



PARTICIPATION STATUS IN THE PARLIAMENT OF BANGLADESH: A STUDY ON MP'S PARTICIPATION ON THE EIGHT AND NINTH PARLIAMENT

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Abstract: This research investigates the aspects of peoples' participation in terms of members of parliaments (MPs) participation in the parliament of Bangladesh. For the analysis of this research 8th and 9th parliaments are considered as they are considered as two most democratic period in Bangladesh. Literature review type methodology is used where books, journal articles, documents and summery of proceedings related to the 8th and 9th parliaments are reviewed to collate data. MPs participation are analysed in the form of *public and private members engagement, attendance, oversight activities, moving resolution, and women's representation* in the parliament. In terms of the public and private members participation in the parliament, it is seen that private members got the opportunity to do their business in the parliament only a few days of total working days. In terms of attendance, not a single day in any session in both eighth and ninth parliament found where all the members are present. Overall, the average number of MP present in the parliament is just above the fifty percent. As oversight functions, less than fifty percent of the questions asked by MPs are answered by the concerned ministers. The participation status through other categories of parliamentary oversight are also found very low. Apart from these, women's representation are also painfully low. Overall, it can be concluded from the findings here that the participation status in the parliament is not very satisfactory in Bangladesh.

Keywords: Peoples' participation, Member of Parliament, Eighth parliament, Ninth parliament, Bangladesh

I. INTRODUCTION

People's Participation is a very essential component of parliamentary democracy. In the parliamentary democracy people first participate in the general election through exercising their voting rights to choose their representatives in the parliament. Then those representatives, known as parliamentary members (MPs), work together in the parliament and govern the country. In this way people's representation in the parliament is guaranteed and it ensures people's participation in the governing process. In other words, MPs participation will be the reflection of people's participation in the parliament.

A democratic parliament will function in such a way that it will represent popular will and MPs will participate lively in the parliament through questions and debate. To its ideal form, it will function through democratic discussion and compromise for public interest rather than individual or sectional interest (Jahan and Amundsen, 2012). Therefore, as a peoples' representative institution, the parliament has to be responsible to their duties. In practice, the parliamentarians need to be lively, active, and participative in the parliament. If the participation happened in the parliament, then people's participation will be effective and meaningful.

Around 50 years has passed since the independence of Bangladesh. So far our understanding and effectiveness of people's participation is only related to voter's turnout in general election. The nature or pattern of MPs participation is not well known to us. Moreover, it is obscure to the scholars, development partners and policy makers about the nature, status and problems related to participation here. So, it is important to take an endeavour to understand people's participation based on their MPs participation in parliament. The proposed research tends to investigate the present status of MPs participation in parliamentary democracy in Bangladesh. Through this we can also understand how well the parliamentarians are discharging their participatory role in the parliament.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

As the objective of this research is to analyze the participation status in Bangladesh parliament, the literature related to parliament and its activities are being reviewed here. In the literature, parliamentary activities are taken as important determinant of several aspects of a representative democracy. The literature related to those are given below.

Raunio (1996) analyzed the parliamentary questions in the European Parliament to see the representation, information and control behavior of MEPs. He argued that parliamentary questions, one of the freest procedures in modern legislatures, gives the individual MEPs an excellent chance of promoting and defending those issues which he or she regards important. Thus 'the use of parliamentary questions may be considered an especially interesting indicator of how the MEPs understand their role. Using a

content analysis of written questions it is found that one party group, the Greens, specialized in a particular subject category, the environment, public health and consumer protection, tabled most questions per MEP. Even from the territorial dimension, members from the original six (France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Netherlands and Luxemburg) asked a higher than the average share of questions.

Similarly Dandoy (2011) examined the parliamentary question between 1995 and 2007 in Belgium House of Representatives. Important variations over time is observed there. This study also tried to see the most important variables in explaining variations in number of written questions asked by individual legislators there. It is found that the more organized and disciplined party has the highest number of questions. Besides, a negative link is found between the number of questions and parties that participate in coalition in the government. Apart from that it is also found that opposition parties introduce more questions than the majority parties.

Bonney (2003) examines the status of *participatory democracy* in contrast to what might be regarded as the older and more orthodox idea of *representative democracy* in Scottish parliament. In this respect he examines the parliament by focusing on issues of visibility and transparency, the role of new information and communication technologies and the representation of external interests in the work of selected *parliamentary committees*. In particular, it examines the ambition to enhance public participation in decision-making in the new committee system and highlights some of the issues that arise, particularly in relation to policy-making and regulation of lobbying.

Sorace (2018) examines 'supplementary' activities of the European Parliament in order to investigate legislative participation patterns in the European Parliament. In this respect, he uses written questions, oral questions, motions, written declarations, questions for question time and debates/one-minute speeches for the analysis. The study found that written questions are the only supplementary activity in which participation occurred by all members irrespective of legislative rank or demographic. However, the questions for question time and written declaration are monopolized by frontbencher or high-ranking members. As the reasons for this overall low participation rates are found here as procedural 'hurdle' that leads to domination by the frontbenchers.

Jensen et al. (2013) examines the parliamentary questions, oversight, and national opposition status in the European Parliament. It is found that members of European Parliament (MEPs) questions are a tool for gaining information as well as a mechanism to understand the potential improper implementation of EU law in member states. However, it is also found that MEPs do not all make equal use of oversight opportunities. National oppositions MEPs are more likely to use parliamentary questions than MEPs from government parties because a simple question could potentially lead to public embarrassment of his or her government.

Proksch and Slapin (2010) in their study examined the parliamentary questions and oversight in the European Union to see this as a strategy to reduce the informational deficits for Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). As theory, both national governing and opposition can reduce informational deficits over EU affairs and monitor the works of the European commission by parliamentary questions. Using dataset on written questions in the EP, it is found in this research that MEPs from national opposition parties ask more questions than governing parties. From this result they argued that MEPs from governing parties do not need to ask questions as an information and oversight tool because they have other information channels through which they can avail that.

Jahan and Amundsen (2012) studied Bangladesh parliament to generate knowledge about the actual and potential role. Though the parliament can performs many roles and functions, this study mainly focused on two key roles as representation and accountability. In case of representation, the analysis was done on three major aspects of representation: political, social and constituency. In case of accountability the analysis is done on the parliament's performance in legislation, budget making, scrutiny and oversight activities.

Ahmed and Khan (1995) studied the oversight functions of the parliament of Bangladesh. In this study they take into consideration the different oversight tools like *question-answer*, *call-attention motions*, *short discussion*, *committee formed*, *committee positions* and *report submission*. Comparing the situation of fifth parliament elected in 1991 with the first one elected in 1973 it is found that the use of both call-attention motions and questions has increased. The number of committees and committee positions has also increased. However, it is also found that focus of these oversight activities were mainly on national rather than on local issues.

Pandey (2008) explores the status of only women's participation in the political process in Bangladesh. In the analysis of the women's political participation the status of women in the parliament is also taken into consideration. In this respect, the state of women members in the Bangladesh Parliament from 1973 to 2006 are discussed.

It is seen from the above that different parliamentary activities are studied in the literature to analyze role of parliamentarian, representation, behavior, visibility and transparency, accountability, participation pattern, as strategy to reduce informational deficits and party discipline. It is also found that the research on the Parliament of Bangladesh are very limited. Moreover, to the best of my knowledge, there is no research on the status of participation in the parliament. Therefore this research intend to add some knowledge on that issue for the parliament in Bangladesh.

III. DATA SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

To analyze the MPs participation in the parliament of Bangladesh, this research only considered 8th and 9th parliament. Although 12th parliament is running at present, in recent times these two parliaments (2001-2013) are considered as two most democratic period in Bangladesh. Moreover, during the elections for these two parliaments all parties were participated and the elections were legitimated by all. For collecting data literature review type methodology is used here. The existing secondary sources like books, articles, and documents were reviewed thoroughly. The *Summary of Proceedings* of the eighth and ninth parliaments are mainly used to collate data and prepare tables and figures in accordance with the requirements. Although data is presented here in quantitative form, for the analytical purpose some descriptive statistics (i.e. mean and percentage) are used but, no causal relation and statistical significance is seen here. The MPs participation in the parliament several are analysed from different perspectives. The indicators used here are MPs participation in the form of *public and private members engagement*, *attendance*, *oversight activities*, *moving resolution*, and *women's representation* in the parliament.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Participation Status in Terms of Public and Private Members Engagement

Investigation on the participation status is started here from the functions of MP that they engaged in the total working days. Table 1 shows the proportion of public members and private members business in the 8th and 9th parliament in Bangladesh. A Member of Parliament (MP) other than a Minister is regarded as the private members. In the 8th parliament the public and private members were 18 and 82 percent respectively, and in the 9th parliament it was 13 and 87 percent respectively. It is also seen from the Table 1 that private members got the opportunity to do their business in the parliament only a few days of total working days, only around 14 and 15 percent in the 8th and 9th parliament respectively. The *Rules* specify that private members' business shall consist of Bills, Resolutions, Amendments and other motions introduced or initiated by private members. Overall we can derive from here that only a few member's affair (i.e. the public functions, 18 and 13 percent members in the 8th and 9th parliament respectively) were mostly dominated in the parliament (i.e. 86 and 85 percent of total working days in the 8th and 9th parliament respectively).

Table 1: Status of Public and Private Members Business in the 8th and 9th Parliament

Parliament	Date	Total Session	Total Working Days	Public Function (%)	Private Function (%)
8 th	28/10/2001 to 04/10/2006	23	373	86	14
9 th	25/01/2009 to 20/11/2013	19	418	85	15
Total		42	791	85.5	14.5

Source: Bangladesh Parliament, 2001-2006; 2009-2013. Calculations have been made by the researcher.

4.2 Participation Status in Terms of Attendance

The important point to investigate the participation would be the attendance of MPs in the parliament. Attendance status of MPs in the 8th and 9th parliament in the each session is shown in Figure 1. It is seen that in both the parliament not a single day in any session were there where all the members are present.

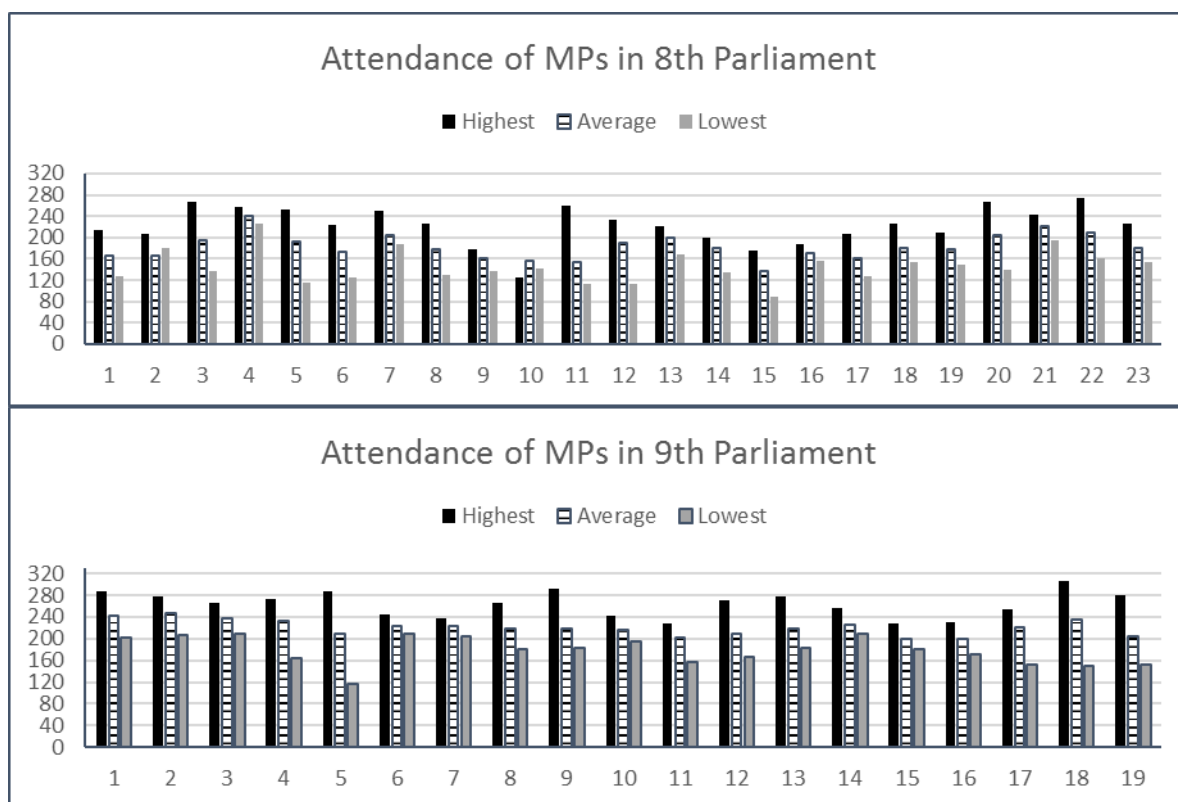


Figure 1: Attendance of MPs in the 8th and 9th Parliament

Source: Bangladesh Parliament, 2001-2006; 2009-2013. Calculations have been made by the researcher. The total working days in 8th and 9th parliament were 373 and 418 respectively.

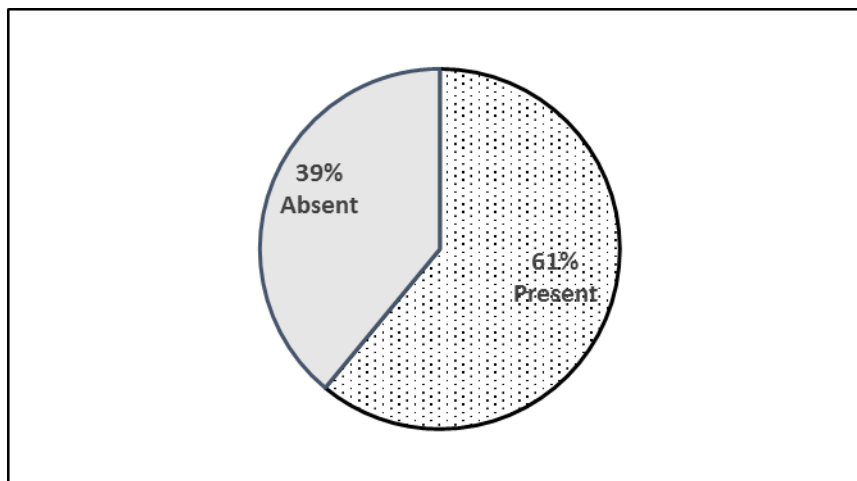
The situation is understood clearer from the Table 2. It is seen that in the 8th parliament among the total 345 members maximum present were 274 and minimum were 90. The average number of MP present in the 8th parliament were 187 which is just above the 50 percent. In the 9th parliament, although the situation is bit improved but still the attendance is not satisfactory. The maximum and minimum number of MP present were 305 and 117 respectively whereas the total number is 350. The average number of MP present in the 9th parliament is 220 which is around 60 percent.

Table 2: Attendance of MPs in 8th and 9th Parliament

Parliament	Total Session	Total Working Days	Maximum Number Present	Minimum Number Present	Average Number Present
8 th	23	373	274	90	183 (53%)
9 th	19	418	305	117	220 (63%)

Source: Bangladesh Parliament, 2001-2006; 2009-2013. Calculations have been made by the researcher.

On average in the two parliament (8th and 9th parliament), the attendance rate of the MP is around 61 percent (Shown in Figure 2). That is, on an average 39 percent of the MPs were absent in the parliament. Their presence is pre-requisite to participate in the parliamentary affairs, and for that purpose they have been mandated by the citizen. Therefore, in this respect the MPs participation is not satisfactory.

Figure 2: Average Number of MPs Present in 8th and 9th Parliament

Source: Bangladesh Parliament, 2001-2006; 2009-2013.

Calculations have been made by the researcher.

There could be several ways to see the participation performance of MP. One easy and basic marker is attendance. Although it indicates nothing about other aspects such as length of stay or participation in debates. However, attendance is a good starting point. Moreover, the presence of members in the Parliament is central to their functioning. In this respect, this study found that the attendance is not very satisfactory in both 8th and 9th parliament. One of the interesting things related to MPs attendance is that there is nothing in our constitution regarding this except two cases, first one is related to vacant of seats and the second one is related to quorum. Article 67 (1) of the constitution says “A member of Parliament shall vacate his seat -(b) if he is absent from Parliament, without the leave of Parliament, for ninety consecutive days;” And article 75 (2) of the constitution says “If at any time which Parliament is in session the attention of the person presiding is drawn to the fact that the number of members present is less than sixty, he shall either suspend the meeting until at least sixty members are present, or adjourn it”. In first case the ninety consecutive days is very long period. On the contrary in second case the minimum number of members as sixty is also very small number, it is only 17 percent among total 350 members. Therefore, there is no or very less binding to MPs to attend the parliament. Consequently the attendance rate is low in the Parliament so does the participation in that respect.

Theoretically it may be argued that salaries or financial incentives may impact on the behaviour of MPs in this respect. However, empirical analysis on this issue does not support this argument. Fisman et. al. (2015) found on their empirical research that there is no effect of salaries on either attendance or shirking¹ of MPs in parliament. On the contrary, they found that social norms and nonpecuniary concerns are more important determinant of politicians' behaviour. However, they found that there is a significant positive relation between attendance and the legislative output of parliament. Therefore, to increase the participation in the parliament, the status of MPs attendance in the parliament has to be improved.

4.3 Opposition's Participation Status

The opposition plays a critical role in holding the executives accountable in the parliament. The opposition is the ‘watchdog of the watchdogs’ particularly in the Westminster-style parliamentary system. In Bangladesh, Article 70 of the constitution imposes strict party control. Therefore, the opposition's role is much more important. The individual members can use several techniques for scrutiny and oversight. These include questions, adjournment motions, call-attention motions and discussion. Participation status through those are discussed in the subsequent sections. In this section, the opposition's status of participation in the parliament is seen through their presence at first.

¹ In some parliament MPs sign a register to prove their attendance, entitling them to daily allowance. However, MPs sometimes abuse this system, sign the register and then leave or absent in all the parliamentary affairs held that day. Such behaviour is called shirking.

Table 3: Opposition's Boycott in 8th and 9th Parliament

Parliament	Total Session	Total Working Days	Govt. MPs	Opposition MPs	Opposition's Boycott Days	Boycotts (%)
8 th	23	373	216	78	223	60
9 th	19	418	262	34	342	82
Total	42	791			565	71

Source: Bangladesh Parliament, 2001-2006; 2009-2013. Calculations have been made by the researcher.

Table 3 shows the opposition's boycott status in the 8th and 9th parliament. It is seen that in the 8th parliament the opposition MPs boycotting the parliament 223 days out of 373 sittings which is around 60 percent of total working days. This became worst in the 9th parliament where the opposition boycotted the parliament for 342 days out of 418 working days which is around 82 percent of total working days. Overall, in the two parliaments the opposition attended only 29 percent of total working days. In this respect their participation is very low.

The boycott culture was first born in the fifth parliament when the then AL-led opposition started boycotting parliament to realise their demands (Liton, 2011). The then AL MPs boycotted 135 out of 400 sittings which is around 34 percent of total working days. In the seventh parliament, the then main opposition BNP also did the same and boycotted 163 out of total 382 sittings, which is around 43 percent of total working days (Liton, 2011). The trend is increasing that we see from the above Table. It is found that the rate of boycott increased from 43 percent in the seventh to 60 percent in the eighth parliament. Previous all record to boycott the parliament exceeded in the ninth parliament. The then opposition BNP attended only 6 sessions out of 19 sessions. They attended only 76 days and did not attend the rest of working days of total 413 days.

It is interesting to note that despite boycotting the primary sessions, the opposition MPs continue to join parliamentary delegations on trips abroad (Liton, 2011). Moreover, they take the salaries and other benefits. None of them have ever surrendered the privileges and facilities they were entitled. When the opposition MPs including the leader of the opposition risked losing membership of parliament for their unauthorised absence, they joined the House for brief period to retain the title of the MP. It seems that they enjoyed all the privileged benefits but did not discharge their responsibility to participate in the parliament well. Public disapproval of this practice is also very high (TIB, 2009).

Oppositions argued that boycott is a legal tool and it is used to register their protest and dissent. It is true but boycotting the parliament being absent in around 82 percent of working days is definitely not right. Boycott is a form of protest, which can be done through *walkout* also. In the parliamentary usage 'walkout' means walking out of the House of the parliament by the parliamentarians for a short period of time (Firoz, 2012; p. 207). They will walkout as to register their protest and again come back to argue, ask question and give opinion on different issues of public welfare. Overall, they participate in the parliament. In case of boycott, the participation is zero. However, the occasional boycotts are legitimate and handy as a means of protest and dissents. But daily practices of these are a serious deviation from the parliamentary norm.

4.4 Participation through Parliamentary Oversight

Parliamentary oversight generally refers to parliamentary supervision and monitoring of the executive and administration (Ahmed, 2013). The main objective of oversight is to ensure that the executive complies with the will of parliament and the ethical behaviour in the civil service is maintained. Halchin and Kaiser (2012) identified some important purposes of oversight as improve the efficiency and effectiveness of government operations, evaluate programs and performance, detect and prevent poor administration, waste, abuse, arbitrary and capricious behaviour, or illegal and unconstitutional conduct, protect civil liberties and constitutional rights, and ensure that executive policies reflect the public interest. However, these objectives will be fulfilled if the members of parliament would participate properly in the parliamentary oversight activities. Therefore, in this section the status of parliamentary oversight is investigated to see the participation situation of MPs in this respect.

According to the *Rules*, an MP in Bangladesh has access a number of oversight techniques. But here the investigation starts with the most important individual participation which is *question*. Questions provide the mainstay of parliamentary scrutiny. According to the *Rules*, the first hour of every sitting is available for asking questions. One of the important ways to measure the participation of MPs is to calculate the number of notices received by the parliament secretariat for questions to minister and prime minister as well as their status.

In the context of questions to ministers, Table 4 shows that MPs are very enthusiastic to participate in regard to asking question to ministers as the volume of the questions received is huge. Moreover, the number of notices received for raising questions has increased from 8th parliament to 9th parliament. However, one of the important thing to notice here that around 20 percent of total questions were rejected/withdrawn on procedural ground in both parliaments. This rejection rate is worth mentioning to question the sincerity of the MPs to participate in the parliament as MPs are assumed to participate in orientation programmes before the commencement of the parliament's first plenary session (Jahan and Amundsen, 2012).

Table 4: Questions to Ministers

	8 th Parliament			9 th Parliament			Total
	Starred	Unstarred	Total	Starred	Unstarred	Total	
Questions Received	26468	6318	32786	46525	13622	60147	92933
Question Rejected/Withdrawn (%)	20	31	22	15	15	15	20
Questions Answered (%)	41	46	42	51	68	55	50
Questions Tamadi (%)	39	23	36	34	17	30	30

Source: Bangladesh Parliament, 2001-2006; 2009-2013. Calculations have been made by the researcher. Starred question means a question for an oral answer and unstarred is a question of written answer.

It is also seen from the Table 4 that around 50 percent of questioned are answered by the concerned ministers. Moreover, it is seen that a significant amount (around 30 percent) of the questions received, often do not reach the House due to the conclusion of the session (referred as Tamadi). Overall, in this respect it can be derived from the above discussion that the participatory status of MPs are not so good.

With regards to the questions to Prime Minister, Table 5 reveals similar type of tendency that is seen in case of minister's questions. It is seen that the participatory tendency is much higher in 9th parliament as questions tabled is very high. However, the rejection rate is also high here on procedural ground which again questions MPs sincerity in participatory role in this respect.

Table 5: Questions to Prime Ministers

	8 th Parliament	9 th Parliament	Total
Questions Received	1914	6493	8407
Questions Rejected/shifted/withdrawn (%)	55	75	70
Questions Answered (%)	17	12	13
Questions Tamadi (%)	28	13	17

Source: Bangladesh Parliament, 2001-2006; 2009-2013. Calculations have been made by the researcher.

It is also seen from Table 5 that only 17 and 12 percent of questions were approved and answered, which is very less. Moreover, the number of questions fall under the category of 'Tamadi' appears to be around 13 percent in total considering both parliament together. Overall, from the above discussion it may be derived that the participatory status of MPs role in respect to parliamentary oversight is not very satisfactory.

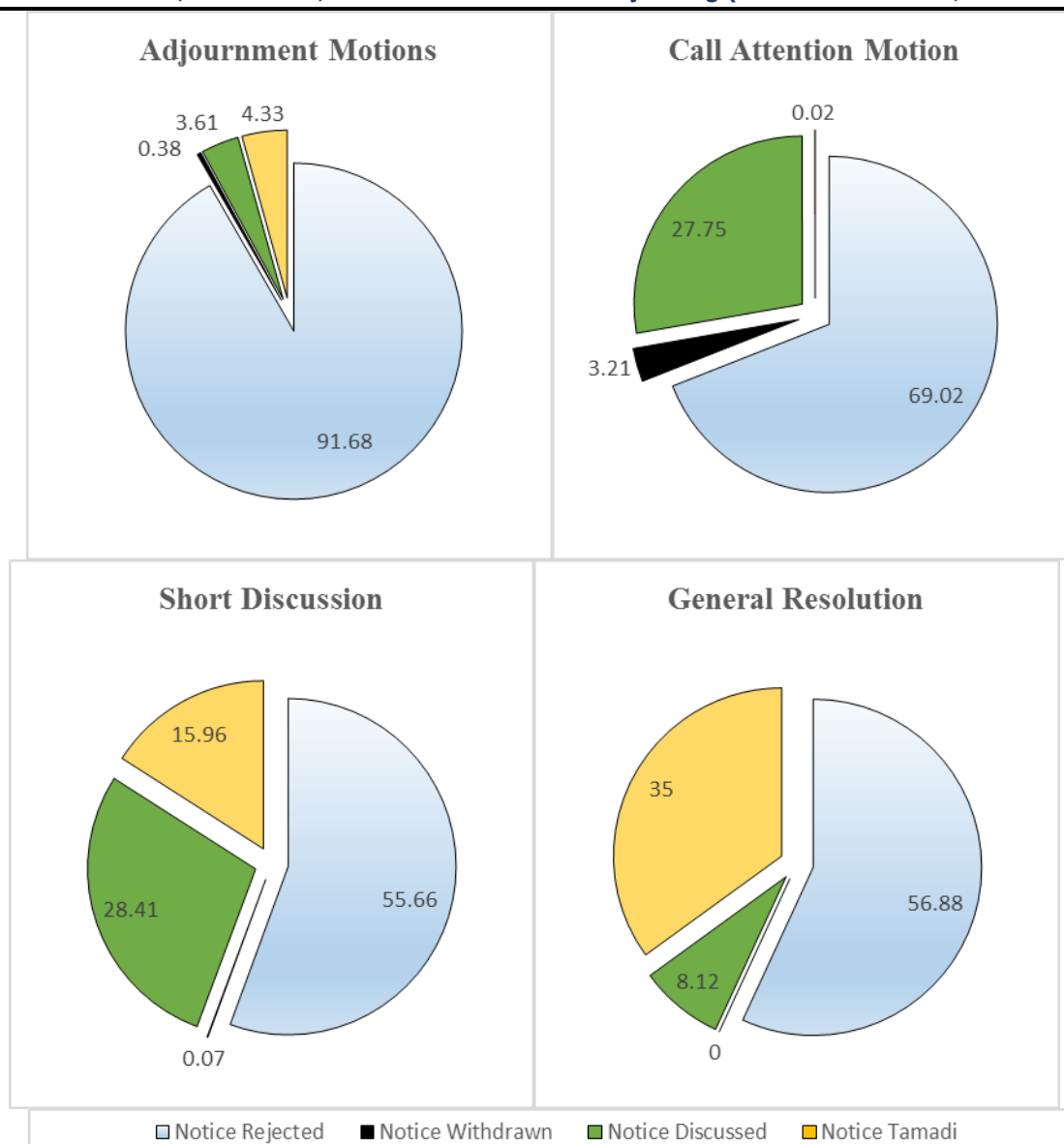
Table 6: Status of Different Motions

Parliament	Adjournment Motions	Call Attention Motions	Short Discussion	General Resolution
<i>Eighth</i>				
Notice Submitted	2440	10165	230	110
Notice Rejected (%)	97.95	60.32	46.09	60.91
Notice Withdrawn (%)	0.33	2.10	1.30	0
Notice Discussed (%)	0	37.55	2.18	2.73
Notice Tamadi (%)	1.72	0.03	50.43	36.36
<i>Ninth</i>				
Notice Submitted	937	9656	4229	50
Notice Rejected (%)	75.34	78.18	56.18	48
Notice Withdrawn (%)	0.53	4.38	0	0
Notice Discussed (%)	13.02	17.43	29.84	20
Notice Tamadi (%)	11.11	0.01	13.98	32
Total (8th & 9th Parliament)				
Notice Submitted	3377	19821	4459	160
Notice Rejected (%)	91.68	69.02	55.66	56.88
Notice Withdrawn (%)	0.38	3.21	0.07	0
Notice Discussed (%)	3.61	27.75	28.41	8.12
Notice Tamadi (%)	4.33	0.02	15.96	35.00

Source: Bangladesh Parliament, 2001-2006; 2009-2013. Calculations have been made by the researcher.

The other categories of parliamentary oversight includes 'adjournment motion', 'call attention motion', 'short discussion', and 'general resolution'. Besides questions an MP can raise motions demanding the adjournment of the business of the House for the purpose of discussing a matter of recent and urgent public importance (Ahmed, 2013). She/he can also call attention of a minister to any matter of urgent public importance and ask for a short discussion on a matter of urgent public importance which has been the subject of a recent question. Provisions also exist for approving a general resolution after a short discussion on issues requiring immediate action. The status of all these oversight techniques also show us the status of participation of MPs in the parliament which is investigated next.

Table 6 provides the detailed about the status of different oversight techniques used by MPs during 8th and 9th parliament. Issues raised in adjournment motions in 8th parliament is more than double than that of in 9th parliament. However, the notices rejected by the Speaker is also very high in both parliament, around 98 and 75 percent in 8th and 9th parliament respectively. What is alarming here that no adjournment motions was allowed for discussion in 8th parliament and a very few of them, only around 13 percent, were allowed for discussion in the 9th parliament.

Figure 3: Status of Different Motions in Total (8th and 9th parliament together)

Source: Bangladesh Parliament, 2001-2006; 2009-2013. Calculations have been made by the researcher.

It is also seen from the Table 6 that among all the notices for moving motions received by the parliament secretariat, the call attention motions constitute the most frequently used technique by the MPs. Although around the same number of notices were submitted in both parliament, the majority of them have been rejected, around 60 and 78 percent in 8th and 9th parliament respectively. However, number of call attention motions were discussed is more than that of adjournment motions. Around 38 and 17 percent of call attention motions were actually discussed in the 8th and 9th parliament respectively.

Table 6 also reveals that in case of short discussion and general resolution motions, rejection rate is high, around 50 percent for both motions in both parliaments. Moreover, percentage of these motions discussed in the parliament is very low. However, it is also seen that a considerable portion of these two motions were lapsed as these notices could not be placed before the speaker for discussion.

Form the Table 6 it seems that the MPs are very enthusiastic to submit notices on those motions. This may be interpreted as their participatory attitude in the parliamentary affairs from different motions perspective. But when the status of those notices is seen then it is revealed that the majority of the notices were rejected. The situation is been clearly seen in Figure 3, where the status of these motions were shown considering both 8th and 9th parliament together. It is seen there that only few portion of the notice submitted were discussed in the parliament. Around one fourth of the call attention motions and short discussions were discussed, whereas for other two motions (i.e. adjournment motions and general resolutions) it is very negligible. Moreover, a considerable portion of these motions were being lapsed there. Therefore, from the above it can be said that the participation status is not very high in this respect also.

4.5 Participation through Moving Resolutions

The parliament is considered to be the supreme law-making authority in Bangladesh. Article 65 (1) of the Constitution provides: "There shall be a parliament for Bangladesh in which subjects to the provisions of this Constitution, shall be vested the legislative powers of the Republic" (GPRB, 2011). It is widely recognised that the government dominates the legislative process in Bangladesh (Ahmed, 2013). Ahmed (2013) in his research found from the legislative records of different parliaments (from 1st to 9th parliament) that in practice, the government almost monopolizes the legislative process. However, only a few private members' bills are introduced in the House, while the rate of passage is extremely low. Therefore, we will not go for that part but we will investigate the other function that MPs can do like 'resolutions'.

Table 7: Status of Private Members' Resolutions

Parliament	Tabled	Accepted	Rejected	Lapsed	Secure position in ballots	Discussed	Status of resolutions discussed		
							Accepted	Rejected	Withdrawn
8 th	34686	23448 (68)	8364 (24)	2874 (8)	305 (1)	109 (0.5)	1 (1)	2 (2)	106 (97)
9 th	18628	17140 (92)	1448 (8)	40 (0.2)	365 (2)	124 (0.7)	5 (4)	25 (20)	90 (72)
Total	53314	40588 (76)	9812 (18)	2914 (5.5)	670 (1.7)	233 (0.6)	6 (2.5)	27 (11.5)	196 (84)

Source: Bangladesh Parliament, 2001-2006; 2009-2013. Calculations have been made by the researcher. Numbers in the parentheses indicates percentage.

The *Rules* allow a MP to move different types of resolution. Rule 132 of the *Rules* provides that a resolution may be in the form of a declaration of opinion or recommendation; or may be in the form of so as to record either approval or disapproval by the House of an act or policy of Government, or convey a message; or command, urge or request an action; or call attention to a matter or situation for consideration by the Government, or in such other form as the Speaker may consider appropriate (Bangladesh Parliament: 43). Past records show that resolutions for disapproval of some government actions, especially promulgating ordinances, and urging the Government to do several things are very common in Bangladesh (Ahmed, 2013). However, resolution have been passed appreciating government actions and/or condemning the opposition are also there. Whatever it is, the resolution is one way to see the participation of MPs in the parliament that we are investigating in the next section.

Table 7 shows the status of private members participation through the resolutions moved by themselves in the parliament. It is seen that private members are very active in moving resolutions, although only a few of them are actually discussed in the parliament. However, number of notices for resolutions were around double in the 8th parliament than the ninth but the number of resolutions discussed are around the same. Altogether in 8th and 9th parliament, nearly one-fifth of the notices for private members resolutions have been rejected as these have failed to satisfy the *Rules*. However, those notices accepted, only a few have been secured positions in ballots (1.7%) and a negligible number have been actually discussed (0.6%) in the parliament. It is also seen from the Table 7 that only 2.5 percent and 11.5 percent of the resolutions discussed in the parliament has been accepted and rejected respectively. Another important aspect noticed here is that most of the resolution discussed in the House finally been withdrawn by the member, around 84 percent. Therefore, the participatory role of MPs in the parliament from the resolutions discussed perspective is very poor.

4.6 Women's Participation in the Parliament

Women remain the most under-represented group in Bangladesh. Women are nearly 50 percent of the total population and the two major political parties have been headed by two woman leaders for around last 35 years. Here, the women participation in the parliament is seen from their representation status in the parliament.

Table 8 shows the status of women participation in terms of their representation in the Bangladesh parliament. Though, this research mainly focused on eighth and ninth parliament but, to have a holistic picture the first to seventh parliament is also included in the table. It is seen from the Table 8 that only 7 MPs are women who are participating in the parliament through directly elected in the eighth parliament. In the ninth parliament the situation bit improved where directly elected women members become 19. However, the number of women directly elected to the previous parliament (1st to 7th parliament) has been severely low. Less than 10 women were directly elected in those parliaments. Overall, the women's participation in this respect is very low in the parliament.

Table 8: Women's Participation through Representation in the parliament

Parliament	Quota	Directly Elected	Total Number of Women MPs	Representation (%)
First (1972-75)	15	-	15	4.8
Second (1979-82)	30	2	32	9.7
Third (1986-87)	30	5	35	10.6
Forth (1988-90)	-	4	4	1.3
Fifth (1991-1995)	30	4	34	10.3
Sixth (1996-96)	30	3	33	10.0
Seventh (1996-2001)	30	8	38	11.5
Eighth (2001-06)	45	7	52	15.1
Ninth (2006-1013)	45	19	64	18.6

Source: Pandey (2008) for first to eighth parliaments; researcher's calculation for the eighth and ninth parliament.

The issue of women under-representation was recognised early stages of our independence. That is why special measures were adopted in the constitution. Article 65 of the constitution provided for a quota of 15 women's reserved seats which was subsequently increased through constitutional amendments. Presently this number is at 50 through the fifteenth amendment. However, merely increasing the number reserved seats for women through the quota does not address the lack of women's participation in the parliament.

V. Conclusion

For Bangladesh, more than 50 years has passed since independence. Bangladesh may need to change its policy making activities in the parliament and to have resulted in desired results in participating activities in the parliament to ensure proper governance of the nation. In this research the participating status of MP is scrutinized considering the latest two most democratic

parliaments, eighth and ninth parliament. In this respect, participation status is seen in terms of functions of MP that they engaged in the total working days, attendance of MPs and different parliamentary oversight functions.

In terms of the public and private members participation in the parliament, it is seen that private members got the opportunity to do their business in the parliament only a few days of total working days. In terms of attendance, not a single day in any session in both eighth and ninth parliament found where all the members are present. Overall, the average number of MP present in the parliament is also very low, just above the fifty percent. Opposition's participation status is painfully low. In the two parliament the opposition attended only a few total working days. Most of the time they were staying outside the parliament in the name of boycott.

In terms of parliamentary oversight functions the participation status is also very low. MPs are very enthusiastic in regards to asking question to ministers and prime minister. However, less than fifty percent of them are answered by the concerned ministers. The participation status through other categories of parliamentary oversight such as 'adjournment motion' 'call attention motion', 'short discussion', and 'general resolution' is also very low. Only a few of the notice submitted were discussed in the parliament. Overall, MP's participation in the parliament through these parliamentary oversight functions is far from desirable in Bangladesh. Apart from these, women participation in the parliament in terms of their representation is also painfully low. Overall, it can be concluded from the findings here that the participation status in the parliament is not very satisfactory in Bangladesh.

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