on the interplay between political movements and moral frameworks by critically engaging with revolutionary theory, resistance studies, and Sufi philosophy. The limitations posed by the recency of the events underscore the need for further scholarly investigation, particularly as more accurate data becomes available.

DISCUSSION

The historic student-people uprising and revolution in Bangladesh that took place from July 1 to August 5, 2024, against the ruling Awami League government, marked an unprecedented event in the contemporary world. However, this remarkable uprising was not an abrupt occurrence. It was the culmination of years of frustration and mounting anger against the 16-year-long authoritarian and deeply corrupt rule of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League government. The July Revolution reflected the deep-seated discontent among the people of Bangladesh, which manifested in this massive popular uprising, signalling the end of an oppressive regime (Haq, 2024).

The July Revolution: Bangladesh's Student-Led People's Uprising

In the December 29, 2008 election, the Awami League won a two-thirds majority with its allies of fourteen parties and formed the government. Since then, the party has shown no inclination to relinquish power. From 2008 to 2024, several factors contributed to growing public discontent against the Awami League government, including suppression of opposition and dissent, election fraud, irregularities, corruption, and reliance on bureaucrats and administrative control to maintain power. The Jatiya Party has supported various initiatives of the Awami League government. However, former President Hussain Muhammad Ershad founded the Jatiya Party on January 1, 1986. On July 1, 2024, a quota reform movement began against the Awami League government, leading to a mass uprising by students and the public, known as the July Revolution. This movement ultimately compelled the Awami League government to withdraw from power (Human Rights Watch, 2024).

For 16 years, the Awami League and its affiliated organisations have governed the country through electoral fraud, repression, and systemic corruption since 2008. The suffering caused by corruption, embezzlement of billions of dollars, extortion, and the skyrocketing cost of living had pushed the people to their limits. Under the regime, freedom of expression was stifled, and people were denied their fundamental rights. The government used state machinery, including the police and military, to oppress its citizens, leaving the population in fear and silence (Hossain, 2024).

The media reports highlight the brutality faced by the public, with many victims of abduction and extrajudicial killings. The term "Aynaghar" (meaning 'the house of disappearance') was used to describe secret detention places where the government had imprisoned its critics. From 2009 to 2021, at least 605 people were detained, with over 400 of them going missing between 2009 and 2017, according to human rights organisations. In 2024, the Human Rights Watch report revealed that more than 600 persons were abducted during Sheikh Hasina's rule (Hossain, 2024).

The people could no longer tolerate the Awami government. The tipping point came when the student movement for quota reforms in government jobs, a seemingly apolitical but just demand, acted as the spark for a more significant uprising. To suppress this fair movement, the government and the ruling party, along with their armed supporters and the police, used lethal force against the students. The movement quickly escalated into a full-scale political revolt against the government, demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the overthrow of the regime (Haq, 2024).

In a judgment delivered on June 5, 2024, the High Court ruled on reinstating the quota system in government jobs. Following this ruling, students from various universities, including Dhaka and Jahangirnagar, initiated a movement demanding quota reform. Initially, individual protests were conducted in isolated forms; however, over time, students across the country began to consider creating a unified platform to coordinate the movement at a national level. This initiative formally established the "Anti-discrimination Students Movement" on July 1, 2024 (Shimul, 2024).

The movement initially operated without a single spokesperson. A 65-member coordination committee was

announced to organise the efforts, comprising representatives from various universities within and outside Dhaka, with 23 coordinators and 42 deputy coordinators. As the movement intensified, the organisation expanded its coordination structure on August 3, forming a team of 158 coordinators from nationwide educational institutions. This team included 49 coordinators and 109 deputy coordinators. The Anti-discrimination Students Movement spearheaded the quota reform movement and later led a non-cooperation movement, ultimately compelling Sheikh Hasina to resign (Prothom Alo, 2024).

On July 26, 2024, three coordinators of the Anti-discrimination Students Movement (Bôishômÿôbirôdhî Châtrô Ândôlôn) —Nahid Islam, Asif Mahmud, and Abu Bakar Majumdar—were forcibly taken from Gonoshasthaya Nagar Hospital in Dhaka by D.B. (Detective Branch) police to the D.B. office on Minto Road. Nahid Islam and Asif Mahmud were receiving medical treatment at the hospital then. On July 27, coordinators Sarjis Alam and Hasnat Abdullah were also forcibly brought to the D.B. office from the Science Lab. On July 28, in the early morning, coordinator Nusrat Tabassum was forcibly taken from her home after it was broken into. Starting on July 19, the coordinators of the Anti-discrimination Students Movement faced abductions, arrests, torture, and harassment, primarily aimed at disrupting the movement and its leadership. In continuation of this strategy, six coordinators were forcibly detained for seven days in D.B. custody under the pretence of “security.” This prompted the general public to take to the streets in protest (Prothom Alo, 2024).

The student-led protests, which lasted for 36 days, ultimately led to the resignation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. The students’ demands for reforming the quota system in government jobs had become a symbol of resistance, turning the protest into a broader movement against authoritarian rule. This was the second round of protests, following the first in February 2018, which had already resulted in the government’s announcement to abolish the quota system in national jobs (Ekattor, 2024).

Alongside the students, Bangladesh’s working class and the public, including teachers, parents, and people from various sectors, played a significant role in this revolutionary movement. More than 1,500 people lost their lives, with the majority coming from the urban poor and semi-poor classes, who were already burdened by unemployment, hunger, and poor living conditions. Despite their hardships, these marginalised people joined the revolution, forming a collective resistance against the oppressive regime. This uprising, a combination of student protests and broader public participation, marked the end of a fascist government in Bangladesh and the beginning of a new chapter in the nation’s political history.

In the July-August 2024 protests, the involvement of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and its affiliated organisations was unprecedented. The BNP provided full support from the outset of the movement, which began as a demand for quota reforms, and their leadership and activists at all levels joined the student protests under the banner of the Anti-discrimination Students Movement, significantly strengthening the momentum of the protests.

The mass uprising of the students and the public against inequality resulted in hundreds of casualties. In addition to the students and ordinary citizens involved in the protests, numerous leaders and activists from BNP and its affiliates also lost their lives. At least 113 BNP members were killed during the demonstrations (Jiku, 2024). This number includes 49 from the BNP’s student wing, Bangladesh Jatiotabadi Chatradal, 35 from the Youth Front, 14 from the Workers’ Party, nine from the Volunteer Party, four from the Peasants’ Party, six from the North Metropolitan BNP, eight from the South Metropolitan BNP, two from the Fishermen’s Party, and one from JASAS. The most significant casualties were among the Students’ Front, Youth Front, and Workers’ Party leaders and activists. Many others are still fighting for their lives due to gunshot wounds, and the death toll is expected to rise, according to party leaders (Jugantor, 2024).

In an interview with the daily Jugantor on August 19, Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, a standing committee member of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, stated that there has never been a precedent for such brutal killings in south asian history. He described how pro-democracy students and public protesters were shot like birds and referred to it as a genocide, with Sheikh Hasina seeking to remain in power through such violent tactics. He also mentioned that hundreds of BNP leaders and activists were killed during the student and public protests. He emphasised the need for swift action against those responsible for these atrocities, highlighting the scale of forced disappearances, killings, and other grave crimes committed by the ruling government (Jiku, 2024).

BNP Senior Joint Secretary Ruhul Kabir Rizvi explained that the movement was initiated by students but garnered support from the public and various political parties, both directly and indirectly, as they stood against the authoritarian repression. He praised BNP's youth and young leaders for their patriotism, stating that they had rushed into action to protect the country. Many BNP leaders and activists were killed, and many others sustained injuries in the process (Banglanewsbdhub, 2024).

During the July Revolution in Bangladesh, students were joined by members of various political groups, including Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, who participated actively in the movement. Jamaat-e-Islami reported that at least 87 of its members were killed during the revolution. The party initially attempted to keep the deaths of their members secret to avoid politicising the student protests. This strategy prevented conflict or misunderstanding with the general student protesters. However, the movement, which initially began as a student movement, later transformed into a mass uprising, resulting in the fall of the Awami League government (Prothom Alo, 2024).

Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami sources confirmed that at least 53 members of the Bangladesh Islami Chhatrashibir, the student wing of Jamaat, were killed, along with 34 members of the Jamaat-e-Islami itself. The first day of intense violence on July 16 saw the deaths of two Chhatra Shibir leaders. Following the Awami League government's executive order to ban Jamaat-e-Islami on August 1, over 60 members of Jamaat and Chhatra Shibir were killed on August 4 and 5 (Ittefaq, 2024).

On July 18, Mia Golam Parwar, Secretary General of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, issued a statement expressing full support for the student movement, advocating for quota reform in government jobs. He stated that Jamaat supported the demand for fair representation and equal student rights (BSS News, 2024).

On August 1, the Awami League government declared Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing, Bangladesh Islami Chhatrashibir, to be illegal under the Anti-Terrorism Act. The Ministry of Home Affairs issued a decree to this effect. In response, political parties supporting democracy, including the BNP, condemned the government's decision as politically motivated. After the Awami League government fell, the interim government annulled the decree banning Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Chhatrashibir, issuing a new ruling on August 28, published in the official gazette (Nayadiganta, 2024).

In 2010, the Awami League-led government began the trials of war criminals from the 1971 Liberation War, accusing several members of Jamaat-e-Islami and the BNP of committing war crimes. By July 2013, four prominent Jamaat leaders, including Assistant Secretary-General Kader Mollah, Mohammad Kamruzzaman, Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid, and Jamaat-e-Islami's former Amir Matiur Rahman Nizami, were sentenced to death. Different countries, various international organisations and human rights groups heavily criticised these trials (Nayadiganta, 2024).

During the Awami League government's tenure, many Jamaat-e-Islami leaders were also killed or disappeared. Notably, the former Amir of Jamaat-e-Islami, the late Professor Golam Azam's son, Abdullahil Aman Azmi, a retired Brigadier General in the Bangladesh Army, disappeared for nearly 8 years. Additionally, the son of Jamaat-e-Islami leader Mir Kasem Ali, Mir Ahmed Bin Kasem Arman, a Bangladeshi barrister and human rights activist, was also forcibly disappeared by the Bangladesh security forces.

The Gono Odhikar Parishad played a crucial role in the July protests. On the night of July 20, Nurul Haque Nur, the former vice president of the Dhaka University Students' Union and the current president of the Gono Odhikar Parishad, was arrested by the Awami League government because he supported the movement. Nurul Haque Nur, who also served as a joint convener of the Bangladesh Students' Rights Council, was a leading figure in the 2018 quota reform movement.

In the context of the student protests demanding reform of the government job quota system, Barrister Andalib Rahman Partha, Chairman of the Bangladesh Jatiya Party (BJP) and former Member of Parliament, was arrested by the ruling Awami League government on July 24. The court subsequently approved a five-day remand. Andalib Rahman Partha posted on social media supporting the students' quota reform movement (Prokash, 2024).

The Amar Bangladesh Party (A.B. Party) is a new political party founded on May 2, 2020, to establish a rights-

based welfare state grounded on equality, human dignity, and social justice. During the July Revolution, the party's convenor, A.F.M. Solaiman Chowdhury, member secretary Mujibur Rahman Manju, and joint member secretary Barrister Asaduzzaman Fuad played significant roles in showing solidarity with students in the July Movement and opposing the Awami government.

In the July Revolution against the Awami League in Bangladesh, journalists and online activists living abroad significantly contributed to the country's democratic movement through social media. Among them are Mushfiqul Fazal Ansari, Mahmudur Rahman, Pinaki Bhattacharya, Tasneem Khalil, Kanak Sarwar, Zulkarnain Sayer, Elias Hossain, Monir Haider, Faham Abdus Salam, Shahed Alam, Abdur Rob Bhutto, Saifur Sagar, Nazmus Saqib, Jawad Nirjhor, and Fayeze Ahmed Tayyeb, along with many others (Banglanews24. 2024).

In addition, several other parties played a role in Bangladesh's July Revolution, including the Ganatantra Mancha, the Liberal Democratic Party, and the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), including others. They joined the student and public movement, taking a strong stance against the Awami League government, ultimately pressuring the Awami League to step down from power.

Sufism and The July Revolution: A Spiritual Lens on Struggle and Martyrdom

The movements of renowned Sufis against tyrannical Muslim rulers have often been centred around spiritual and social change. They have led various movements against oppressive rulers throughout history, with their primary goal being the restoration of the fundamental principles of Islam and the establishment of justice and social equity among the people. Sufi saints typically take a stance against tyrannical rulers from a spiritual perspective and encourage the people to fulfil their moral and spiritual duties. They strive to establish justice and protect the general public's rights. Many Sufi movements have worked to safeguard the people's interests, spreading Islamic teachings and morality to create a strong resistance against tyrannical rulers. These Sufi movements have played a significant role in transforming and developing Islamic society, attempting to establish the rights and justice of the people based on Islamic ethics.

From the Sufism perspective, the struggle for the country or Ummah and the significance of martyrdom are paramount. This is a critical aspect of Islamic thought and spirituality. According to Sufism, a Sufi is encouraged to struggle for his spiritual development and the welfare of the country or the Ummah. This contributes to the establishment of peace and security in society. Martyrdom holds great honour in Islam. The Qur'an and Hadith mention that martyrs are honoured by Allah and have a special place reserved for them in Paradise. In the view of Sufism, this symbolises spiritual elevation. In Sufism, war or struggle is seen as a means of ensuring the security and propagation of Islam. Those who are martyred for their country or the Ummah are considered contributors to the protection and establishment of Islam (Pinckaers, 2016).

Through struggle and martyrdom, an individual can become spiritually stronger. It helps them become closer to Allah through their sacrifice. Selfless love and surrender to Allah are vital elements in Sufism. Struggling for the country or the Ummah is an excellent expression of selfless love and dedication to the path of Allah. According to Sufism, the struggle against injustice is the responsibility of every Muslim. It is essential for the protection and welfare of the Ummah. From these perspectives, Sufism considers the struggle for the country and martyrdom as high and spiritual duties. It presents a rich perspective on the commitment to the welfare of the Ummah and the battle for Islam (Ohlander, E. S. 2020).

Junayd al-Baghdadi (d. 910), recognised as the founder of Sufism, worked tirelessly to restore justice and morality within Islamic society. He spoke out against many tyrannical rulers and openly opposed their authority (Ohlander, E. S. 2020). Similarly, Mansur al-Hallaj (d. 922) was known for his fierce criticism of the rulers of his time, protesting societal injustice and the oppression of authoritarian rulers. His thoughts and actions have made him a prominent figure for many (Ramli, 2013, p. 106).

In Sufism, the importance of struggling for the country or Ummah and martyrdom is highlighted in the book *Futuh al-Makkiyah* by Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi (d. 1240). He mentions, "The land soaked with the blood of martyrs is the ladder to Paradise. Those who sacrifice themselves for the sake of Allah reach the highest stations." Furthermore, Ibn Arabi discusses the significance of spiritual struggle and self-sacrifice for the Ummah in his

work Futuhat al-Makkiyah. This work is considered a fundamental piece of Sufi literature (Meirison & Muzakki, 2020).

The great Sufi figure Abdul Qadir Gilani (d. 1166) elaborates on the combination of spirituality and struggle, explaining how one should strive for the truth. Abdul Qadir and his followers initiated movements to establish social justice, spread Islamic teachings, and raise awareness against tyrannical rulers. He stated, “Those who give their lives in the way of Allah are truly alive. They are a special example for the Ummah, those who struggle for justice and truth (Bhat, D. M. A. 2011).”

During Emperor Akbar’s reign (1556–1605), various policies perceived as contrary to Islamic principles were introduced, including the propagation of Dīn-i Ilāhī, a syncretic religious doctrine aimed at unifying diverse faiths within the empire. This movement, which attracted a portion of the population, raised significant concerns among Islamic scholars. Among those who mounted a response was Imam Rabbani Ahmad Sirhindi (d. 1624), a prominent Sufi scholar who recognised the potential long-term implications of these initiatives on the faith and identity of the Muslim community (Chowdury, 2024, pp. 1-8). In response, Imam Rabbani actively opposed Dīn-i Ilāhī, remaining steadfast in his reformative mission of writing a ‘Maktubat E Imam Rabbani’ despite facing harsh persecution, including imprisonment and prolonged hardship. His persistent efforts to preserve Islam in the face of imperial opposition eventually led to the decline of Dīn-i Ilāhī and the restoration of traditional Islamic practices within the empire. For his achievements in re-establishing Islamic principles, he was later honoured with the title Mujaddid-i Alf-i Thani, or “Renewer of the Second Millennium of Islam,” underscoring his enduring influence on the religious landscape of the Mughal Empire (Chowdury & Göktaş, 2021, pp. 93-121).

Shah Waliullah Dehlawi (d. 1762), a renowned Sufi from the Indian subcontinent, strongly criticised the oppressive Muslim rulers and worked to establish Islamic values among the people (Chowdury, 2024). He stressed the need for political and social education for the Ummah. According to him, “Struggling for the Ummah is the implementation of the fundamental principles of Islam. Struggling on the path of truth is the duty of every Muslim (Chowdury, Alkan, & İsmailoğlu, 2023, p. 25).

Said Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (d. 1960) provides a detailed discussion on the nobility and the significance of struggling for the Ummah and martyrdom. He led a spiritual movement against the oppressive rulers in Turkey, emphasising the importance of Islamic fundamental principles and teachings among the people. His movement was focused on religious freedom and justice. These Sufi commentaries and literary works highlight the significance of struggle and martyrdom for the Ummah. They guide individuals on their duties and responsibilities based on Islam’s fundamental teachings and ethics (Syauq, A. 2022). These Sufi thoughts emphasise the importance of struggle and martyrdom for the welfare of the Ummah, demonstrating the connection between spiritual development and social justice. Through their words and actions, these prominent Sufis presented a vision for the Ummah rooted in justice, truth, and the application of Islamic values.

In Bangladesh, the spread of Islam owes much to the significant contributions of pirs, dervishes, and Sufi mystics. These figures not only played vital roles in the construction of mosques, madrasas, and the patronage of khanqahs (Sufi centres), but they also opposed oppressive rulers and, in some instances, became martyrs. A prominent figure in the Islamic history of Bangladesh is Hazrat Shah Jalal (d. 1341), who, along with his nephew Shah Paran and 360 followers, travelled from Konya, Turkey, to the Sylhet region of Bangladesh in 1303 CE. After defeating him in battle, they came to confront the tyrant King Gaur Govinda and established Muslim rule in the area (Chowdury, 2023, pp. 73-83).

Another influential figure in Bangladesh’s Islamic history is Baba Adam Shahid (d. 1178), a Sufi saint who travelled from Ta’if, Saudi Arabia, to Bengal in the 12th century to spread Islam. Impressed by the lush, green environment of Bengal and the simplicity of its people, he decided to settle in the region. Baba Adam is mainly remembered for his efforts in the fertile region of Munshiganj’s Bikrampur, where he established khanqahs and propagated Islam. At that time, Bikrampur was under the rule of the Hindu king Ballal Sen, who was notorious for oppressing the ordinary people. Baba Adam, in resistance to the tyranny of King Ballal Sen, led a revolt and became a martyr in the battle against the unjust Hindu ruler (Chowdury, 2023).

Mir Nesar Ali Titumir (d. 1831) led a significant armed movement against his time’s oppressive practices of the

zamindars and British imperialism. His resistance against the oppressive landlords and indigo planters became known as the 'Barasat Rebellion.' In 1831, near Barasat in the village of Narkelbaria, Titumir and his followers constructed a bamboo fort to gather weapons for battle. He engaged in combat with British forces in Narkelbaria, ultimately sacrificing his life in the struggle. A contingent was sent to fight Titumir, who remained steadfast in his fight against injustice without compromise. Titumir's legacy has continued to inspire freedom fighters in Bangladesh's struggle for independence. In 1971, Mohammad Jinnah College was renamed Government Titumir College in his honour. Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) named a student dormitory "Titumir Hall" after him. In a BBC poll, Titumir was voted the 11th greatest Bengali ever. In recognition of his contributions to the anti-British movement, on December 10, 1974, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman commissioned a Bangladesh Navy base, BNS Titumir, on the banks of the Rupsha River in Khulna and bestowed it with the 'Naval Ensign.' Additionally, a ship in the Bangladesh Navy was named BNS Titumir. Furthermore, an intercity train service named Titumir Express runs between Rajshahi and Chilahati Station in Nilphamari district (Cowdury, 2023, pp. 151-161).

Haji Shariatullah (d. 1840) was a prominent leader opposing indigo planters and feudal oppression. He led the Faraizi Movement in Bengal and British India, which aimed to liberate peasants, weavers, and other labourers from exploitation. He was initiated into the Qadiri Sufi tariqa by his teacher, Taher Sombal. In his honour, the district of Shariatpur in Bangladesh was named after him (Cowdury, 2023, pp. 125-134).

Therefore, there are many sufis: Shah Sultan Rumi (Early 11th century) in Mymensingh, Shah Niamatullah Butshikon (pre-Mughal Empire period) in Dhaka, Shaikh Fariduddin Ganjshakar (d. 1266) in Faridpur, Shah Makhdum Ruposh (d. 1313) in Rajshahi, Makhdum Shah Daulah Shahid (d. 1313) in Pabna and Shah Sultan Balkhi (16th century) in Bogra exemplify the role of Sufi saints in not only spreading the message of Islam but also in challenging oppressive political regimes, thus playing an essential part in the social and spiritual transformation of the region.

If we analyse Bangladesh's July Revolution from the perspective of Sufism, we can observe that Sufi-centered groups, alongside other political parties, played a significant role in this revolution. These groups actively participated in the student-populist movement from Hefazat-e-Islam Bangladesh to Islami Andolan Bangladesh and the Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis. The details of their contributions to this movement are elaborated below.

Hefazat-e-Islam Bangladesh is based on the Qaumi madrasa system, formed on January 19, 2010. Since its establishment, the organisation has been conducting movements to establish an Islamic governance system in Bangladesh. In the anti-quota movement, Hefazat-e-Islam, a Qaumi madrasa-based and Sufi-based organisation, led various campaigns against different Awami League governments. During the July Revolution in 2024, more than 73 students, including 14 Hafiz of the Qur'an, affiliated with Hefazat-e-Islam Bangladesh and Bangladesh Qaumi Madrasas, were martyred by the Awami League government (BBC Bengali, 2024).

The Hefazat-e-Islam organisation has been a significant political and religious force in Bangladesh, particularly noted for its opposition to secularism and its advocacy for implementing an Islamic governance system. In 2013, Hefazat launched widespread protests demanding the death penalty for atheist bloggers who allegedly insulted Islam and the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The group also called for the enactment of blasphemy laws and the prohibition of un-Islamic behaviour (bdnews24, 2024). Under the leadership of the prominent Sufi scholars Shah Ahmed Shafi (d. 2020) and Junayed Babungari (d. 2021), Hefazat presented a list of 13 demands to the Awami League government. These included calls for stricter enforcement of Islamic principles and implementing Sharia laws (Jugantor, 2024).

On May 5, 2013, Hefazat organised a long march from across the country to Dhaka, culminating in a large rally at Shapla Chattar in the Motijheel area of Dhaka. The rally saw significant participation; on that day, clashes occurred between Hefazat activists and law enforcement agencies, leading to heavy casualties. According to Hefazat's account, approximately 300 people were killed by the combined forces of the police, Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), with their bodies allegedly being disposed of, and over 2,500 people were arrested and reportedly disappeared (Odhikar, 2024).

Regarding the 2024 student uprising, Babungari remarked that the memories of the May 5, 2013, massacre in

Shapla Chattar still burn in their hearts. He recalled how many of the victim's bodies had been disposed of and attempts were made to cover up the extent of the deaths. He also noted the horrific mockery and lies surrounding the deaths of the martyrs in the Parliament. Despite all the challenges, including imprisonment, repression, and conspiracies, Babungari emphasised that the time had come for the people to rise and stand firm in their pursuit of justice (Nayadiganta, 2024).

As the Anti-discrimination Students Movement began, the Awami League government first started injuring and killing students in various ways. Six students were killed in attacks on anti-quota activists at Dhaka University, Begum Rokeya University, Chittagong University, and Jahangirnagar University (Amader Shomoy, 2024). Hefazat-e-Islam Bangladesh strongly condemned and protested these actions. On July 17, in a statement sent to the media, the Amir of the organisation, Shah Mohibullah Babunagari, and the General Secretary, Shaikh Sazedur Rahman, condemned the brutal attacks, stating that six students had been killed and women had been brutally beaten. Even in hospitals, the wounded were attacked. They emphasised that attacking women in such a manner is prohibited in Islam and a gross violation of international human rights law. They strongly condemned such inhumane acts, which no rational person could accept (Dhaka Post, 2024).

On the night of July 17, around 10 PM, Mir Idris Nadvi, the Central Joint Secretary of Hefazat-e-Islam, issued a declaration on behalf of general students in front of the Darul Uloom Moinul Islam Hathazari Madrasa, condemning the violence and demanding justice (Dhaka Post, 2024). After the Asr prayer, more than a hundred madrasa students gathered in the Dakbangla compound to protest the attacks and express their solidarity with the victims. Hefazat-e-Islam leaders and activists participated in the gathering. They demanded immediate action from the authorities to punish those responsible for the violence. They warned that Qaumi madrasa students would also take to the streets if the attacks did not stop. On July 18, after the Asr prayer, Hefazat-e-Islam called for a protest rally and gathering.

Mir Idris Nadvi, the Central Joint Secretary, stated that the 56% quota system in recruitment had led to a lack of merit in the administrative machinery. He emphasised the need for reforms in the quota system for the welfare of the state and the nation. He argued that the state machinery had become meritless due to the quota system, and reforms were urgently needed (Ittefaq, 2024).

The government's attempts to suppress the movement by closing educational institutions and undermining the nation's intellectual capacity were strongly criticised. Hefazat-e-Islam stated that the government had crossed the red line of human rights violations in its efforts to suppress the legitimate movement of students and the public. Hefazat-e-Islam called on the public to show solidarity with the students and protest the government's violations of human rights (Ittefaq, 2024).

On August 2, 2024, Hefazat-e-Islam Bangladesh's Amir, Shah Mohibullah Babungari, called for nationwide prayers to be held on Friday. He stated that, in recent times, hundreds of innocent students and people had been killed and thousands injured due to violent clashes between the administration and the students during the Anti-discrimination Students Movement. The law enforcement agencies, to suppress the legitimate movement, had used force and conducted reckless acts of brutality against the student masses. Additionally, many students and ordinary citizens had been arbitrarily arrested. He condemned these actions in the strongest terms. He called for prayers for the well-being of the country and its people, as well as to protect defenceless individuals from extrajudicial oppression (Kalbela, 2024).

Hefazat's Secretary General, Shaikh Sazidur Rahman, expressed deep condolences for the families and relatives of those who had lost their lives in the movement. He stated that the organisation prays for the forgiveness of the martyrs and the swift recovery of the injured. He further demanded that the government provide compensation to the families of the deceased and ensure immediate medical treatment for the wounded. He urged Hefazat's leaders, activists, and the country's people to stand by those affected by the movement and support them in their time of need (Kalbela, 2024).

On August 3, 2024, a prayer gathering was held at Chittagong Jamia Azizul Ulum Babungari and across the country by Hefazat-e-Islam Bangladesh to pray for the forgiveness of the martyrs of the quota reform movement and the recovery of those injured by the law enforcement agencies and terrorists' gunfire. During the prayer meeting, Shah Mohibullah Babungari stated that justice will only be established in the country through the blood

of the martyrs. He pointed out that the student movement, focused initially on the quota system, has now transformed into a demand for justice for the student murders. He emphasised that the atrocities are now being condemned not only within the country but also internationally. He further referenced the unresolved murder cases of Hefazat workers and madrasa students in Shapla Chattar on May 5, calling out the government's indifference towards these past injustices. He asserted that no remedy would come from those who have caused the deaths, and only the destruction of the oppressive forces will bring justice to the country. He urged the people not to be deceived by false promises (Inqilab, 2024).

In a statement issued on August 4, 2024, Hefazat-e-Islam Bangladesh's Amir, Shah Mohibullah Babungari, called upon the nation to unite in the one-point movement led by the student masses. He stated, "The heroic students and citizens of Bangladesh must participate in the one-point 'Dhaka Cholo' (Let us go to the Dhaka) movement." In his statement, he urged all political groups and individuals to join the movement, emphasising that this was a new struggle for freedom. He further condemned the actions of the ruling government, stating that those who have deprived the people of their fundamental rights, restricted political and religious liberties, and conducted genocide to destroy peace and prosperity must face the end of their fascist rule (Ittefaq, 2024). Babungari stated that the student-led quota reform movement had become a symbol of justice, and the brutal killings of innocent students should not be tolerated. He called for unity in the fight for justice and the protection of the nation's sovereignty, declaring that there could be no alternative to joining the students on the streets (Nayadiganta, 2024).

During the July Revolution of 2024, directed against the Awami League government, various political groups, including the students and the masses of Bangladesh, actively participated. Among them, the followers and members of the Islami Andolan Bangladesh (IAB) including its student wing Islami Chatro Andolon Bangladesh (Islamic Student Movement Bangladesh) and under their different wings like Islami Jubo Andolon Bangladesh (Islamic Youth Movement Bangladesh), Islami Sromik Andolon Bangladesh (Islamic Labor Movement Bangladesh), Islami Muktijodda Projonmo Porishod (Islamic Liberation Fighter Generation Council), Islami Ainjibi Porishod (Islamic Lawyers Council), Jatiyo Sikkhok Forum (National Teachers Forum), Jatiyo Ulama Mashyekh Aiemma Porishod (National Ulama Mashaikh Aemma Parishad), led by the Chormonai Pir, a major Sufi-centered political party in Bangladesh, played a significant role in the protests. Members of the IAB were directly involved in the movement, and many of them were either martyred or injured by the actions of the Awami League government during the protests.

According to a press conference held on August 20, 2024, by the Deputy Amir of IAB, Syed Mohammad Faizul Karim, at least 18 of the party's leaders and activists were killed during the July-August student uprising, with more than a thousand others injured and currently undergoing treatment (Jugantor, 2024).

On July 18, 2024, IAB, led by Chormonai Pir, announced nationwide protests in response to the brutal attacks on innocent students protesting for quota reforms (BD Pratidin, 2024). These protests were a direct response to the violence by the Awami League government and its affiliated terrorist groups, including the police forces, who opened fire on unarmed students (Bangla Tribune, 2024). In response, on July 19, IAB organised prayer gatherings in mosques across the country, followed by marches condemning the actions of the Awami League government. Police forces injured many participants in these protests (Dhaka Times, 2024).

On August 2, 2024, during a protest rally in the capital's Paltan area, the IAB declared a mass procession to be held on August 5, 2024. Later, they advanced the date to August 4, 2024, when Islami Andolan Bangladesh, in solidarity with the student movement, led a mass march from the National Press Club to Shahbagh in Dhaka, reaffirming their commitment to the student-led protest. The senior deputy Amir, Syed Faizul Karim, fully supported the student movement's activities (Dhaka Times, 2024).

On August 4, 2024, Islami Andolan Bangladesh, under the leadership of Chormonai Pir, suspended its previously planned mass procession and declared its participation in the student movement's "March to Dhaka." Syed Mohammad Rezaul Karim, the Amir of IAB, instructed all leaders and activists of Islami Andolan Bangladesh and affiliated student and youth organisations to participate in the movement. He also emphasised providing all necessary support for those arriving in Dhaka. In his statement, he urged the nation's people to unite and contribute to the success of the "March to Dhaka" as part of the broader demand for the resignation of the Awami

League government.

IAB has continuously shown solidarity with the student movement's call for justice and an end to the government's discriminatory policies. The party leaders have been instrumental in rallying support for the movement and providing resources to ensure the movement's success. The IAB's participation highlights its commitment to the political and social empowerment of the people while also demonstrating its resistance against the oppressive measures employed by the government.

During the July Revolution in Bangladesh, as the Awami League government engaged in a brutal massacre against the students and public protesters, Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis, an Islamic political party in Bangladesh, issued a strong protest. The party condemned the killings of innocent students, the injury and arrest of thousands, and the renewed repression of government opponents. On August 2, in a statement, Khelafat Majlis Amir Abdul Bashit Azad and General Secretary Ahmed Abdul Qader expressed their opposition to the killings, torture, and repression carried out by the Awami government (Dhaka Times, 2024).

The leaders of Khelafat Majlis emphasised that the unprecedented unity displayed by the people in the streets against the government's mass killings, mass arrests, and unlimited corruption would ensure the fall of the government. They demanded that the government immediately resign, taking responsibility for its failure to provide security for people's lives and property (Dhaka Times, 2024).

Khelafat Majlis also called for a thorough, impartial, and internationally recognised investigation into the deaths during the student protests, with the perpetrators brought to justice. On August 3, during a press conference at the party's office in Old Paltan, the General Secretary of Khelafat Majlis, Mamunul Haque, expressed these views. In the ongoing movement, the Amir of Khelafat Majlis, Ismail Nurpuri, led prayers and prayers for the souls of the martyrs and the swift recovery of the injured (Khaborer Kagoj, 2024).

On August 5, in a statement, Abdul Bashit Azad and Ahmed Abdul Qader, the Amir and General Secretary of Khelafat Majlis, stated that the July 2024 student protest movement, which began earlier in the month, had achieved its final goal on August 5, fulfilling the aspirations of the students and the people of Bangladesh. The 15-year-long fascist authoritarian regime had come to an end (Inqilab, 2024).

On August 7, 2024, in a press conference in Sylhet, the General Secretary of Khelafat Majlis Sylhet district, Nehal Ahmad, stated that the people of Bangladesh had gained freedom from the autocratic rule of Sheikh Hasina through an extraordinary uprising, made possible by the bloodshed and sacrifice of the students and the public. This revolution resulted from the sacrifices made by thousands of martyrs and millions of student protesters. During this victory, the movement's leadership expressed gratitude to the student public (Jalalabad, 2024). On September 4, marking one month since the fall of the autocratic Sheikh Hasina government through the people's uprising, Khelafat Majlis sent greetings to the nation (BanglaNews24, 2024).

On September 30, 1979, the late President Ziaur Rahman formed the Nationalist Ulama Party, bringing together people with Islamic ideology. During the 1990s, the organisation's first conference appointed S.M. Ruhul Amin as President and Moazzem Hossain as General Secretary. Under the leadership of Md. Selim Reza, the current Convenor of the Central Committee of the Ulama Party, and Secretary General Advocate Kazi Abul Hossain, the Ulama Party played a crucial role in the July Revolution, actively participating in all programs called by the Bangladesh National Party (BNP) and contributing significantly to the movement.

Various Sufi groups affiliated with Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, such as the Pir of Naghaish Darbar Sharif Mustak Faizi, played an active role in the movement, providing statements in support of the student protests. Similarly, Pir Kamrul Islam Saeed Ansari also issued statements supporting the student-led uprising. This active involvement of Jamaat-e-Islami and its affiliated Sufi groups highlighted the July Revolution's deeply rooted political and religious dimensions. Jamaat was pivotal in shaping the protest's narrative and strategic direction.

Enayet Ullah Abbasi, the spiritual leader and pir of Abbasid Manzil and Jainpuri Darbar Sharif, has consistently voiced strong opposition to the repression and abuses by the Awami government. Due to his various remarks against the government, he faced charges under the Digital Security Act filed by the Awami government. He

likened the 2024 popular uprising to a “Second Liberation War,” emphasising the significance of this movement in the context of national resistance (Jugantor, 20024).

A. F. M. Khalid Hossain, the current Religious Advisor of Bangladesh, stated that the martyrs of the July Revolution sacrificed themselves for the greater good of the country and the nation. He emphasised that these individuals gave their lives to free the nation from fascism, and the nation will remember their sacrifice. The Religious Advisor further remarked, “For a long time, the people of the country suffered under the oppression and tyranny of a fascist government. The former government suppressed democracy and curtailed the freedom of speech. In such circumstances, the country’s students and the public played a remarkable role in liberating the nation. They sacrificed their lives to free the motherland from fascism, a debt that can never be repaid (Somoy News, 2024).”

In the July Revolution against the Awami League in Bangladesh, the Islami Oikya Jote played a significant role alongside other parties. The party’s current chairman, Abdul Kader, and secretary general, Sakhawat Hossain Raji, actively participated in the student and public movement and issued various statements protesting against the Awami League. They also played essential roles like Bangladesh Khelafat Andolon, Tawhidi Janata Andolon, Bangladesh Islami Front and Islami Mohajote in the July revolution in Bangladesh.

FINDINGS

The July Revolution of 2024 in Bangladesh is a critical point in the country’s political history, where revolutionary dynamics, authoritarian practices, and resistance strategies against such practices intermingled. The following argument, which rests on the theoretical insights of Theda Skocpol (States and Social Revolutions), Crane Brinton (The Anatomy of Revolution), Hannah Arendt (The Origins of Totalitarianism) and James C. Scott (Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance), attempts to examine these structural and sociopolitical facts surrounding this specific student movement of revolt against the Awami League government.

Revolutionary Dynamics: Structural Preconditions and Collective Mobilisation

The theories of Theda Skocpol in States and Social Revolutions emphasise the interplay of structural crises, elite disunity, and popular mobilisation as pivotal in revolutionary outcomes. Skocpol’s model aligns closely with the trajectory of the July Revolution, wherein systemic corruption, embezzlement of billions of dollars, extortion and economic hardship, and suppression of dissent created structural vulnerabilities within the Awami League regime. From 2008 to 2024, the government’s reliance on bureaucratic and administrative control to maintain power alienated various societal sectors, creating an environment ripe for revolution. The tipping point emerged with the students’ demand for quota reforms, which, although seemingly apolitical, acted as the catalyst for collective action. This reflects Skocpol’s argument that revolutions often arise from non-political grievances mobilising disparate groups into cohesive movements (Skocpol, 1979).

Crane Brinton’s The Anatomy of Revolution highlights stages in revolutions, such as the fall of the previous system, radicalisation, and eventual stabilisation. The July Revolution followed these steps: beginning protests for quota reform grew into broader demands for systemic change, ending in the demise of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s government. Brinton’s definition of a “revolutionary crisis,” characterised by the breakdown of governmental authority and public mobilisation, is exemplified by the unprecedented unity of students, political parties including the BNP, Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, Gono Odhikar Parishad, Bangladesh Jatiya Party (BJP), Amar Bangladesh Party, Ganatantra Mancha, the Liberal Democratic Party, the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), and Sufi-centered groups like Hefazat-e-Islam Bangladesh, Islami Andolan Bangladesh and the Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis and other parties and other Sufi groups. The movement’s leadership structure, notably the Anti-discrimination Students Movement’s decentralised coordination committees, exemplifies Brinton’s theory of how revolutionary leaders develop to channel anger into organised resistance (Brinton, 1938).

Authoritarianism and State Repression: Tools of Control and Resistance

Hannah Arendt’s writings in The Origins of Totalitarianism provide a perspective to study the Awami League’s authoritarian methods, particularly its use of violence, propaganda, and bureaucratic control to suppress

opposition. Arendt's explanation of how authoritarian regimes utilise fear and systematic oppression to keep power is evident in the Awami government's policies, which include extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, and the utilisation of secret detention facilities such as "Aynaghar." The repression of leaders and followers in different political organisations and activists, as seen by abductions and forced detentions, demonstrates the regime's efforts to destabilise the movement's leadership and instil fear. Arendt's view of "loneliness as a precondition for totalitarianism" reflects the public's collective misery under the system, finally leading to resistance (Hannah, 1973).

James C. Scott, in *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, highlights the subtle forms of resistance employed by oppressed populations, which, when coordinated, can undermine authoritarian regimes. The July Revolution exemplifies Scott's theory through the creative and decentralised strategies employed by the Anti-discrimination Students Movement. The student's ability to sustain protests despite severe repression, coupled with their use of social media to amplify their cause, reflects Scott's notion of how everyday acts of defiance can evolve into organised resistance. Furthermore, the involvement of marginalised groups, such as the urban poor and semi-poor classes, underscores the role of collective grievances in challenging authoritarian rule (Scott, 1985).

Theory of Resistance: Mobilisation and Overthrow

The July Revolution also aligns with the theory of resistance, which examines how oppressed populations mobilise to overthrow authoritarian regimes. The movement's transformation from a demand for quota reforms into a full-scale political uprising illustrates the dynamic interplay between structural grievances and active resistance. The Anti-discrimination Students Movement's decentralised coordination committees and alliances with political parties, including the BNP, Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, Gono Odhikar Parishad, Bangladesh Jatiya Party (BJP), Amar Bangladesh Party, Ganatantra Mancha, the Liberal Democratic Party, the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), and Sufi-centered groups like Hefazat-e-Islam Bangladesh, Islami Andolan Bangladesh and the Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis and other parties, highlight the importance of coalition-building in resistance movements. The theory of resistance also sheds light on the strategic use of non-cooperation and mass mobilisation, which ultimately forced the Awami League government to step down.

The revolutionary success can also be analysed through Crane Brinton's concept of "thermidor" or the return to stability after revolutionary upheaval (Young & Leszczynski, 2021). The establishment of an interim government following the resignation of Sheikh Hasina marks the beginning of this phase, with the potential for structural reforms and political realignment. However, the violence and casualties during the uprising, including the deaths of over 1,500 individuals and 31,000 injuries, underscore the cost of resistance against authoritarian regimes (Kalerkantho, 2024).

The Intersection of Revolutionary and Authoritarian Dynamics

The July Revolution underscores the intricate relationship between revolutionary dynamics and authoritarian repression. While the Awami League's authoritarian practices sought to suppress dissent and maintain control, these very actions—such as the use of lethal force against students—served to intensify public outrage and galvanise resistance. The mass participation of students, political parties, and Sufi-centered groups like Hefazat-e-Islam Bangladesh, Islami Andolan Bangladesh and the Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis illustrates how revolutionary movements can transcend individual grievances to address systemic issues, such as corruption, inequality, and political repression.

In the July Revolution against the Awami League government, various political and Islamic parties joined forces with Sufi-centered groups, inspired by historical instances of Sufi martyrdom and sacrifice against tyrants. Many were martyred or injured in the process. Alongside these groups, ordinary citizens, motivated by the spirit of notable Sufi figures like Shah Jalal, Shah Paran, Baba Adam Shaheed, Haji Shariatullah, and Titumir, organised a mass revolt to overthrow the Awami League government.

CONCLUSION

This article has examined the political, social, and religious dynamics that led to the downfall of the Awami

League government after 16 years of continuous rule in Bangladesh. Initially coming to power through a democratic election in 2008, the Awami League progressively shifted toward authoritarianism, with increasing allegations of election rigging, human rights abuses, and corruption. Over the years, the government faced mounting criticism for undermining democratic processes, as evidenced by claims of one-sided elections and suppression of opposition, ultimately alienating the public and disenfranchising citizens.

The government's severe response to the July 2024 student-led quota reform protests catalysed public outrage. Instead of addressing the protesters' grievances, the government escalated the situation by deploying security forces, which led to violence and casualties. This approach sparked widespread anger and drew support from various political, Islamic, and Sufi-centered groups. These groups, inspired by the historical legacies of prominent Sufi figures, saw the movement as an opportunity to challenge perceived authoritarianism and honour the values of justice and resistance against oppression. In particular, the involvement of Sufi-centered groups marked a unique intersection of religious and political activism in Bangladesh, contributing to a unified mass uprising that ultimately forced the government to step down.

The July Revolution of 2024 underscores the dynamics of revolution, authoritarianism, and resistance, as Skocpol, Brinton, Arendt, and Scott theorised. The uprising reveals how structural grievances, catalysed by specific crises, can coalesce into a broader revolutionary movement. It also demonstrates the resilience of grassroots resistance in the face of authoritarian repression, providing a rich case study for understanding contemporary revolutions. The revolution marked the end of an autocratic regime and demonstrated the power of collective resistance in shaping political change. Future research can further explore the implications of this uprising for democratic consolidation and governance in Bangladesh.

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