Integrating Knowledge and Democracy for Practical Reform to Overcome Political Crisis in Bangladesh

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Abstract

It is crucial to integrate knowledge and democracy into Bangladesh's government to establish a fair and effective system for future leaders. Let us implement this new system to ensure our government serves citizens' needs fairly and justly. This research paper proposes a new method for selecting administrative and state councils at different levels of government based on the Integration/Islamization of Knowledge and Democracy. The study includes interviews with political leaders and experts from Bangladesh and extensive research on politics in the country. The theories involved in this research are from Prof. Emeritus Dato' Dr. Abdulhamid Abusulayman, Profesor Emeritus Tan Sri Dr. Mohd. Kamal bin Hassan, Prof. Dr. Ibrahim Mohamed Zein, and former colleagues and students of al-Faruqi and al-Attas. The two pathways to introduce IoK and modern democracy in Bangladesh and other states with political crises are: 1) Education reform to emphasize interdisciplinary learning, practical applications, and critical thinking, and 2) Government support for policies and funding to promote IoK initiatives, collaboration, and evaluations. Thus, the Integrated Knowledge of Federal Democracy System (IKOFDS) is a proposed governmental structure that aims to empower citizens, enhance governance efficiency, and foster collaborative decision-making. By combining Federalism with the Integration of Knowledge (IoK) and a robust democratic method, the (IKOFDS) seeks to create a balanced and responsive governance model that capitalizes on the strengths of Federalism, knowledge integration, and democratic principles.

Keywords: Integration of Knowledge (IOK), Democracy/ Shuracracy, Integrated Knowledge of Federal Democracy System (IKOFDS), Muslim-State

Abstrak

Sangat penting untuk mengintegrasikan pengetahuan dan demokrasi ke dalam pemerintahan Bangladesh untuk membangun sistem yang adil dan efektif bagi para pemimpin masa depan. Mari kita terapkan sistem baru ini untuk memastikan pemerintah kita melayani kebutuhan warga negara secara adil dan adil. Makalah penelitian ini mengusulkan metode baru untuk memilih dewan administratif dan negara di berbagai tingkat pemerintahan berdasarkan Integrasi/Islamisasi Pengetahuan dan Demokrasi. Studi ini mencakup wawancara dengan para pemimpin politik dan pakar dari Bangladesh dan penelitian ekstensif tentang politik di negara tersebut. Teori-teori yang terlibat dalam penelitian ini berasal dari Prof. Emeritus Dato' Dr. Abdulhamid Abusulayman, Profesor Emeritus Tan Sri Dr. Mohd. Kamal bin Hassan, Prof.Dr.Ibrahim Mohamed Zein, serta mantan rekan dan mahasiswa al-Faruqi dan al-Attas. Dua jalur untuk memperkenalkan IoK dan demokrasi modern di Bangladesh dan negara-negara lain yang mengalami krisis politik adalah: 1) Reformasi pendidikan untuk menekankan pembelajaran interdisipliner, penerapan praktis, dan pemikiran kritis, dan 2) Dukungan pemerintah terhadap kebijakan dan pendanaan untuk mempromosikan inisiatif dan kolaborasi IoK , dan evaluasi. Oleh karena itu, Pengetahuan Terpadu Sistem Demokrasi Federal (IKOFDS) adalah usulan struktur pemerintahan yang bertujuan untuk memberdayakan warga negara, meningkatkan efisiensi pemerintahan, dan mendorong pengambilan keputusan kolaboratif. Dengan menggabungkan Federalisme dengan Integrasi Pengetahuan (IoK) dan metode demokrasi yang kuat, (IKOFDS) berupaya menciptakan model pemerintahan yang seimbang dan responsif yang memanfaatkan kekuatan Federalisme, integrasi pengetahuan, dan prinsip-prinsip demokrasi.

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INTRODUCTION

The Integration of Knowledge (IoK) methodological approach (Ruhullah & Ushama, 2023) is crucial for developing governmental methods and achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Goulart et al., 2021) in Political Leadership for the future of Bangladesh (Ahtasam Shams Arafin, 2016). Omercic (2021) explained the most famous contemporary Islamic IOK/ IoK scholars' opinions on Islamization or Integration of Knowledge (Omercic, 2021a). His research said that IoK involves the interaction of the Islamic heritage and tradition (turāth) with modern knowledge. According to Al-Attas (1978), this approach aims to restore human nature by using all Islamic channels of knowledge, not just reason, senses, and experience (Al-Attas, 1993). Similarly, Al-Faruqi (1982) suggested redefining, reordering, rethinking, re-evaluating, and re-projecting knowledge to improve humanity and the Muslim vision and condition in life (Al-Faruqi, 1982).

The IoK is a dialogue and an integrative methodological process with solid foundations that require extra effort for genuine development. IoK also includes the study of the world of higher order, along with the temporal world, as reflected in Al-Attas' identification of the channels of knowledge. This communication highlights the limitations and potentialities of human beings in excelling in this world and the ultimate purpose of life as defined in Islam. Therefore, ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology as philosophical foundations for understanding and becoming part of such an order imply the existence of a world or reality of a higher order. Muslims must develop suitable methodological mechanisms (Abror, 2020) since the mechanisms developed in the West focused solely on the physical world (Omercic, 2021b).

The topic of the text is "Integration of Knowledge (IoK) and Democracy in Bangladesh's Electoral Framework: Establishing a New Political System for Future Leaders." It discusses how the integration of knowledge (Omercic, 2021b) and democracy (Momen, 2014) can be implemented within Bangladesh's electoral framework to establish a new political system that can pave the way for future leaders, particularly the election of a head of state and the head of the government with a pure, accessible, and fair method of the Shura Council (Chowdhury, 2015) (The House of Representatives and Senate) democratically (Bellamy, 2017). Bangladesh's electoral framework is based on democratic principles but lacks effective (Sheikh Mahabub Alam, 2019) integration of knowledge (IOK) to nurture capable leaders. This absence of structured incorporation of diverse knowledge paradigms within the democratic system hinders the cultivation of forward-thinking and inclusive leadership necessary for sustainable governance (Solarz, 2020).

Despite Bangladesh's commitment to democratic principles in its electoral framework (Syed Serajul Islam, 2023), a critical gap exists in understanding the integration of Knowledge (IOK) (Hashim & Ssekamanya, 2014) within this system and its implications for fostering a more effective and sustainable democratic process. This research assesses the impact of IOK integration on Bangladesh's electoral framework and explores ways to establish a more knowledge-driven political environment to empower future leaders. The focus is on identifying challenges, gaps, and opportunities that hinder or facilitate knowledge integration within Bangladesh's democratic framework.

The text argues that the concept of democracy has its roots in Islam (Chande, 2023) and is not a recent phenomenon influenced by Western thought. Scholars point out that the Quranic injunctions encourage collective decision-making, mutual consultation, and engaging the views of others, as

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demonstrated by the Prophet (PBUH). This challenges the notion that democracy is foreign to the Islamic world. Allah said in the Quran,

> "With the mercy of Allah, O Muhammad, you were kind to them. Had you been harsh and hard-hearted, they would have abandoned you. So, forgive them, ask Allah to forgive them, and consult them in matters. And once you have made a decision, put your trust in Allah. Allah loves those who rely on Him" (Quran-3: 159).

The meaning of Shura Council/ House of the Senate, the Majlis-ash-Shura (Arabic: مجلس الشورى; Shura Council in English) is a consultative council or advisory body in Arab culture. In Islamic jurisprudence, the noun شورى (Shura) refers to the concept of "consultation" and is often used in conjunction with the term Majlis, مجلس, which denotes a council or legislature. Together, they represent a collective of individuals who advise, consult, or make decisions. The Majlis-ash-Shura is significant in the Islamic context as it is one of two methods by which a khalifa (Islamic leader) may be selected, the other method being by nomination (Aiena, 2014).

According to the council, Shura is one of the governing principles of Islam. It also claims that Shura has been gradually implemented since the days of Muhammad Ali. One of the council members praised Shura for contributing to the progress of democracy in Egypt. They compared it to the American Senate and other Western councils while emphasizing its roots in the Egyptian parliamentary history that dates back to the days of Muhammad Ali (Parray, 2023).

The meaning of Senate, "House of Senate" usually refers to a specific house or chamber within a bicameral legislative body, such as a parliament or congress. This is where elected or appointed representatives, who are called senators, gather to discuss, modify, and approve laws. The Senate is one of the two chambers in the United States and other countries with a bicameral legislature. In contrast, the House of Representatives (or other legislative bodies) makes up the other. Typically, the Senate is a smaller, more reflective institution, with senators serving lengthier terms than those in the lower house. The Senate carries specific duties and powers within the legislative process, including confirming government appointments, ratifying treaties, and participating in creating and approving laws. Depending on each country's constitution and legal system, the Senate's structure, powers, and responsibilities may differ significantly (Strang, 2023). The Prophet (SAW) explained the true meaning of leadership in the following Hadith:

> "Each of you is a shepherd and each of you is responsible of his flock. The Amir (ruler) who is over the people is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock; a man is a shepherd in charge of the inhabitants of his household and he is responsible for his flock; a woman is a shepherdess in charge of her husband's house and children and she is responsible for them; and a man's slave is a shepherd in charge of his master's property and he is responsible for it. So, each of you is a shepherd and each of you is responsible for his flock" (Abu Daud, 2539).

To be a dynamic and Ijtihad/ innovative leader is crucial for guiding the Ummah correctly. Leadership plays a pivotal role in the holistic development of Muslim societies. From the Quranic viewpoint, every human being is a leader. When Allah (SWT) planned to create the humans, He consulted the angels: *"And when your Lord said to the angels: Indeed, I am about to place a viceroy in the earth...."* (Surah Al-Baqarah: 30).

Leadership in Islam is not limited to politics. It covers all aspects of life, including finance, education, culture, law, society, and more. A leader should possess qualities like profound knowledge of Sunnah, recitation of the Quran, Taqwa, maturity, honesty, justice, patience, accountability, wisdom, sacrifice, sincerity, respect, love, and confidence. Unfortunately, the secular education system has not produced the

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desired leadership for the ummah. Reforming the education system can help create the kind of leadership that the early generation of Islam had (Ghalia & Hossen, 2019).

RESEARCH PROBLEM STATEMENT

The text delves into the historical challenges faced by Bangladesh during governmental and state head elections spanning from 1996 to 2023. One of the most significant challenges has been political instability, characterized by frequent changes in government due to polarization, power struggles, and allegations of corruption. This instability has, in turn, led to contentious elections, boycotts, and protests, ultimately affecting the credibility and stability of the electoral process (Arafatul Islam, 2023).

Another challenge that Bangladesh has faced is allegations of electoral irregularities, including voter intimidation, ballot stuffing, and unfair practices. These allegations have led to disputes over the legitimacy of election results and challenges to the democratic process (Antonio Spinelli, 2024). Furthermore, opposition parties in Bangladesh have occasionally boycotted elections, questioning the fairness of the electoral process or alleging bias in the election administration. These boycotts have hurt the inclusivity and representation in the electoral process (Amundsen, 2016).

Ferdous Arfina Osman (2010) Bangladesh's political governance faces challenges due to confrontational activities, which weaken formal accountability mechanisms and have created a governance crisis since Independence. This article analyzes confrontational politics in Bangladesh, examining its causes, nature, and impacts on governance with supporting evidence. Additionally, bureaucracy and local government institutions are politicized, creating obstacles to effective governance. The article demonstrates the detrimental effects of confrontational politics on governance through case examples (F. A. Osman, 2010).

According to Rehman Sobhan (2013), the governance problem in Bangladesh can be traced back to the fundamental structural features of its political system. The current state of politics in the country is characterized by a confrontational approach, weak implementation of parliamentary democracy, malfunctioning political parties, the use of money and power in politics, and the collusion of political parties, state machinery, and vested commercial interests. It is necessary to persuade political parties to adopt reforms and improve political institutions to improve governance. The paper also highlights the importance of civic action in creating awareness of the benefits of better governance, which can increase the political costs of malfeasant governance (Sobhan, 2013).

Bangladesh experienced democratic backsliding, authoritarian tendencies, economic challenges, and human rights violations during the review period. The opposition made a resurgence on the political scene, holding large-scale rallies and protests. The ruling Awami League government maintained a tight grip on power, resorting to severe human rights abuses and silencing critics. The country faced economic difficulties, sought loans from international organizations, and unveiled stimulus packages to tackle budget deficits. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted the country's economy, bringing about hardships for citizens. The opposition found an opportune moment for its resurgence, drawing significant participation despite government-imposed disruptions and crackdowns. Figure 1 show Six BNP parliament members resigned, and 10 BNP members were reportedly killed by police gunfire during protests against inflation and in favor of impartial and nonpartisan government elections (Stiftung, 2024).
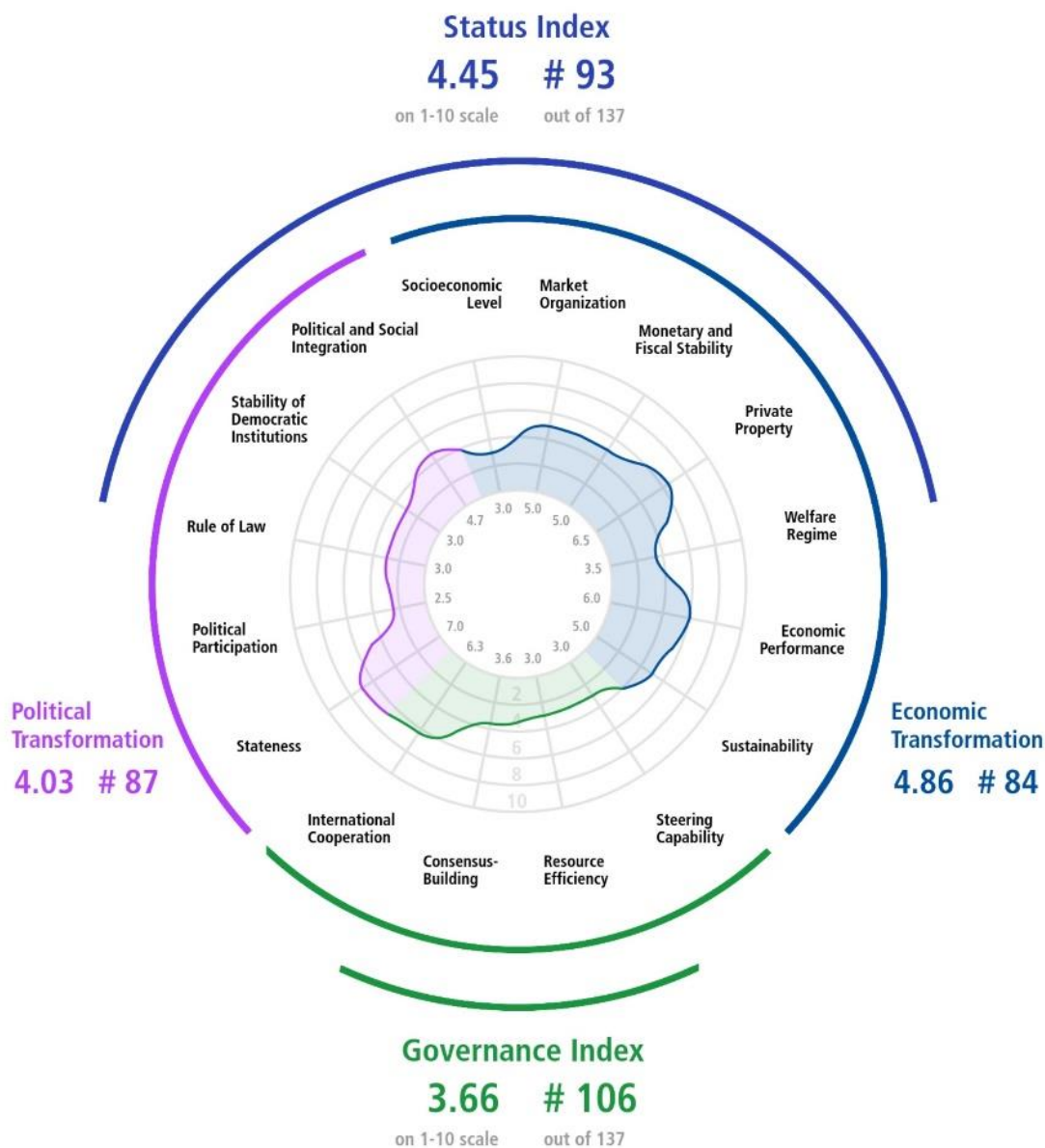
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Figure 1. Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index of Bangladesh (BTI) 2024
Source: (Stiftung, 2024)

Election periods in Bangladesh have also been marred by violence, clashes between political groups, and disruptions, impacting the overall peaceful conduct of elections and posing security challenges. Additionally, there have been concerns about the concentration of power within the ruling party and the government, leading to criticisms of authoritarian tendencies and a lack of checks and balances within the political system (N. Ahmed, 2018). The independence and effectiveness of the Election Commission have also been questioned, with allegations of partiality or lack of autonomy in overseeing free and fair elections. It is crucial to recognize that Bangladesh's political landscape and challenges can be complex and multifaceted. Various factors, including political rivalries, governance issues, socio-economic

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concerns, and institutional weaknesses, have influenced the issues related to governmental and state head elections in Bangladesh (Macdonald, 2023).

Bangladesh's progress on governance reforms was set back in 2013 as the two main political parties engaged in a standoff over upcoming elections. The controversial election of January 2014 resulted in continued concerns about political stability, and new issues are emerging, including the rise in political violence and the politicization of government branches. According to business and civil society organizations, corruption remains a significant impediment to economic development. The World Economic Forum's 2013-14 Global Competitiveness Report shows that corruption and infrastructure were the most significant concerns of businesses before the political crisis (M. H. Khan, 2014).

Over the past decade, there has been a gradual yet significant decline in democracy in Bangladesh (Riaz, 2021). This decline is evidenced by two consecutive rigged elections in 2014 and 2018, legal measures that restrict freedom of expression, an increase in extrajudicial killings, and allegations of interference with the judiciary. This article aims to trace the reasons behind this democratic backsliding, focusing primarily on the period after 1990 and the rapid debilitation of democratic institutions and practices since the Bangladesh Awami League (AL) came to power in 2009. It is argued that Bangladesh has transformed from an electoral democracy to an electoral authoritarian state. By using Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt's stages of democratic backsliding, it is demonstrated how the backsliding process began with a constitutional amendment in 2011, followed by the persecution of opposition parties, critics of the incumbent, and the media, and the manipulation of the judiciary using legal and extralegal measures (Riaz, 2021).

Some Muslim theorists believe that the Quranic principle of *Amr bil marouf wa nahy anil munkar, which means "command good and forbid evil,"* justifies the creation of an ideological state that aims to establish Islamic shariah. This doctrine is derived from several verses of the Quran, including 3:100, 3:104, and 9:710. In Quran 3:110, Allah says, *"You are the best of the nations raised for (the benefit of) humanity; you enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong."*

To sum up, the text explores the role of Islam in politics and public policy and offers a constructive perspective on the key features of Islamic governance. The author argues that, given the belief of many Muslims in the necessity of an Islamic state, an idea of Islamic democracy has emerged in modern Muslim political discussions (Means, 2017).

The text emphasizes the importance of the principles of Constitution, Consent, and Consultation, which are essential for Muslims seeking to implement the Shariah. These principles must be explored and articulated in specific socio-cultural contexts, but they are crucial for a democratic Islamic polity (Ruhullah & Ushama, 2023). The text also discusses the significance of the compact of Medina, which provides a model for developing Islamic political theory. It highlights how Jews were constitutional partners in the making of the first Islamic state and how this compact can inspire future discussions on Islamic governance. The text offers a constructive perspective on the role of Islam in politics and public policy, emphasizing the importance of critical principles and historical models for developing Islamic political theory (A. M. Khan, 2015).

Thus, the convergence of Knowledge Integration (IOK) (Hanafi, 2022) and democratic principles can shape a more adaptive and responsive governmental political system within Bangladesh's electoral framework. However, a crucial knowledge gap exists regarding how incorporating IOK influences the design and functionality of the current governmental political system, thereby affecting the preparation and emergence of future leaders (S. M. Ahmed et al., 2024).

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This research explores how integrating knowledge into Bangladesh's governmental system can help establish a more effective and accountable leadership framework. The study aims to identify the barriers, opportunities, and strategic pathways required to integrate knowledge into the system effectively. The research seeks to propose a redefined political framework that fosters an enriched symbiosis between knowledge integration and democratic values to groom future leaders who can address the nation's complex challenges (see figure 2).

Figure 2. State and Government Head Rotation of Bangladesh Figure 2. State and Government Head Rotation of Bangladesh
Source: Mohammad Eisa Ruhullah (2024)

The appointment of the state and governmental head of Bangladesh has been controversial recently due to the perceived foolish method of rotation that has been implemented. The rotation system, as depicted in the chart, has been met with criticism and concern from various stakeholders. Many have questioned this method's transparency, fairness, and effectiveness and are calling for a more rational and objective approach to the appointment process. The issue has garnered significant attention in the media and public discourse and will likely continue to be debated and scrutinized in the coming days.

According to the map, the state power is belonging to the president and the Government head is prime minister in Bangladesh Administrative position. As stated by Golam Mortoza (2023), in Bangladesh, despite having limited authority, the president holds the highest honor in the state, as specified in Article 48 of the constitution. The president's role is primarily advisory, with the primary responsibilities of appointing the prime minister and the chief justice. Additionally, the president acts as the chancellor of all universities in the country, serving as a ceremonial head for academic affairs. This topic invites further discussion on the intricacies of the president's role in Bangladesh's political and educational systems (Golam Mortoza, 2023).

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Bangladesh and It's Political Administrative Geography

The text discusses the dominance of administration in East Bengal's political environment, which will likely control politics in the future. The article examines the implications of this shift for institution-building and development, including potential conflicts between democratic aspirations and partisan institution-building and between ideology and technocracy. The instrumental approach highlights that the administration can recreate a vital role in obtaining the modification by serving as an instrument for the diffusion of values, institutional structures, or practices. The instrumental approach recognizes the power of administration to influence change within and beyond the organization (Ehsan, 2020).

Rounaq Jahan (2021) in another part, the dominance of administration in East Bengal's political environment is expected to shape future politics. To enhance democratic structures, reforms are required in the parliamentary system, including an independently supervised electoral process that is free, fair, and competitive. Public funding for elections and parties can help mitigate the influence of money and business interests on politics. The balance of power must be re-established to reduce executive dominance over the legislature, ensure government accountability, and reaffirm the rule of law and media independence (Rounaq Jahan, 2021).

Bangladesh has a well-defined administrative structure that comprises eight divisions at the first-order administrative level. Each division is named after its principal city, which serves as its administrative capital. The eight divisions are Barishal, Chattogram, Dhaka, Khulna, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Mymensingh, and Sylhet. At the second-order administrative level, the divisions are divided into 64 districts, subdivided into approximately 500 sub-districts, and then into unions. The government of Bangladesh recently approved the creation of two new divisions, Meghna and Padma, but their creation has been delayed. Additionally, on 2 April 2018, the government changed the English spellings of two divisions and three districts (along with their centers) to reflect their Bengali pronunciation. The divisions and districts affected were Chittagong (now Chattogram), Barisal (now Barishal), Comilla (now Cumilla), Jessore (now Jashore), and Bogra (now Bogura) (PCGN, 2023).
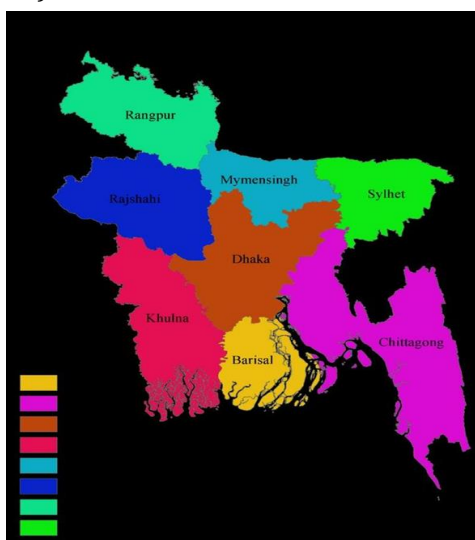

Figure 3. Map of Bangladesh based on Divisions
Source of Map: (Masum & Pal, 2021)

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In Bangladesh, the country's administration is carried out through the distribution of authority among various levels such as state head, governmental head, Division, District, Sub-district, Thana/Upazila, and Union (Figure 3). The bureaucracy in Bangladesh plays a significant role in policy formulation and implementation. However, it is often plagued with corruption, inefficiency, and a lack of transparency. The bureaucracy in Bangladesh needs several issues, including a gap between bureaucrats and citizens, lack of transparency, accountability, and problems with recruitment. The decision-making process is non-transparent, and accountability devices still need to be implemented. The bureaucracy's recruitment process needs improvement to detect qualified applicants for class I positions. To make it more efficient and accountable to serve society better (Jannatul, 2016).

The text discusses the importance of separating the judiciary from other branches of government to ensure judicial independence in Bangladesh. The judiciary is a crucial organ that restores citizens' rights in a country. Still, it can only perform its functions independently if it is free from interference from other branches of government. While the judiciary was separated from the executive in Bangladesh in 2007, some instances of executive interference still exist. Judicial sovereignty and the court partition are essential in developing a proper judicial system (Hannan & Arifuzzaman, 2021).

Islamic Democracy or Shuracracy by the Theory of Integration of Knowledge (IOK)

According to Moten (2023), the Khilāfah embodies trust, responsibility, authority, duty, election, and service. Man's destiny and ultimate vocation is to serve Allah (SWT), as the Quran affirms, "I have not created jinn and mankind except to serve Me" (51:56). The faithful execution of this sublime responsibility is the essence of 'ibādah. As a Khalifah, human activities can be categorized as either Haqq Allāh or Haqq al-'ibād, with the Quran emphasizing justice, trust, respect for life and property, patience, humility, thankfulness, and forgiveness in all dealings with others. There is no other way to fulfil this responsibility, and true civilization is only possible through a morality upheld by Tawhid alone among the known ideologies. Moreover, Muslim scholar-activists who followed earlier revivalists had strong anti-colonial rhetoric and activism coupled with Islamic commitments. Sayyid Qutb contrasted Islam against the political and economic development models prevalent in the West. He believed that the Western model was based on secularism, which is antithetical to Islam. In contrast, Islam is divine, and the Qur'an and the sayings and actions of the Prophet (SAW) serve as its foundation. Qutb argued that Islam was the only system with the values required for leadership and a way of life. All that is secular is sacred in the roots of its being (Moten, 2023).

Zillur R. Khan (1997) stated that impatience and lack of balance can significantly undermine democracy. Leaders must chart a balanced course of moderation and change, nurturing fundamental values like education, the dignity of labor, social and health security, and tolerance. A sound democratic foundation can help address controversial issues and achieve consensus in Bangladesh. However, democratic aspirations are being confronted by the incumbent's propensity to use state powers and resources to ensure electoral victory in Bengal and Pakistan (Zillur R. Khan, 1997).

Sia (2022) examines how the idea of Islamic Democracy has influenced the Islamic movement in Malaysia, specifically the Pertubuhan Ikram Malaysia (IKRAM), during the PAKATAN HARAPAN's Ruling from 2018-2020. Rachid Ghannouchi, a notable political activist and thinker, introduced the concept of Islamic Democracy, which recognizes democracy and its values as part of Islamic beliefs. IKRAM and other Islamic organizations in Malaysia have adopted this idea to legitimize their political activism and move towards a more inclusive approach. During the PAKATAN HARAPAN's Ruling, IKRAM had direct involvement in Malaysian politics, with its members winning seats in Parliament and supporting Pakatan

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Harapan's rulings. Therefore, it is essential to evaluate their decision-making and political conduct during this time frame and to align it with the principles of Islamic Democracy. This is significant as the activism of Islamism has decreased over time due to its incompatibility between Islamic Politics and Democracy in the modern nation-state realm (Sia, 2022).

The institution of Shura in Islam is built on two foundational postulates: its compulsory nature and the limited scope of its legislation by Islamic law. While both 'reformists' and 'conservatives' agree on these postulates, contemporary reformist scholars have added three corollaries to the Shura principle. They maintain that Shura is a mandatory rule, refers to the community wholly and not a section thereof, and responds to the majority rule. Shura is a God-ordained system that can apply only to issues where there are no explicit injunctions in the Qur'an and the Sunna, and it can legislate only to the extent that it does not legalize the prohibited or prohibit the legal. Shura is a central pillar obligatory for the rulers and ruled alike, and whenever the ruler rejects it, he ought to be removed from office (Aiena, 2014).

The concept of the Islamic state has been debated, especially with the emergence of global Islamic political movements. Scholars and intellectuals in Indonesia have varying opinions and try to delegitimize the concept. However, some have noted that the arguments against the Islamic state concept stem from a secular perspective, which assumes that religion should be separate from the state. In exploring Islamic issues, scholars use a scientific method that involves exploring primary Islamic sources such as Al-Quran, Sunnah, ijma, and the consensus of the Sahabah to arrive at conclusions. This approach secures the thinking process from external factors and ensures credible results (Aswar, 2021).

The text discusses the concept of democracy and its acceptance in the Western world, highlighting resistance encountered universally, including in Western scholarship. It also mentions how Islam has practiced its form of democracy for over a century, right from the period of the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) lifetime and during the period of the four pious caliphs. One uncompromising view on democracy in Islam is the source of law or powers, where it is believed that the Quran, Hadith, Ijma, Qiyas, and modern fatwas by Ulamaas remain the primary sources of law no matter the situation. Once a Muslim state accepts a democratic system with a modern constitution that is devoid of Shari'ah, no amount of arguments can convince us that democracy is legitimate from this perspective. Integrating democracy in Shari'ah law is necessary for its legality (Zulkarnain et al., 2022).

RESEARCH METHOD

This paper utilizes multiple study methods to explain the governmental system through two theories - Integration/Islamization of Knowledge (IoK) (Ullah, 2023) and Democracy (Moten, 2023). The objective is to revive traditional reasoning through IoK methodological reasoning, which is the basis for future studies. The methodology for a qualitative and quantitative descriptive research paper focuses on establishing a new system for electing and appointing governmental administrative and state councils at various levels - district, subdistrict, and city mayor (Uddin, 2019).

Methodological pluralism is necessary to ensure coherence between contemporary and traditional reasoning. The study involves interviews with Bangladeshi leaders and political scientists who played a pivotal role in formulating and drafting the policy paper for establishing a democratic Bangladesh. The researcher uses the IoK theory method established by following Islamic scholars Prof. Emeritus Dato' Dr. Abdulhamid Abusulayman and Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Dr. Mohd. Kamal bin Hassan, Prof. Dr. Ibrahim Mohamed Zein, and former colleagues and al-Faruqi and al-Attas students, who form the backbone and architect of the doctrine of IOK (Islamiyyat al-Ma'rifat) (Rehman et al., 2023). They also developed the

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preliminary plan and blueprint for integrating Islam and science, demonstrating their commitment to furthering the university's mission and values (Amir & Rahman, 2023) and (Ullah, 2023).

Research Question and Objective

1 **R. Q.** How can the Theory of Integration of Knowledge (IOK) be effectively implemented within the democratic framework to nurture future leaders in Bangladesh, and what governmental framework alterations or adaptations are required for its successful integration?

2 **R. O.** To investigate the practical steps and adjustments essential for integrating IOK principles into the democratic governance framework of Bangladesh to foster the development of capable and well-rounded future leaders.

Conceptual Framework for the Integration of Knowledge for Bangladesh Future Leaders

Bangladesh is among the Muslim countries that have attempted to democratize, which has proven challenging due to various factors such as historical, political, cultural, and economic issues (Fossati, 2017). Some Islamic political activists advocate for human rule, while scholars of Islam suggest that Shura is the foundation for democratic ethics (M. N. Osman & Saleem, 2016). Despite this, women and young people in Bangladesh have been fighting for their rights since the country became independent (Nazneen, 2017). The study proposes a mixed governmental system for Bangladesh's future leadership that focuses on free and fair political practices for all citizens as per the constitution. It promotes knowledge integration with Shuracrcy and democracy, treaty respect, and regional accountability to achieve democratic reforms.

Critics of cultural essentialism argue that the Islamic faith and democratic principles share fundamental values, including justice, mercy, equality, and pluralism. Moreover, democratic traditions are evident in Islam through concepts such as Shura (consultation), ijtihad (independent reasoning), and ijma (consensus), as well as the Constitution of Medina, which was a significant accomplishment during Islam's Golden Age. Despite the poor track record of some Muslim-majority governments, the Qur'an and the Sunna, Islam's holy sources of revelation, mandate universal human rights, including freedom of religion and tolerance (Jeremiah B. Bautista, 2014).

The Integrated Knowledge of Federal Democracy System (IKOFDS) is a proposed governmental structure for Bangladesh that combines Federalism with the Integration of Knowledge (IoK) and a robust democratic method. The primary objective of this system is to empower citizens, enhance governance efficiency, and foster collaborative decision-making.

The Integrated Knowledge of Federal Democracy System (IKOFDS) comprises three tiers of government: The National Federal Government, the Provincial Sub-state Government, and the Municipal Government. The highest tier, the National Federal Government, is responsible for national affairs and overarching policies. It comprises representatives elected through a democratic process, ensuring diverse perspectives. The Integration of Knowledge (IoK) is employed by incorporating experts, scientists, and professionals in advisory roles to enhance evidence-based decision-making. This tier focuses on formulating national-level policies, defense, foreign affairs, and major infrastructure projects.

The Provincial Sub-State Government is an intermediate tier that manages regional concerns and development (figure 4). Elected representatives from each province work alongside appointed experts to balance local knowledge and national expertise. This tier empowers provinces to decide on education, healthcare, regional infrastructure, and economic development. It promotes regional autonomy while ensuring alignment with national goals.
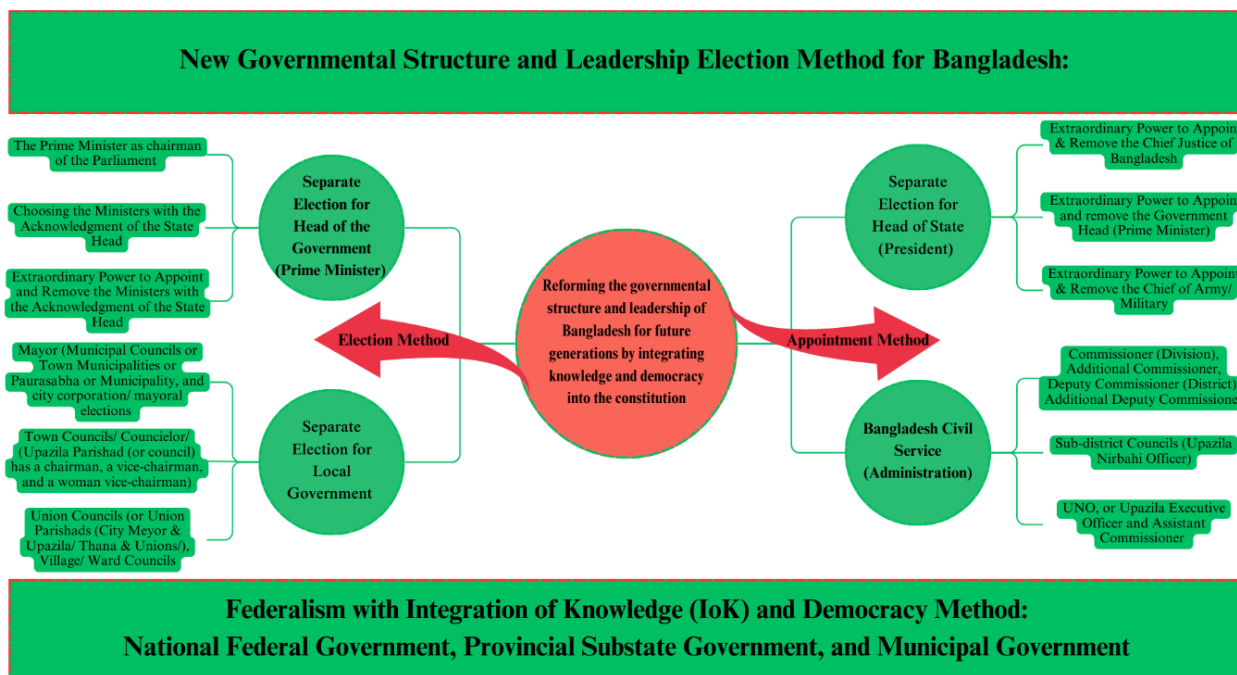
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Figure 4. New Governmental Structure and Leadership Election Method for Bangladesh
Source: Mohammad Eisa Ruhullah (2024)

The Municipal Government is responsible for local governance of cities and towns, fostering community participation. Elected officials collaborate with local experts, community leaders, and citizens to address specific municipal challenges. This tier focuses on urban planning, public services, and community development. It encourages bottom-up decision-making to address the unique needs of each municipality.

The IKOFDS governance model is based on the Integration of Knowledge (IoK), democratic method, and flexibility. It promotes collaboration and empowers local communities through municipal governance. The Integrated Knowledge (Ghalia & Hossen, 2019) of Federal Democracy System (Sohela Nazneen, Sam Hickey, 2019) (IKOFDS) is a proposed government structure that wants to give power to citizens, improve governance efficiency, and encourage cooperative decision-making. The IKOFDS combines Federalism with the Integration of Knowledge (IoK) and a robust democratic method to create a balanced and responsive governance model that leverages the strengths of Federalism, knowledge integration, and democratic principles (BUTT Marghoob Saleem, 2023).

However, democracy building in Muslim countries faces challenges due to historical, political, cultural, and economic factors. While some Muslim activists consider democracy to be the rule of humans, scholars of Islam suggest that the consultative decision-making principle of Shura is the source of democratic ethics in Islam. Reformist Muslims are receptive to new ideas, practices, and institutions, while secular Muslims see the experiences of the secular West as models for their countries. Women and young people are struggling for their rights in some countries. To prevent terrorism from growing, Western countries need to foster civil society and support democratic reforms in repressive political systems. This can be achieved by increasing foreign assistance, providing incentives for democratic reforms, respecting multilateral agreements and treaties, and promoting regional accountability mechanisms (Magen, 2018).

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According to Moten (1993), Donald E. Smith argues that Muslim societies are organic societies with organic religious systems, where religion permeates all institutions instead of being differentiated and autonomous. However, since the colonialists left the Muslim lands, there has been a growing body of literature suggesting the feasibility of radical separation between the spiritual and temporal realms. This issue is severe and requires an examination of the linkage between the two realms through textual, intellectual, and historical evidence. To do so, we need to first understand the meaning and nature of politics from the Western perspective to facilitate a comparison. This will help us understand the dynamics of the relationship between Islam and politics and determine what has changed and remained unchanged (Moten, 1993).

Federalism is a system where a group of states agree to become a single nation-state and share power between a central government and its member states (Fenna & Schnabel, 2024). The United States was the first country to have a truly federal system of government, which has influenced many other countries since (Rose & Miller, 2017). Over twenty countries have federal governments, accounting for over forty percent of the world's population. There are two types of federalism: dual federalism and cooperative federalism (Md Khalid & Jalil, 2018).

Thus, researchers want to implement Locke's statement in Bangladesh's political system; Locke believed that everyone is naturally free, equal, and independent. One can only give up this natural liberty and join a civil society by agreeing to join other people in a community that provides safe and peaceful living, secure enjoyment of their properties, and greater security against outsiders (Hinsch, 2015).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Precise Background of Bangladesh Governmental System

Current method of the state and the governmental head of Bangladesh, the eligibility criteria and the role of the President are defined by the country's Constitution. To be considered a candidate for the office of President, one does not have to be a member of parliament. However, a nominator and a seconder of the nomination are required from among the members of parliament. A majority vote among MPs elects the President. According to Article 48(4) of the Constitution, precise necessities must be met to be qualified for election as the President of Bangladesh: A) The candidate must be at least thirty-five years of age. B) They should be qualified for election as a member of parliament. C) They must not have been removed from the office of President by impeachment under the Constitution.

It is important to note that although the President is the head of state in Bangladesh, the President has no executive powers. Instead, the President's role is considered an ornamental post, according to political analysts. The President acts on the advice of the head of government, the prime minister. However, Article 48 (3) of the Constitution grants the President certain powers. Specifically, the President is not obliged to consult the prime minister directly on appointments of the prime minister and the chief justice. This provision gives the President some discretion in the exercise of their duties (Ali Asif Shawon, 2023).

A Brief History on Practice of Democracy and Integration of Knowledge

Today, democracy is aggressively promoted as the best and only form of government. Its champions argue that it provides and guarantees fundamental rights such as freedom of speech, liberty of choosing leadership, accountability, and transparency. However, this view is being challenged in some parts of the world, particularly in the Islamic world. Here, divine sovereignty and laws are considered supreme over

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any artificial system. While most modern Islamic scholars do not oppose democracy outright, they reject its principles when they are deemed to override Shari'ah law (Ado-Kurawa, 2016).

In contrast, Rached Ghannouchi, a Tunisian political leader and activist, has proposed a vision to revolutionize how democracy is perceived in the Islamic world. Ghannouchi believes that Western liberal democracy and Islamic governance can be synthesized through the full Islamization of democracy. He argues that such a system could solve the ongoing debate between divine sovereignty and manufactured laws. Ghannouchi's unique blend of philosophy, ideology, and activism has earned him the reputation of an Islamic democratic philosopher in the 21st century. His vision is a source of hope and motivation for those striving to create a more impartial and just community. This study aims to critically examine Ghannouchi's efforts to Islamize democracy by linking and comparing early Islamic philosophy on democracy with Ghannouchi's ideas. The objective is to derive policy implications for democratic governance in the Muslim world that can help pave the way for a better future.

The Integration of Knowledge (IOK) theory is a holistic approach to addressing complex issues by synthesizing knowledge from different fields. To achieve this, a few critical steps need to be taken. Firstly, education reform is necessary, which involves revising curricula to emphasize interdisciplinary learning, critical thinking, problem-solving, and practical applications. Additionally, educators should encourage collaboration between different disciplines. Secondly, leadership development programs that offer a comprehensive curriculum should be created integrating various fields such as social sciences, natural sciences, technology, humanities, and ethics. Thirdly, research and innovation centers should be established where scholars, experts, and students from different fields collaborate on solving real-world problems. Encouraging partnerships between academia, industry, and government can help address societal challenges. Fourthly, policymakers must be trained to use an IOK approach in policymaking. Evidence-based decision-making should be encouraged, considering social, economic, environmental, and cultural aspects. A culture of inclusivity and dialogue should be fostered to ensure policies address diverse perspectives. Finally, educational institutions and public forums should emphasize critical thinking, debate, and dialogue. Promoting the dialogue of ideas and beliefs can facilitate a culture of learning and openness to new perspectives.

The following steps should be taken to adapt the governmental framework to integrate IOK successfully: Firstly, government support is essential through policies that endorse interdisciplinary education, research, and innovation. Resources and funding should be allocated for initiatives promoting IOK. Secondly, collaboration and coordination should be facilitated among government agencies, educational institutions, private sectors, and NGOs to implement IOK effectively. Creating platforms for sharing resources and expertise can help achieve this. Thirdly, universities and educational institutions should be encouraged to adapt their structures to support interdisciplinary studies. This may involve changes in administrative policies, hiring practices, and tenure considerations. Fourthly, awareness campaigns should be launched to inform the public about the benefits of IOK and its role in nurturing future leaders. Public participation in discussions and initiatives related to interdisciplinary approaches should be encouraged. Finally, mechanisms should be established to assess the effectiveness of IOK integration in education and leadership development. Regular evaluations help identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. Implementing IOK within a democratic framework in Bangladesh requires a multi-stakeholder approach involving government, educational institutions, civil society, and the private sector. A long-term commitment is necessary to foster a culture of interdisciplinary learning, innovation, and collaborative problem-solving among future leaders.

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The principle of Shura in Islam is often considered the foundation of democratic ethics. However, before using Shura as a basis for an Islamic conception of democracy, we must recognize the differences. Shura is a consultative process for decision-making, which some scholars believe is obligatory and others see as desirable. While some scholars see it as obligatory based on the Quranic verse "and consult with them on the matter" (3:159), others consider it merely desirable based on the verse praising "those who conduct their affairs by counsel" (43:38). Even though Shura is the Islamic way of making decisions, it is unclear whether a government must implement a consultative process, or if a government that does not implement Shura is illegitimate. While many Muslim intellectuals agree that a consultative and consensual government is best, many jurists are more doubtful or ambivalent. This may be because many jurists depend on non-consultative bodies for their livelihoods and are reluctant to relinquish the privileges that non-consultative governments extend. It is important to note that while Shura supports the democratic process, it is not the same as democracy (Magen, 2018).

Integration of Knowledge (IoK) and Democratic Electoral New Structure for Government Positions in Bangladesh

The proposed system aims to significantly change Bangladesh's electoral and administrative procedures by incorporating the principles of knowledge (IoK) and democracy. This approach guarantees that individuals who possess specialized knowledge and have been democratically elected are assigned significant governmental roles and responsibilities.

Election Mechanism: The process of electing candidates for important positions such as Prime Minister, President, Mayor, Chairman, Vice Chairman, Councilor, Union Chairman, and Ward Councilor members will involve two layers of assessment. The first layer will be based on the democratic election process, where citizens will vote for their preferred candidates based on their policies, leadership qualities, and local needs. The second layer will incorporate a rigorous evaluation process that uses the IoK (Information on Knowledge) element to assess the candidates' knowledge, expertise, and experience relevant to their respective positions. This evaluation process will ensure that only candidates with the necessary skills for effective governance are elected to the positions of power.

Shuracrcy/Democracy of IoK: The IoK system is built on the principles of Shuracrcy, which is a combination of Shura (consultation) and democracy. This system emphasizes the importance of collective decision-making and active participation of the people in the governance process. In order to ensure effective decision-making and policy implementation, leaders in this system are selected democratically and equipped with the necessary knowledge and expertise. This approach ensures that individuals in leadership positions have the qualifications to make informed decisions and manage the affairs of the state competently.

District and Sub-district Based Appointment: The proposed plan is to implement administrative appointments based on district and sub-district divisions, a strategy to decentralize power and address local needs more effectively. This structure ensures that leaders have a comprehensive understanding of each region's unique challenges and opportunities, which leads to a more responsive and localized governance. By having a more decentralized system, administrative processes can be streamlined to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy and improve efficiency in responding to local needs.

Constitutional Alignment: The system proposal aligns with the Constitution of Bangladesh, as it gives the President the authority to supervise the appointment procedures. As the state's leader, the President is responsible for ensuring the effective functioning of the IoK (Institute of Krishi) and preserving democratic principles.

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Therefore, what Moten (1993) said that there are different levels of incorporating Islamic principles into a country's constitution, and the extent to which these principles are practiced varies among Muslim communities. Enforcing laws based on shari'ah alone will only be effective if the society undergoes a complete transformation.

"This requires of Muslims their active participation in politics, making it serve Islamic purposes. This is also the guarantee to prevent 'politicisation' of Islam, that is, to prevent the use of Islam by those trying to legitimise the prevailing socia-political set up, irrespective of the subordinate role assigned to the shari' ah. The most reliable defence against the influence of corrupt politics is to bring politics within the fold of Islam, such that people's political life is always situated within the larger frames of their religious and spiritual life. Islam being a complete way of life abhors any disjunction between the faith in Allah (SWT) and political action" (Moten, 1993).

The integration of knowledge and democratic electoral structure in Bangladesh aims to establish a governance system qualified to address the diverse demands of the nation while ensuring accountability to its citizens. This system combines the democratic mandate of the people with the expertise required for efficient administration. The ultimate goal is to create a more nuanced and compelling governance framework that leverages the best of both worlds - the democratic voice of the people and the technical proficiency of the experts. By doing so, it strives to establish a well-functioning government that can meet the nation's needs effectively and efficiently. Thus, leading Muslim thinkers need to reflect more on the nature of Shura and its relationship to democracy and other Islamic principles related to democratic practice. This theory is what researchers want to implement in Bangladesh's Integration of Knowledge (IoK) and Democracy established in Bangladesh.

CONCLUSION

The concept of democracy as compatible with Islamic principles is gaining traction, suggesting that embracing democratic values could lead to enhanced social justice, economic prosperity, and religious freedoms within Muslim-majority countries. However, this ideological shift requires a reevaluation of traditional interpretations of Islamic sources, free from biases against perceived Western influences. Bangladesh, a strategically important nation in Asia, is currently grappling with political instability, corruption, human rights violations, and the rise of extremist groups. Addressing these challenges necessitates support from global powers like the United States, focusing on strengthening state institutions, monitoring authoritarian tendencies within the government, and providing humanitarian aid. Additionally, proposed initiatives such as the Integration of Knowledge (IoK) and Democratic Electoral Structure aim to combine democracy with expertise, emphasizing collective decision-making and active community participation to create a more inclusive and effective governance system tailored to local needs.

In Bangladesh, an oligarchy of political elites controls key sectors like banking, bureaucracy, and business, contributing to economic crises through corruption and cronyism. Opposition leaders and activists are advocating for democratic reforms to break this oligarchy's grip on power and restore integrity to the governance system. Initiatives like the IoK system propose a fusion of democracy and expertise in electoral and administrative processes, aiming to decentralize power and incorporate community input through mechanisms like local councils and public forums. By empowering citizens to actively engage in the political decision-making process, Bangladesh can move towards a more inclusive

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and participatory democratic environment that addresses the nation's diverse needs and aspirations effectively.

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