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Contemporary student politics in Bangladesh: Impacts, trends, and insights from the University of Rajshahi

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ABSTRACT

The increase in student politics helps students gain leadership power and become aware. However, university campuses are being contaminated with violence, party interests, personal benefits, and more. Student politics has both negative and positive impacts on society. This study, which is based on primary data gathered from 100 respondents at the University of Rajshahi, aims to examine the role of student politics in Bangladesh from July 2024 to date, to know people's opinion about student politics, to assess the impact of student politics on academic and governance activities, and to identify the positive and negative aspects of student politics. A purposive sampling method was used. The study shows two sides of the coin on students' politics: On one side of the coin, it makes the student leader politically aware. However, it hampers the normal functioning of educational institutions, creating administrative problems, violence, and many more. The researchers have offered some practical recommendations for reform at the end of the study for student politics to uphold a positive role in democracy and institutions, and the significance of democratization, transparency, and accountability.

Keywords: student politics; Bangladesh; youth political activism; impacts of student politics.

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RESEARCH & PUBLISHING



1. INTRODUCTION

Student politics refers to the political activities of students. It is a buzzword in Bangladesh for various reasons. However, these aspects are negative in almost every case (Arafat, 2024a). The political culture in Bangladesh has been greatly influenced by this long-standing party politics (Mukherjee, 2024; Patwary, 2011). The Language Movement of 1952, the Liberation War of 1971, and the 2024 Gen Z uprising of Bangladesh were protests led by students or at least comprised a significant number of youth (Chughtai & Ali, 2024; Paul, 2024). In Bangladesh, political parties such as the Awami League, Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), Jatiya Party, and Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami maintain student wings that are active mainly in public universities and other institutions of higher education (Alam & Shahjamal, 2008; Alam, 2003). Student politics creates political awareness and civic engagement. However, it also creates violence. It is also corrupt. Student council members are charged with engaging in national politics. Recent public perception reflects that it can be better and more responsible (Suykens, 2018; Hossain et al., 2014; Kuttig, 2019).

1.1. Background of the Study

Student politics has been a vital factor in Bangladesh's political history. The student class is the most progressive, articulate, inspired, and dynamic constituent of the nation's population. Students in Bangladesh have a long political history. Students participated in the Language Movement of 1952, the Education Movement of 1962, the Six-Point Movement of 1966, the Mass Uprising of 1969, and the Liberation War of 1971 (Patwary, 2011). Since attaining independence, student organizations have actively participated in politics. Most of the time, they are linked with major political parties, such as the Awami League, Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), Jatiya Party, and Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami (Alam & Shahjamal, 2008; Alam, 2003). Modern-day student politics in Bangladesh has received a lot of criticism despite its history. It is often linked to violence and disruption of academic activity, as well as partisanship (Suykens, 2018; Kuttig, 2019; Hossain et al., 2014) though it encourages political and leadership development. Since July 2024, students have been more active because of the upcoming national elections, economic problems, and tensions with the administration of colleges and universities. The July Uprising, also referred to as the Bangladesh 2.0 movement, is a notable instance of anti-discrimination and pro-democracy protests (Chughtai & Ali, 2024). This study investigates the present situation of student politics in Bangladesh, its nature and recent trends, and their impact on institutions and society. The objective is to create a balanced version of both how student politics works today and what changes are required to have it positively contribute to the democratic process.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Although student politics in Bangladesh has historically contributed to democratic progress, its contemporary practices have raised serious concerns. The growing involvement of students in politically motivated violence, disruption of classes, misuse of student unions, and pressure on university administrations has brought the integrity of academic institutions into question. The lack of democratic practices within student organizations and their increasing dependency on national political parties further complicate the issue. The central problem is the dual character of student politics: it holds the potential for leadership development and political engagement, but often results in campus instability, fear, and academic interruptions. Understanding the impacts from July 2024 to the present is important for developing timely and effective response strategies.

1.3. Objectives of the Research

The primary objective of this research is to assess the role of student politics in Bangladesh from July 2024 to the present. The other objectives are as follows: (1) to know the opinions of people about student politics; (2) to evaluate the impact of student politics on academic activities and governance; and (3) to identify the positive and negative aspects of student political involvement.

1.4. Rationale of the Study

This study is significant for several reasons. First, student politics remains a key feature of Bangladesh's political culture, and understanding its current state is crucial for safeguarding democracy and academic freedom. Second, as political tensions rise in the lead-up to national elections, student organizations become increasingly active and influential. Third, universities are meant to be spaces for learning and critical thinking; however, excessive political interference undermines their core mission. Furthermore, there is limited recent research focusing specifically on the impacts of student politics in the 2024–2025 period, especially focusing on the University of Rajshahi. This study aims to fill this gap and provide evidence-based recommendations for educators, policymakers, and student leaders.

1.5. Previous Research and Literature Review

Education means a systematic approach to a particular topic or course to make someone fully understand it by a certain organization or person within a proper environment and infrastructure (Arafat & Fahmida, 2024, 2025b). However, this is difficult within certain constraints. For ages, student politics has been a huge deal in higher education, mostly in Global South countries. These places have a certain thing going on with education, political science, and how society changes (Altbach, 1984). In Bangladesh, student politics has shifted quite a lot, and it's helped to form the country's politics and government. A few studies suggest that when students get into party stuff, it can mess with how the country grows and how good the education is. The results are far from democracy and let institutions run up and down (Alam, 2003; Alam et al., 2011; Patwary, 2011). Universities are often actual arena where students feel motivated and chat about important political stuff. It proves that young people can actually change politics (Benneworth, 2013). In Bangladesh, when students do something, it usually mirrors what's up in society. They often fight for what's right, for democracy, and for justice. The Road Safety Movement and the Quota Reform Movement show how quickly young people can affect laws and what people are chatting about (Ghosh, 2023; Pranto et al., 2024). This kind of fighting is changed by what's happening locally, and also by what's up around the world about youth rights, democracy, and being a good citizen (Giroux, 2009; Rhoads, 1998). Research says that when students protest, it can bring important topics to everyone's attention, make the government listen, and sometimes spark fast changes in politics (Chughtai & Ali, 2024; Paul, 2024). Surveys of students say that being in politics is a big part of their time at university. It paints how they see being in charge, citizenship, and being responsible (Hossain et al., 2014; Mukherjee, 2024). All this comes with issues. When political parties and the government are too tight, when students are too keen to make sacrifices, and when student groups get too bossy, it can stop students from being helpful (Suykens, 2018; Kuttig, 2019).

1.6. Historical Background of Student Politics in Bangladesh

Bangladesh's political history and influence of political leaders on the present-day politics of the students are all covered here. Student politics has been a part and parcel of Bangladesh society from the colonial days. Throughout the years, students, especially those of university and college levels, have taken part in almost every important political movement which had great impact on the country. The student's political activities made possible the Language Movement of 1952, the first popular movement for equal rights in the 1960s which ultimately culminated in the independence movement and liberation war of 1971, and the struggle against military rule in the 1980s and the restoration of democratic rule in 1991. Student wings of political parties play important role in gaining and holding on to the power, quite a bit. Politics of student has not just been the offshoot of national political movements in the region but has also often led the charge. Student's organizations have time and again emerged as important players from colonial rule to democracy. But the scenario of student politics has been negative in certain cases. Till now, Bangladesh's national integrity system and political ethics remains weak due to a combination of institutional, political, and societal shortcomings (Arafat & Fahmida, 2025a; Arafat et al., 2025), which is a big reason behind it.

1.6.1. Student Politics in the Pre-Independence Period

Student activism in the Indian subcontinent began under British colonial rule, where students participated in anti-colonial movements. In East Bengal (now Bangladesh), this trend continued through various organized efforts.

1.6.1.1. The Language Movement (1948–1952)

The Language Movement was the first major mass uprising led largely by students of Dhaka University and other institutions. Their demand that Bengali be recognized as a state language of Pakistan eventually led to the martyrdom of several students on 21st February 1952. This movement not only secured linguistic rights but also established student activism as a legitimate political force in East Pakistan.

1.6.1.2. Anti-Ayub Movement and 1962 Education Movement

In the 1960s, students played a critical role in opposing the authoritarian regime of General Ayub Khan. The student-led protests against the Sharif Education Commission Report in 1962 demonstrated the youth's commitment to democratic education policy.

1.6.1.3. Mass Upsurge of 1969

Students, under the banner of the Sarbadaliya Chhatra Sangram Parishad, united across party lines to demand the end of Ayub's rule. Their movement laid the foundation for the 1970 election victory of the Awami League, and ultimately, the Liberation War of 1971.

1.6.2. Student Politics During and After the Liberation War

1.6.2.1. Role in the Liberation War (1971)

The student community played a pivotal role in bringing Bangladesh's independence movement to its final stage. During the Liberation War, they organized themselves in various ways and actively engaged in armed resistance alongside political leaders. When the war commenced on March 26, 1971, a significant number of students from schools, colleges, and universities directly participated in the struggle for freedom. Student activists, particularly those from the East Pakistan Students League, played vital roles in organizing the liberation struggle. Many joined the Mukti Bahini and fought against Pakistani military forces. Student hostels and campuses served as hubs of revolutionary planning.

1.6.2.2. Post-Independence Era (1972–1981)

After independence, student organizations became affiliated with political parties that created various political philosophy among students. First, Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) – It established in 1949 which is affiliated with the Awami League. However, Bangladesh's interim government (2024 to present) has officially banned the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), the student wing of ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League party, declaring it a “terrorist organisation” (Paul, 2024).

Second, Bangladesh Jatiotabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) – Bangladesh Jatiotabadi Chhatra Dal is an affiliate organization of Bangladesh Nationalist Party - BNP. Bangladesh Jatiotabadi Chhatra Dal was founded in 1979. It's main slogan is - education, unity, progress. The head office of this organization is located in Naya Paltan, Dhaka. Many of those currently associated with BNP politics were associated with the Jatiotabadi Chhatra Dal. When Ziaur Rahman founded the BNP, he felt the need to establish a student body to create future leadership. So, he established this organization centrally on January 1, 1979. At that time, many youths were inspired by Ziaur Rahman's popularity and joined the nationalist student movement.

Third, Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) – Bangladesh Islami Chhatrashibir, commonly known as Chhatrashibir or Shibir, is an Islamic student organisation in Bangladesh. It was established in 1977. It's often considered as the de facto male student wing of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami.

Fourth, Leftist student organizations – Such as Chhatra Union and Chhatra Moitree.

During this period, student politics began shifting from nationalist activism to partisan control, often leading to campus violence.

1.6.3. Student Politics During Military Regimes (1982–1990)

Under the military rule of General Ershad, student organizations once again emerged as a united force for democracy. During this period, the anti-autocracy movement of the late 1980s was led by student alliances like Sammilito Chhatra Parishad. In 1990, students, alongside civil society, forced Ershad to resign, restoring parliamentary democracy. This era highlighted the transformative power of student unity, where rival student wings temporarily set aside differences for the greater goal of democracy.

1.6.4. Post-1991: The Era of Competitive Partisan Politics

With the restoration of democracy in 1991, student politics became increasingly partisan and institutionally embedded within the structures of mainstream political parties.

1.6.4.1. Institutionalization of Party Wings

Student organizations like BCL and Chhatra Dal became more dependent on central party leadership for guidance and resources. Political loyalty began to matter more than ideology or merit. This trend led to hall control conflicts (gaining control over student dormitories), extortion and tender manipulation, inter-group rivalry and armed clashes.

1.6.4.2. Decline and Rise of Student Union Elections

The once-active student union elections (e.g., DUCSU) were suspended for decades in many universities, leading to the absence of democratic practice within student bodies. This void contributed to the rise of unelected student leaders with strong party affiliations but little accountability. Rajshahi University Central Student Union (RUCSU) had been in limbo for almost 34 years. The elections in four autonomous universities in Bangladesh took place in 2025 recently and it has ignited a new shift toward student politics after many years. Following the mass uprising of 2024, student union elections returned to public universities after years of absence. Dhaka, Jahangirnagar, Chittagong and Rajshahi universities conducted polls between September and October, revealing a dramatic shift in student politics that has left traditional organisations struggling for relevance (Emon, 2025).

1.6.5. Recent Developments (2010–2020)

In the 2010s, several student-led movements gained national attention:

1.6.5.1. Shahbagh Movement (2013)

University students and youth protested against the lenient punishment of war criminals. Although not directly linked to mainstream student political wings, it showed the potential of issue-based mobilization.

1.6.5.2. Quota Reform Movement (2018)

The 2018 Bangladesh quota reform movement was a students' movement demanding reforms in policies regarding recruitment in the Bangladesh government services. Bangladesh Sadharon Chhatra Odhikar Songrokkhon Parishad (Bangladesh General Students' Right Conservation Council) initiated movement initially began in Shahbag and on Dhaka University campus on 17 February 2018, and eventually spread country-wide by 8 April 2018. The movement rapidly attained popularity among students of different universities and colleges forcing the government to announce changes. However, it was largely organized via social media, showing a shift from traditional political organizing.

1.6.5.3. Road Safety Movement (2018)

School and college students protested following the deaths of two students in a road accident. It was non-partisan and showed the growing independence of youth activism.

These movements indicated that new forms of student engagement were emerging often outside the influence of traditional political parties.

1.6.6. Emergence of New Political Party after July Uprising

NCP – The Jatiya Nagorik Party (National Citizen's Party or NCP) is a political party in Bangladesh. It was established on February 28, 2025, through the initiative of student rights activists and the Jatiya Nagorik Committee (National Citizen's Committee). It is notable for being the first student-led political party in Bangladesh's history.

Student politics in Bangladesh has evolved from liberation-era, from heroism to party-based rivalry, and more recently, to youth-led issue-based movements. While historically a force for national transformation, student politics has also been responsible for campus violence and political polarization. Understanding this historical trajectory is essential for analyzing the recent developments from July 2024 to the present.

2. METHODOLOGY

Research means a systematic finding and study of materials and sources in order to establish facts and reach new results (Arafat, 2024b). This study adopts a descriptive quantitative research design to examine the nature, perceptions, and impacts of student politics in Bangladesh, with particular emphasis on the University of Rajshahi, from July 2024 to the present. A quantitative approach is appropriate for this study as it allows the systematic measurement of students' attitudes, experiences, and perceptions regarding student political activities within a structured and comparable framework.

2.1. Research Design

The research is descriptive and exploratory in nature. It seeks to identify prevailing trends, patterns, and impacts of student politics rather than to test causal relationships. Given the contemporary and evolving nature of student political engagement following the July 2024 developments, this design enables a timely assessment of campus-level realities based on respondents' lived experiences.

2.2. Population and Sample

The target population of the study comprises students enrolled at the University of Rajshahi, one of the largest public universities in Bangladesh and a historically significant centre of student political activity. A total of 100 respondents were selected for the study. A purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure that participants possessed sufficient awareness of campus political dynamics. This sampling method was considered appropriate because the study required informed responses from students who are directly exposed to student political activities, governance issues, and academic environments influenced by such activities.

2.3. Data Collection Instrument

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire designed to capture respondents' demographic profiles, levels of political involvement, perceptions of student politics, experiences of academic disruption, and views on governance, leadership development, and democratic participation. The questionnaire consisted mainly of closed-ended questions using Likert-scale and categorical response options, allowing for consistency in responses and facilitating quantitative analysis. The instrument was pre-tested on a small group of students to ensure clarity, relevance, and logical flow before final administration.

2.4. Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected during the study period through direct distribution of questionnaires among selected students. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents were informed about the purpose

of the study prior to data collection. Ethical considerations, including anonymity and confidentiality, were strictly maintained throughout the research process.

2.5. Data Analysis Techniques

Collected data were systematically coded and analysed using descriptive statistical techniques, including frequency distributions, percentages, and cumulative percentages. These tools were chosen to effectively summarise respondents' opinions and experiences and to present findings in a clear and interpretable manner. Tables and figures were used to enhance clarity and facilitate comparative understanding of key trends. The use of descriptive statistics is justified, as the primary objective of the study is to explore perceptions and impacts rather than to establish causal inference.

2.6. Scope and Justification

The exclusive reliance on primary data allows the study to reflect current and context-specific realities of student politics following July 2024. While secondary sources were not used in the data analysis phase, they informed the theoretical framing and literature review to ensure academic grounding.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1. The Impacts of Student Politics in Bangladesh (From July to Present): A Case Study on the University of Rajshahi

This case study presents a critical analysis of the impacts of student politics in Bangladesh from July to the present, with a specific focus on the University of Rajshahi. Through this empirical approach, the study aims to highlight both the positive and negative consequences of student politics, grounded in factual findings. By examining real-life experiences and attitudes within the University of Rajshahi, this chapter seeks to provide a deeper understanding of how student politics influences academic life, campus governance, and youth political behavior in contemporary Bangladesh.

3.1.1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1. Age

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Frequency
Below 20	0	0.0	0.0	0
20-25	65	65.0	65.0	65
26-30	35	35.0	35.0	100
Above 30	0	0.0	0.0	100
Total	100	100	100.0	100

Table 2. Education Level

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Frequency
Undergraduate	64	64.0	64.0	64
Post-graduate	36	36.0	36.0	100
Total	100	100	100.0	100

Table 3. Gender

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Frequency
Male	53	53	53.0	53
Female	46	46	46.0	99

Others	1	1	1.0	100
Total	100	100	100.0	100

The survey captured responses from 100 participants, predominantly young adults aged 20-25 (65%), as most of the students are graduate or undergraduate level, with smaller groups 26-30 (35%), below 20 (0%) and above 30 (0%) (Table 1). The gender distribution shows a slight male majority (53%), with 46% female and 1% identifying as other (Table 3). Educationally, 64% are undergraduates, and 36% are postgraduates, (Table 2) confirming the sample's alignment with the student population targeted for this research.

3.1.2. Involvement in Student Politics

Table 4. Are you currently involved in student politics?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Frequency
Yes	30	30.0	30.0	30
No	70	70.0	70.0	100
Total	100	100	100.0	

A significant 70% of respondents reported no current involvement in student politics, while 30% confirmed participation (Table 4). This suggests that while student politics remains relevant, active engagement is limited among the surveyed population, potentially reflecting a cautious or disengaged stance toward political activities during the study period.

3.1.3. Perception of Student Politics

Table 5. Perception of Student Politics

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Frequency
Very positive	19	19.0	19.0	19
Somewhat Positive	41	41.0	41.0	60
Neutral	17	17.0	17.0	77
Somewhat Negative	19	19.0	19.0	96
Negative	4	4.0	4.0	100
Total	100	100	100.0	

The perception of student politics in Bangladesh is notably mixed. However, the percentage toward positivity is higher in this regard. 23% stated negative and 17% remained neutral (Table 5).

3.1.4. Motivations for Student Political Involvement

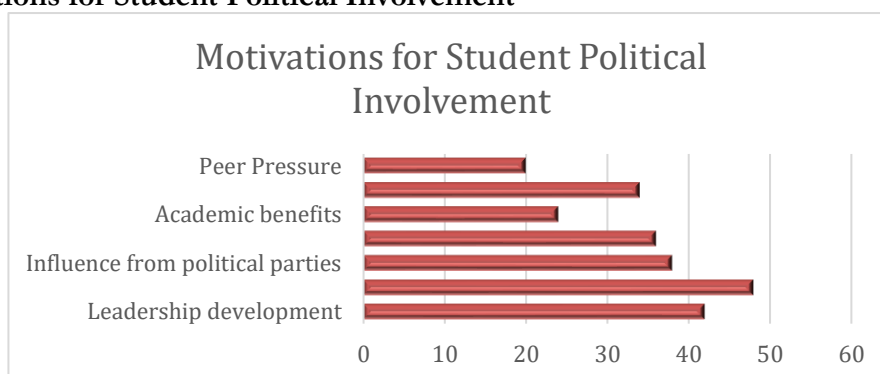


Figure 1. Motivations for Student Political Involvement

Based on Figure 1, the survey reveals that social and political awareness (48%) is the primary motivation for student political involvement, followed by leadership development (42%) and influence

from political parties (38%). Other factors include career opportunities (36%), social change (34%), academic benefits (24%), and peer pressure (20%). This suggests that ideological and personal growth factors drive participation, aligning with the objective to assess the role of student politics from July 2024 onward.

3.1.5. Contribution to National Governance and Democracy

Table 6. Contribution to National Governance and Democracy

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Frequency
Yes, significantly	28	28.0	28.0	28
Yes, but moderately	37	37.0	37.0	65
No, it has minimal impact	18	18.0	18.0	83
No, it has a negative impact	13	13.0	13.0	96
No effects	4	4.0	4.0	100
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 6 shows that most respondents (37%) think the contribution to national governance and democracy is moderate, while 28% see it as significant. In contrast, 18% believe the impact is minimal, 13% view it as negative, and 4% think there is no effect. Overall, the findings indicate a generally positive but limited contribution to national governance and democracy.

3.1.6. Benefits for Leadership Development

Table 7. Benefits for Leadership Development

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Frequency
Strongly agree	27	27.0	27.0	27
Agree	40	40.0	40.0	67
Neutral	21	21.0	21.0	87
Disagree	7	7.0	7.0	94
Strongly disagree	4	4.0	4.0	100
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 7 indicates that most respondents view the initiative as beneficial for leadership development. A combined 67% either agree (40%) or strongly agree (27%), showing strong positive sentiment. Meanwhile, 21% remain neutral, and a small portion disagree (7%) or strongly disagree (4%). Overall, the findings suggest that leadership development is widely recognised as a key positive outcome.

3.1.7. Impact on University Governance

Table 8. Impact on University Governance

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Frequency
Very positive	18	18.0	18.0	18
Somewhat Positive	44	44.0	44.0	62
Neutral	19	19.0	19.0	81
Somewhat Negative	10	10.0	10.0	91
Negative	9	9.0	9.0	100
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 8 show that the majority of respondents perceive a positive impact on university governance. About 44% consider it somewhat positive, and 18% view it as very positive, together forming 62% with

favourable opinions. Meanwhile, 19% remain neutral, while 10% see it as somewhat negative and 9% as negative. Overall, the results reflect a generally positive but not overwhelming impact on university governance.

3.1.8. Increase in Political Awareness

Table 9. Increase in Political Awareness

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Frequency
Strongly agree	18	18.0	18.0	18
Agree	32	32.0	32.0	50
Neutral	30	30.0	30.0	80
Disagree	15	15.0	15.0	95
Strongly disagree	5	5.0	5.0	100
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 9 shows that most respondents recognise an increase in political awareness. A combined 50% either agree (32%) or strongly agree (18%), indicating a generally positive perception. Meanwhile, 30% remain neutral, and 20% (15% disagree, 5% strongly disagree) express negative views. Overall, the data suggest that political awareness has improved, though not uniformly across all respondents.

3.1.9. Impact on the Academic Environment

See Table 10 for detail.

Table 10. Impact on the Academic Environment

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Interpretation
Yes, very positively	15	15.0	A minority sees strong positive contributions, likely via leadership or activism.
Yes, but slightly	42	42.0	Majority of respondents felt minor positive impact.
No impact	18	18.0	Significant portion sees neutral effect, suggesting that politics is not always disruptive.
Yes, but negatively	17	17.0	Indicates a considerable concern about adverse academic effects.
Yes, very negatively	8	8.0	A small group strongly criticizes student politics' influence.
Total	100	100.0	

3.1.10. Dimension of Academic Impact

The data (N=100) indicates that student politics in Bangladesh has had both disruptive and developmental impacts on academic activities. A majority (53%) of students reported disruptions due to political events, highlighting the prevalence of strikes, protests, and academic delays, particularly intensified since July 2024. At the same time, 39% observed strained faculty-student relations, suggesting a breakdown in academic cohesion. However, 36% acknowledged a rise in political awareness and discussions, indicating the educational potential of student political engagement. Notably, 29% cited positive governance contributions, but the same proportion also pointed to violence and clashes, revealing the dual-edged nature of student politics in the campus environment. These findings underscore the complex landscape of political engagement in Bangladeshi universities—where activism, disruption, and institutional challenges coexist.

3.1.11. Personal Experience of Academic Disruptions

Table 11. Have you personally faced any academic disruptions due to student politics?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Frequency
Yes	55	55.0	55.0	55
No	45	45.0	45.0	100
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

A majority (55%) of respondents have personally faced academic disruptions due to student politics, while 45% have not (Table 11).

3.1.12. Types of Academic Disruptions

Among those affected, class cancellations (49%) and biased treatment from faculty/administration (47%) are the most reported disruptions, followed by session delays (34%). These findings reflect a deep entanglement of political activities with the academic ecosystem, often resulting in delayed academic calendars, classroom absences, and discriminatory practices within academic governance. Since July 2024, increased student mobilization, administrative responses, and hall-based political events may have further intensified these challenges. This underlines a systemic vulnerability where political expression—while sometimes constructive—can significantly derail academic progress and institutional fairness.

3.1.13. Influence on National Politics

Table 12. Influence on National Politics

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Frequency
Yes, strongly	24	24.0	24.0	24
Yes, but to a limited extent	39	39.0	39.0	63
No, they have no influence	23	23.0	23.0	86
No, they harm national politics	14	14.0	14.0	100
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 12 shows that 63% of respondents believe student political organizations influence national politics, with 24% strongly and 39% to a limited extent. However, 37% think they have no influence (23%) or even harm politics (14%). This indicates that while student politics still holds significant influence in Bangladesh, there is also growing skepticism about its role—raising concerns over its relevance, effectiveness, and negative impact on national politics.

3.1.14. Relationship with University Governance

Table 13. Relationship with University Governance

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Frequency
Very positive	18	18.0	18.0	18
Somewhat Positive	48	48.0	48.0	66
Neutral	18	18.0	18.0	84
Somewhat Negative	12	12.0	12.0	96
Negative	4	4.0	4.0	100
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The findings reveal that 48% of respondents view the relationship with university governance as somewhat positive, while 18% consider it very positive, indicating that most respondents hold favourable opinions. Meanwhile, 18% remain neutral, and smaller portions view it somewhat negatively (12%) or negatively (4%) (Table 13). Overall, the results suggest a generally positive but varied perception of the relationship with university governance.

3.1.15. Major Challenges Faced by Student Politics

The primary challenges include campus violence and factionalism (53%), lack of transparency in student unions (41%), political exploitation by major parties (36%), and low participation in constructive activities (39%). This data, supporting the objective to identify positive and negative aspects, underscores significant internal and external obstacles during the research period.

3.1.16. Need for Reform

Table 14. Should student politics be reformed to make it more constructive?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Frequency
Strongly agree	30	30.0	30.0	30
Agree	39	39.0	39.0	69
Neutral	16	16.0	16.0	85
Disagree	9	9.0	9.0	94
Strongly disagree	6	6.0	6.0	100
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

A strong majority (69%, with 30% strongly agreeing and 39% agreeing) believe student politics should be reformed to be more constructive, with only 15% (9% disagree, 6% strongly disagree) opposing (Table 14). This reflects a public opinion push for improvement, aligning with the objective to assess its role and impact from July 2024 onward.

3.1.17. Necessity for a Democratic Society

Table 15. Necessity for a Democratic Society

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Frequency
Strongly agree	30	30.0	30.0	30
Agree	39	39.0	39.0	69
Neutral	16	16.0	16.0	85
Disagree	9	9.0	9.0	94
Strongly disagree	6	6.0	6.0	100
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 15 shows that most respondents consider student politics essential for a democratic society, with 39% agreeing and 30% strongly agreeing, totalling 69% positive responses. Meanwhile, 16% remain neutral, and 15% (9% disagree, 6% strongly disagree) express opposing views. Overall, the majority believe student politics plays a vital role in sustaining democracy.

3.1.18. Suggested Reforms for Student Politics

Respondents suggest multiple reforms, with ensuring equal participation opportunities (49%) and encouraging academic-oriented implementation (41%) as top priorities. Other notable suggestions include limiting the involvement (35%), ensuring transparency (35%), implementing stricter rules (34%), promoting awareness (27%), and reducing external influence (21%). This aligns with the objective to assess the role of student politics, indicating a desire for structural and ethical improvements from July 2024 to the present.

3.1.19. Support for Separating Academic and Political Activities

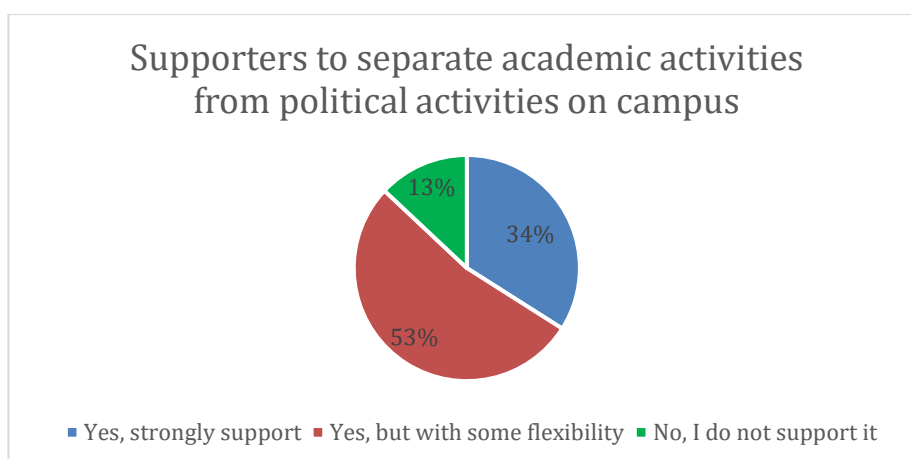


Figure 2. Support for Separating Academic and Political Activities

A strong majority (87%, with 34% strongly supporting and 53% with flexibility) support a policy to separate academic activities from political ones on campus, while only 13% oppose it (Figure 2). This finding, tied to the objective of evaluating impact on academic activities, suggests a perceived need to protect education from political interference during the research period.

3.1.20. Fulfillment of Movement Expectations

Table 16. Fulfillment of Movement Expectations

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Frequency
Yes	40	40.0	40.0	40
No	29	29.0	29.0	69
Not sure	31	31.0	31.0	100
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Opinions on whether the outcomes of the movement fulfilled student expectations are divided: 40% say yes, 29% say no, and 31% are unsure (Table 16). This lack of consensus, relevant to the objective of understanding public opinions, indicates varied perceptions of student politics' effectiveness from July 2024 onward.

4. RECOMMENDATION

Through responsible engagement of students emphasising leadership, civic education and social responsibility, universities, NGOs and civil society groups can contribute to strengthening student politics in Bangladesh by providing trainings to student leaders to promote democratic values, ethical governance and non-violent activism. To avoid creating a disturbance in classes, exams, research, and administrative works, there should be a clear demarcation between politics and academic works. Keeping a convenient space and timeslot for political activities is always welcome. Student unions should be transparent and inclusive. Fair elections must be held so that all students have equal opportunity of taking part and assuming leadership roles. Political party interference from outside must be curtailed to protect and uphold the autonomy of the institution. Campus violence and factionalism will be dealt with a zero-tolerance policy by an independent disciplinary structure and resort to law if necessary. Constructive political activity should be encouraged. Disputes, anomalies or misunderstanding between students and the administration can be resolved easily through dialogue. In final remarks, regular monitoring and research on student politics can further enhance it. It will bring positive changes.

5. CONCLUSION

The act of doing politics by students in Bangladesh is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it is a necessary space for youth leadership, democratic participation and political awareness. On the other hand, it often disturbs academic life, causes violence, and suffers from too much politics. From July 2024 to today, this report indicates that while student activism is an important feature of democratic culture today, there is growing disillusionment and strong demands for reform. A large number of students support efforts to transform student politics into constructive, transparent and education-friendly institution. A positive model of student politics that is non-violent, grounded in democratic practices and aligned to academic values can help students become informed, sensitive and ethical responsible citizens rather than merely political actors. We must find a way to balance activism and scholarship, rights and responsibilities. If the suggested reforms are implemented, student politics in Bangladesh can help restore their spirit as a vital and progressive force for nation-building instead of a source of conflict in educational institutions. Few limitations are present in this study. At the outset, the study is based on primary data collected from one university thus limiting the study on that university in Bangladesh. The second limitation is that although the sample size is sufficient for exploratory analysis, it may not fully capture the varied experiences and perspectives of students across regions and universities. Again, responses could be subject to personal biases, social desirability threats or other hidden traces. Finally, the research cites student politics since July 2024. This means longer-term trends and historical patterns are only indirectly referenced in the study. However, this may limit the context which will only be able to provide.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest, financial or otherwise, that could have influenced the research design, data collection, analysis, interpretation, or reporting of results.

Informed Consent

All participants were fully informed about the objectives and procedures of the study. Their participation was entirely voluntary, and informed consent was obtained prior to data collection in compliance with ethical research standards.

Ethical Approval

This research was conducted following ethical principles and guidelines for quantitative studies.

Data Availability

The quantitative data supporting the findings of this study are available from the main author upon reasonable request. Data were collected, processed, and analysed using standard statistical procedures. Any additional materials or datasets can be shared with researchers for academic purposes under appropriate confidentiality agreements.

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