

Politicization of Talk shows in Bangladeshi Satellite TV Channels: Audience Perceptions and Perspectives

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Abstract

During the last decade, Bangladesh has been experiencing a boom in mass media sector. Television channels are increasing in good amount. Every new government has sanctioned license for new TV channels. As a result, there is a tough competition among the TV channels in Bangladesh. Every channel wants to beat others by their content presentations. Since the politics of this country is not stable now, TV viewers have an attraction for news which arises from their political anxiety. In prime time news, TV channels cannot explain the whole news or its background. Talk shows bring the opportunity to elucidate the news. Though we live in a society where politicization is spreading out, we see its reflection on Talk Shows. This study deals with the viewers' perception on the politicization of talk shows in Bangladeshi satellite TV channels. A survey was carried out among 50 TV viewers of the capital, Dhaka. We assumed that the audience of Dhaka city is cautious than other audience of other parts of the country since the viewers of Dhaka city have facilities to enjoy various Mass Medias. Among the respondents, there were teachers, students, businessmen and journalists. From this study, it was found that 98% of the viewers watch talk shows regularly. 78% of the respondents think that talk shows portray political agenda of the channels. Only 52% of the respondents reflect that moderators of talk shows play neutral role. Respondents also named the political ideology of different channels. It was clear that, viewers are not passive instead they are cautious and active now.

Introduction

Television is one of the most striking innovations of mankind. At present there are billions of television audience worldwide. The dyadic functions of television consists entertainment and information. So, television provides news as a tool for information and other programs for entertainment. Now a days talk shows have become a facet version of news. Because of the shortage of time, many television channels cannot telecast the elaboration of the news but talk shows give chances to widen the stories of the news. In Bangladesh, political unrest is increasing day by day and thus the talk shows catch the opportunities of public interest in Bangladesh. Audiences of television channels in Bangladesh saw the move up of talk shows recently and as a result talk shows have successfully occupied the prime times of the TV channels.

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Bangladesh has nearly 23 private TV channels; most of the channels have talk shows on politics, economy, social condition etc. However, politics usually is the main interest of these talk shows. This study tried to find out the observation and feedback from the audience of talk shows in Bangladesh which on the contrary, also aimed to analyze the political affiliation of talk shows in TV channels.

Present Mass Media Scenario in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, private TV channels started their journey in 2000. Ekushey Television was the first private channel which showed news with entertainment. Though ATN Bangla has started their journey in 1997 but it could not show news. At present Bangladesh see a boost in electronic media. The website of the Information Ministry of Bangladesh shows that there are 23 TV channels in the country. (http://www.moi.gov.bd/TV/List_of_channels.pdf) Four of them are news channels. So, there are apparent competitions among them. National Media and Demographic Survey, 2011 conducted by AC Nielson; reports that 74% of the population now has access to TV. Talk shows are one of the major tools of chasing other TV channels. Same survey also reports that, radio listening are declining to 16% of the population. At the same time the size of the advertising market of the country is about 122 million US\$. So, new initiatives were taken to set up new TV channels. (<http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/pdf/bangladesh.pdf>) A study by the Institute of the Governance Studies, BRAC University shows that, private TV channels are highly ranked than then government run BTV channel, respectively 82% and 78%. (http://infoasaid.org/sites/infoasaid.org/files/pdf/bangladesh_media_landscape_guide_final_090512.pdf) From this statistics, we can clearly understand that the audiences have good perception on the content from the private TV channels in the country Bangladesh. Talk shows are one of the reasons for this good perception, because they give the opportunity to the audiences for sharing and giving different feedback. When audiences give their feedback they presume that, TV channel is authentic and impartial.

History of Early Talk Shows

Talk shows and TV are flourished with the same time. American media personality Joe Franklin hosted the first talk show which started in 1951 and ended in 1993. The show started in 1951 on WJZ-TV and moved to WOR-TV. It was running from 1962 to 1993 and this was just the beginning. Talk shows have created many stars like Larry King, Oprah Winfrey, David Letterman, and Tim Sebastian. Larry King hosted the Larry King Live from July, 1985 on CNN and continued until the June, 2010. It was the most watched and longest running program of CNN which had over one million viewers every night. Oprah Winfrey started her talk show in 1986 and this program lasted until 2011. It was the highest rated talk show of American TV industry which was highly influential in American cultures too. Tim Sebastian was the first presenter of HARD Talk on BBC. Tim Sebastian spent seven years in HARD Talk. At that time it was one of the most popular programs in BBC. BBC website said about HARD Talk- *In depth interviews with hard hitting questions and sensitive topics being covered as famous personalities from all walks of life talk about the highs and lows in their lives.* (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/n13xtmdc>)

The history of talk shows in Bangladesh is not too old. *Tritiyo Matra* is the pioneer of talk shows in Bangladesh. It started its journey on 17th July of 2003 and was broadcasted every day. *Tritiyo Matra*'s website says that it had nearly 12 million audiences since 2008 which also *has* crossed 3500+ episodes. (<http://www.tritiyomatra.com>)

After '*Tritiyo Matra*' Bangladeshi electronic media saw the boom in talk shows. New ideas came up with new talk shows. The topics covered from the politics to the life style, from economy to religion. Ekattor Television, a private 24*7 news channel of the country, came with its new initiative of live coverage. It has added new dimensions on talk shows. Now-a-days talk show is not chatting or talking between two or three people instead it is livelier. For example, two guests are in the studio, at the same time presenter connects with the third experts from his office and another from abroad with Skype. At the same time it has the participation of audience through phone. So, talk show is not only the chatting of political leaders but now it brings a common discussion space for mass people from the society. Not only Ekattor Television channel, but other TV channels are showing talk shows about different issues. When viewers watch TV channels at night time, they would see that most of the TV channels are showing talk shows and thus it is frequent in Bangladesh that the urban people wait till late night to see talk shows in different channels.

Theoretical Lenses

Audiences or viewers watch TV talk show for gratifying themselves. So, we have selected Uses and Gratification Theory. Uses and Gratification Theory is one of the accepted theories of mass media research.

Uses and gratifications theory views that, mass media audiences make active uses of what the medias have to offer, arising from a complex set of needs which the media in one or another form gratify. Broadly similar uses have been categorized by researchers based on questionnaires or interviews. An example is the compensatory use of the media – to make up for lack of education, perhaps, lack of status or social success. Where the media has a supplementing use, the audience may be applying what they see, hear and read in social situations as subject-matter for interpersonal exchange. In the television audience: a revised perspective' in Dennis McQuail, ed., *Sociology of the Mass Media* (Penguin, 1972), McQuail, Jay G. Blumler and J.R. Brown define four major categories of need which the media serve to gratify. (1) Diversion (escape from constraints of routine; escape from the burdens of problems; emotional release). (2) Personal relationships (companionship; social utility). (3) Personal identity (personal reference; reality exploration; value reinforcement). (4) Surveillance (need for information in our complex world – 'Television news helps me to make up my mind about things). (Watson and Hill: 2006).¹

A person uses technology or media basically for information, communication, entertainment and education need. Uses & Gratification theory suggests that, the individual uses media to obtain certain gratifications (Katz, E: 1959).²

TV viewers of Dhaka city choose the talk shows purposely to create a meaning after watching talk shows. Sometimes, they were vigilant about the partiality of talk shows and other issues. TV viewers also noticed the partial locution of talk show moderators. So, it was justified to suite the Uses & Gratification theory with our research.

Previous Studies

Researchers found that there are insufficient studies regarding of talk shows in Bangladesh. With the expansion of mass media, talk shows are increasing. Every channel has talk shows in different times.

It was difficult for the researchers to find out related studies. In Bangladesh, there are no studies regarding the politicization of talk shows in TV channels. Islam (2012) found that dominant class of the society dominates the talk show and get more space in talk shows. She also found that, during the live talk show, producers avoid the question of the audience which discontents the power class. So, the government is playing a role of overseer on talk shows of Bangla vision channel.³

Rameez Ahmed from the University of Punjab found that talk shows are increasing the political awareness and socialization of the viewers. Although respondents have awareness to talk shows they do not participate in the politics. It showed the passive attitudes of the young towards politics. Talk shows of Pakistani TV channels are now an enjoyable battle of two political parties instead of conclusion on different issues or problems and demands from the people.⁴

Bilal et al. (2012) consummated a study on talk shows on Pakistani TV. Their objective was to explore the relationship between spoken words and ideology of the talk shows' anchors. They picked up two talk shows from GEO TV. And they found that anchors try to maintain talk shows intentionally by setting agendas.⁵

However, Yousuf (2012) said that talk shows are creating political awareness in Pakistan. Researchers showed that Pakistani electronic media is more informative. Talk shows are playing a major role in shaping awareness. The researcher has conducted survey. The study found that, TV viewers watch talk shows regularly and that they consider talk shows to be an informative program. A grand majority (96%) of viewers believed that, talk shows can provide political knowledge and generate awareness to the public.⁶

Kwak et al. (2004) found that, late night talk shows in Canada is a resource for political understanding. They also found the use of late night talk shows were interacting with newspapers. The negative relationship between late night talk show viewing and vote likelihood was most evident among young adults who observed celebrities and entertainment elites trustworthy and convincing.⁷

Baumgartner (2006) carried out a study on the Daily Show with Jon Stewart which was telecasted from Monday to Thursday on CTV. It was a fake news program and made fun about politicians. The study showed that, talk show viewers perceive presidential candidates negatively when they were criticized on talk shows.

This study also revealed that, the program consists of high conflict brings negative impression of the audience towards politics and politicians.⁸

All these studies make a field for our research. We see that there is lack of research in addition to Bangladeshi talk shows. So, researchers conducted a survey among the TV viewers of Dhaka city to know the viewers' perception on political talk shows. The lack of research also justifies this work. It would be a great opportunity to add academic works on talk shows.

Methodology

This study was mainly based on survey. Survey method is one of the most frequently used research method by the scholars dealing with media, communication, business, consumer groups, advertisers etc. This method is also used in pronouncement creation procedure. To the experts the survey research is used:

“to answer questions that have been raised to solve problems that have been posed or observed, to assess needs and set goals, to determine whether or not specific objectives have been met, to establish baselines against which future comparisons can be made, to analyze trends across time, and generally, to describe what exists, in what amount, and in what context” (Isaac and Michael: 1997).⁹

In survey research, independent and dependent variables are used to define the scope of study, but cannot be explicitly controlled by the researcher. Before conducting the survey, the researcher must predicate a model that identifies the expected relationships among these variables. The survey is then constructed to test this model against observations of the phenomena. The questionnaire consisted both open and close ended questions. Demographic questions were included to know the age, gender of the viewers. (Glasow: 2005)¹⁰

Objective

The objectives of this study are given below:

- To know the current tendency of Bangladeshi TV talk show.
- Do the talk shows discuss politics?
- Are talk shows guided for setting political agenda?
- What are the most preferred talk shows of viewers?
- What are the main discussed topics of talk shows?
- Are talk shows unprejudiced?
- What are the reasons of their leaning?
- Who controls the talk show?
- Are talk shows guided by the guests rather than anchor?
- To know the popularity of talk shows.

Data Collection and Sampling

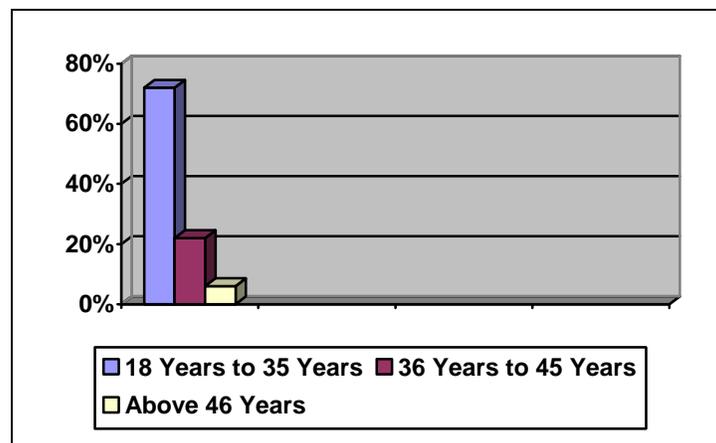
A questionnaire was made to carry out the survey. The survey was conducted among 50 TV viewers of Dhaka city. Dhaka city is now divided into two city corporations- South and North. Researchers picked 25 respondents from Dhaka North City Corporation and another 25 respondents from Dhaka South City Corporation. Socio-economic condition of the viewers is also considered for diversified result. Respondents consist of businessman, teachers, students, journalists, housewives etc. This study was carried out on July, 2013. The respondents were chosen on the basis of convenience sampling. They were from the age of 18 to above 46.

Researchers also selected seven channels in their questionnaire to know the opinion of the viewers. These channels were selected in according to latest TRP (Television Ratings Point). Researchers analyzed the latest TRP and selected these channels. On the other hand, four news channels were picked to have diversified answers. However, news channels give importance on talkshows. When they cannot analyze the news, they try to cover it by talk shows. That are the reasons of choosing news channels. ATN Bangla is the oldest satellite TV channels of the country. It has an inclination towards the present government. That is why researchers considered ATN Bangla. Channel I plays a middle role in every government. Channel I shows *Tritiyo Matra* which is the oldest talk show of the country. That is why Channel I was chosen. Banglavisision got license in the period of BNP government. It is assumed that BNP leaders are the owners of this channel. So, we picked the Banglavisision, to know their role of talkshows.

Data Analysis

Out of 50 respondents 12 were female and 38 were male. Researchers tried to go through a variety of age in this research. 72% of the respondents were from 18 years to 35 years. 22% of them were from 36 to 45 years. 6% were from above 46 years. It shows that a variety of people were interviewed for this research. The data is presented in the following chart:

Figure 1: Age Pattern of the respondents



After the demographic data, researchers looked into the tendency of watching talk show of the respondents. It was found that most of the respondents watch talk show regularly which is about 98%. Only 2% of the respondents do not watch talk shows regularly. It showed that, the good number of people were the viewer of talk shows. When we asked the viewers about their favorite talk shows, the answers were really interesting. They named 15 talk shows from 13 different TV channels. It depicts the variety of choices of the TV viewers. 17% of the talk show viewers named *Ajker Bangladesh* of Independent Television and *Ekattor Journal* of Ekattor Television as their favorite talk shows respectively. The oldest talk show of the country *Tritiyo Matra* is still now popular, which was 16%. *Our Democracy* of RTV was named by 13% of the respondents. The elaborate data is presented in the following table:

Table: 1

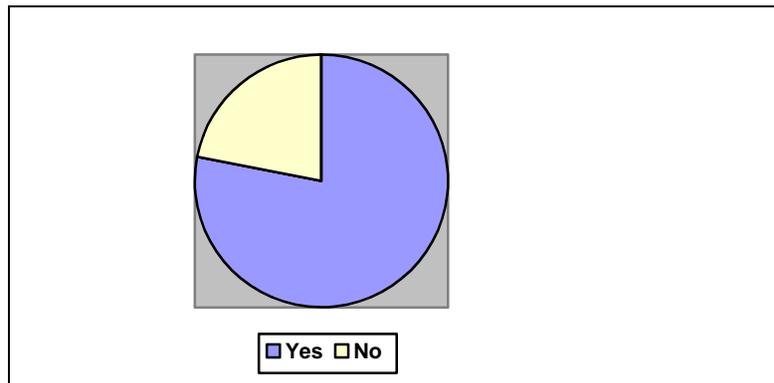
Name	Name of the Channel	Amount	%
TritiyoMatra	Chaneel I	25	16
EkusheyRaat	EkusheyRaat	6	3.5
AjkerBangladesh	Independent TV	27	17
Ekattor Journal	Ekattor TV	27	17
EkattorMoncho	Ekattor TV	15	10
SongbadSonglap	Gazi TV	4	2.5
Sompadokiyo	Somoy TV	17	11
MuktoBaak	Channel 24	8	5
Our Democracy	RTV	20	13
News and Views	Banglavisioin	6	3.5
SojaKotha	Desh TV	1	.70
BBC Bangladesh	Channel I	1	.70
Songlap			
SomvabonarBangladesh	BTV	1	.70

This research also tried to find out the favorite talk shows from foreign TV channels. But, this research found that the audience of Dhaka city were not familiar with talk shows from foreign TV channels. It was found that only 28% of the respondents watch talk shows of foreign TV channels and 72% do not watch talk shows of foreign TV channels. The leaning of the TV viewers of Dhaka city is towards native talk shows. They do not find interest to foreign talk shows. May be foreign talk shows cannot impress our TV viewers.

However, the viewers answered few talk shows of four channels. 34% of the respondents named *Al Jazeera Stream* and *BBC Hard Talk* respectively. 29% of the respondents named *Amanpour* of CNN. We see that the TV viewers of Dhaka city watch foreign talk shows poorly; it determines the name of the talk show. So, there were limited numbers of foreign talk shows watched by TV viewer comparison to Bangladeshi talk shows.

The government gives the license to its supporters. The present Awami League government received 209 applications for new TV channel. But, the government granted only 10 licenses of new TV channel. Most of the license holders are directly or indirectly involved with present government. (Pintu: 1416) ¹¹ As a result, it has an impact on setting agenda for talk shows. It was assumed that talk shows in Bangladeshi channels often reflected political agendas. This assumption was correct. 78% of the respondents answered that they find these talk shows reflect agenda of different political parties. And 22% of the respondents said that, they do not think that talk shows reflect political agenda. This data is presented in the following pie chart:

Figure 2: Reflection of Political Agenda in Talk Shows



It was asked is the talk shows are changed in according to change of the government. 60% of the respondents answered “Yes.” They consider that talk shows are changed with the change of the government. On the contrary 40% of the respondents do not think that talk shows are changed with the change of the government. At the same time it was asked whether talk shows were intentionally motivated or not. We found that 80% of the respondents think that, talk shows were intentionally motivated whereas 20% respondents answered this question negatively. From these three answers, we presume that TV viewers have a belief that, talk shows are politically motivated. Sometimes, they carry the agenda of their owners. And these owners are close ally of the government.

TV viewers have a belief that talk shows were politically linked. The motives of a talk show was asked in the survey to the viewers and it was found that TV viewers have negative impressions on the intentions of talk shows. The data is presented in the following table:

Table: 2

Reasons	Interval	%
Own purposes of TV channels	23	22.31
Loyalty towards political parties	18	19
Making sensation	11	12
Advocacy of own political ideology	20	21
Fulfillment of business	12	13

Influence TV viewers	9	10
Hypocrisy	1	.97
Find out new dimension	1	.97
Give clear conception	1	.97
Show pathway for the government	1	.97

Here we see that the majority of the respondents which is 22.31% said that talk shows serve the purposes TV channels. Talk shows are playing role of own ideological advocacy. It is said by 21% of the respondents. But, 19% of the respondents answered that talk shows are used to show loyalty towards political parties. Researchers tried to know the subjects which are emphasized on talk shows and the politics came first. 41% of the respondents named politics. 21% of the respondents named economy. Social and civic thought is also placed on talk show, which is said by 25% of the respondent. Also the religious thinkings were named by 11% of the respondents. From this data, we can assume that politics is the most important subject in talk shows. Bangladesh is facing political unrest in recent few years. So, TV viewers have an attraction towards political unrest and other political scenario of Bangladesh. However, we see its reflection on talk shows. Producers of talk shows give importance on politics for their shows. They try to give importance to attract viewers on politics.

Researchers tried to find a correlation between the responses of viewers on talk show in previous data. Along with this, researchers tried to look for that does these topics are given importance on viewers' favorite talk shows. It was found that politics is the most important topic for favorite talk shows of viewers. *Ajker Bangladesh* of Independent TV is the most favorite talk show for the respondents. Respondents said that *Ajker Bangladesh* gives almost equal importance on politics, economy, social or civic thought and religion. The elaborate data is presented below:

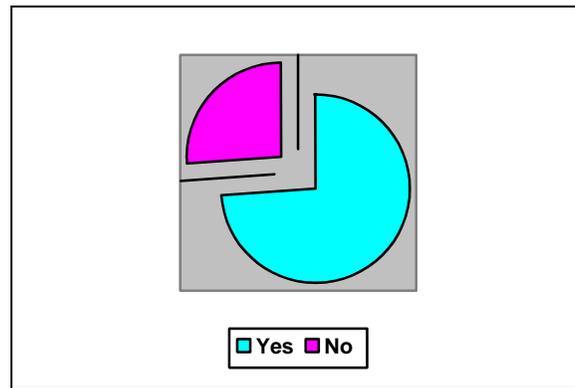
Table: 3

Talk Show Name	Channel	Politics (Interval)	Economy (Interval)	Social/Civic Thought (Interval)	Religion (Interval)
TritiyMatra	Channel I	9	5	6	2
News Hour Extra	ATN News	2	1	2	1
Young Night	ATN News	1	1	2	
EkusheyRaat	ETV	9	4	7	2
AjkerBangladesh	Independent TV	19	16	17	8
EkattorMancho	Ekattor TV	8	5	6	1
Ekattor Journal	Ekattor TV	9	5	7	1
Amounpour	CNN	1	1	-	-
Sompadokiyo	Somoy TV	8	5	5	-
Muktobaak	Channel 24	5	2	1	-
Our Democracy	RTV	12	4	6	-

EkattorSongjogh	Ekattor TV	1	-	1	-
BBC Bangladesh Songlap	Channel I	1	-	1	-
SojaKotha	Desh TV	1	-	1	-
News & Views	Banglavisoin	3	1	1	-
SongbadSonglap	Gazi TV	3	3	-	-

At the same time the respondents were asked whether talk shows can set their agenda or not. However, we found that almost two third of the respondents (74%) answered that, they believe that talk shows were setting agendas. It portrays the negative notion on talk shows among the viewers. On the other hand, 26% of the respondents said that, talk shows did not set agenda of its own. This data is presented through the following pie chart:

Figure 3: Agenda Setting of Talk Shows



In the tenure of present Awami League government, several issues were emerged which got public attention. So, it was asked to the respondents, which issues got importance in the period of Awami League government. Respondents named 12 issues. They said their favorite TV channel replicates these issues. 82% of the respondents said that their preferred channel gave importance to these issues. And 18% of the respondents answered that their favorite channel did not give importance to these issues. The data in this regard is presented in the following table:

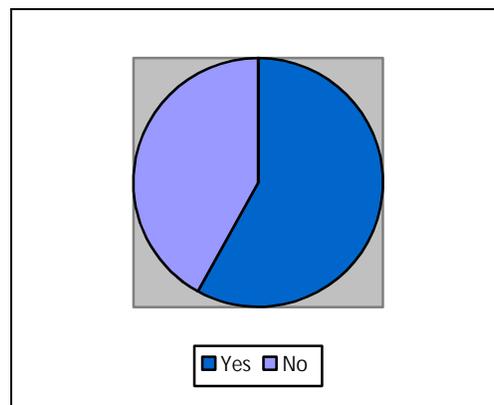
Table: 4

Issue	Interval	%
Hefajote Islam	41	13
BDR Mutiny	15	4.5
Share Scam	34	10
Hall Mark/ Destiny Scam	35	10.5
Garments Turmoil	32	9.5
Caretaker Government	30	9
Dr. Yunus	38	11

City Election	31	8.5
Indecent Talking in Parliament	25	7.5
Tareq Rahman	28	8
Bangladesh-India Relation	11	3

When TV channels give importance on various issues, it comes how they shade these issues. But, we found that the viewers have positive approach towards talk shows. 58% of the respondents thought that, talk shows are impartial and 42% of the respondents said that, talk shows are partial in some extent. The data is presented in the following pie chart:

Figure 4: Talk Shows are Partial or Impartial



At the same time it was asked why these talk shows could not be maintained neutrality and what were the reasons behind this partiality. 32% of the respondents said that, the pressure from the government drives talk show of TV channels. 21% of the respondents thought that, for the pressure of political parties, talk shows cannot play a nonaligned role. Another 21% of the respondents named ownership, which forced talk shows to play a biased role. At the same time, we found that, TV viewers didn't play a passive role. Thus the researchers also think that, political loyalty influences talk shows to act partisan. These answers showed that, TV viewers of Dhaka city were really active and vigilant. The detailed data is presented in the following table:

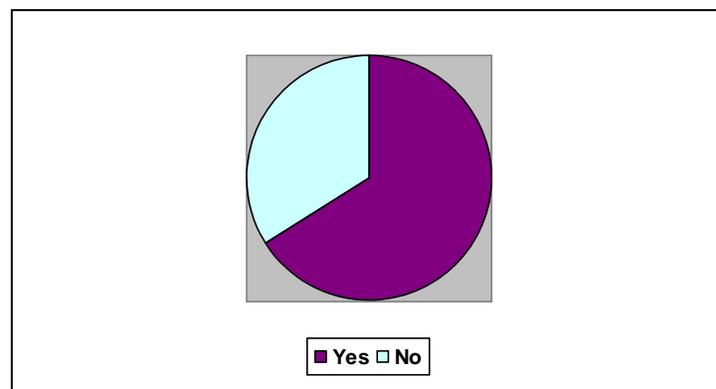
Table: 5

Issues	Interval	%
Pressure of the government	40	32
Political pressure	26	21
Ownership	26	21
Self censorship	7	6
Political loyalty	19	16
Fulfillment of business interest	11	9
Fear	1	.5

Wearing mask or sycophant	2	1
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We can see that the viewers were pretty sure about the partiality of talk shows. They thought, it is possible for the host to balance between objectivity and political loyalty and thus, 66% of the respondents supported this opinion. And 34% of the respondents answered that it was really impossible for talk shows to bring check and balance between objectivity and political loyalty. Here we can presume that though talk shows can play partial role in some extent, they can balance between objectivity and political loyalty. If talk shows were fully partial, viewers would not watch talk shows. So, viewers were cautious of the talk shows partiality. The data is presented in the following pie chart:

Figure 5: Possibility of Balancing Objectivity and Political Loyalty



In the previous data we saw that, 66% of the respondents were agreed on the balance of the talk shows on objectivity and political loyalty. Researchers asked them to define this balance numerically. 42% of the respondents stated that, their favorite talk shows could balance between objectivity and political loyalty by 60%. And 24% of the respondents answered their favorite talk shows balance 80% between objectivity and political loyalty. 6% of the respondents said that their favorite talk shows could balance 100%. This data proves that talk shows have a good image among the viewers. Here we see, 72% of the respondents have affirmative notion on talk shows, because their responses were from 60% to 100%. The detailed data is presented in the following table:

Table: 6

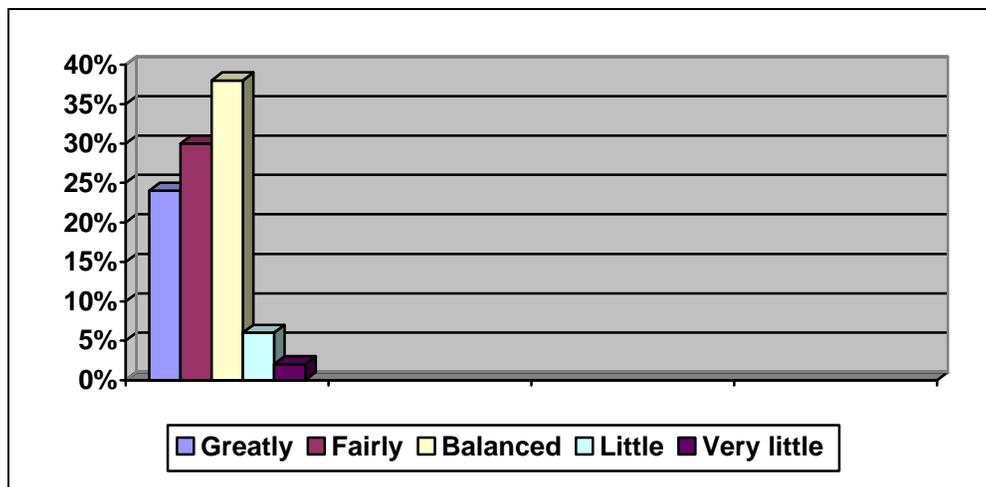
Answers	Interval	%
100%	3	6
80%	12	24
60%	21	42
40%	7	14
20%	4	8
00%	3	6
Total	50	100

We asked the respondents, how much impartiality talk shows have maintained. This study found the similar positive outlook towards talk shows like the previous answers. 12% of the respondents thought talk shows were 80% impartial. 36% respondents assumed talk shows were 60% impartial. And 48% of the respondents' answers were from 60% to 80%. We found almost majority of the respondents who felt that talk shows were nearly impartial. Only, 10% of the respondents assumed talk shows to be entirely partial because they answered 100%.

The two answers presented above illustrate that, TV viewers are really active. They know that, their favorite talk shows play partial role, however these talk shows try to make check and balance with political loyalty to objectivity. Confidence levels of viewers towards talk shows were really positive.

A Guest play a significant role in talk shows since the role of a guests can make a talk show tedious or cheerful. At the same time, talk shows have selective guests for setting agenda or for political ideology. Occasionally, it is assumed that producers of talk shows select weak guests from the opponent political ideology and select strong and vocal guests from its own political ideology. As a result, guests from opposite political ideology are routed by the opponent which is how a talk show can try to set its own agenda. So, we can assume that, they play partial role on selecting guests. 24% of the respondents said that the selection of guests of talk was too much partial. 30% of the respondents thought this selection was fairly biased. 38% of the respondents thought there was a balance in selecting guests. The detailed data is presented in the following bar chart:

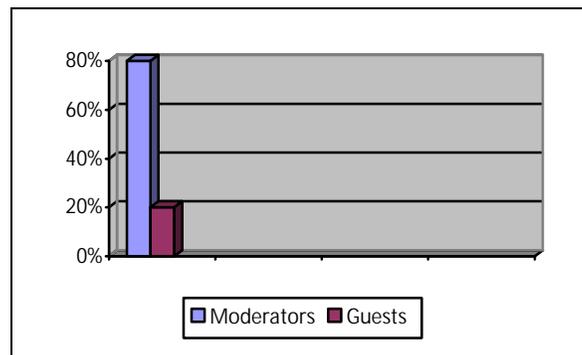
Figure 6: Selection of Guests whether Partial or Impartial



Moderators of talk shows also play a very important role. Because they can make talk shows biased or impartial. But we see that moderators play inclined roles. Sometimes they try to set agenda. They also try to fulfill the intentions of owners. Respondents were also cautious of this trick by the moderators. We see its reflection on their answers.

About 52% of the respondents answered that, the moderators played neutral role in talk shows. On the other hand 48% of the respondents replied that the moderators played biased role when they moderate a talk show. When we discuss on the role of moderators, it was asked to the respondents what the role of guests was. Because, when moderators play a partial role the guests usually try to confront the moderator. Sometimes, the guests can take over the control of the show and vice versa. 20% of the respondents said that, guests were controlling the talk shows. On the contrary, 80% respondents answered that, moderators were controlling the talk shows. Now-a-days however, guests usually control talk shows at some extents. The data is presented in the below bar chart:

Figure 7: Who Controls Talk Shows



Mass media is called the fourth state. Because it has surveillance roles for the society. Mass media analyzes the politics, economy, society and others. It indirectly gives suggestion for the people. As an important content of the mass media, talk shows analyze the politics. Talk shows provide a space for the viewers on their decision making. 58% of the respondents said that talk shows played an important role for analyzing politics. And 42% of the respondents answered that talk show did not play any role to analyze the politics. These answers showed the constructive stance of the audiences towards the talk shows. Moreover talk shows brought out a breathing space for viewers in addition to traditional political hard news. We know that our TV news usually only consists interview or speech from major political parties and that, this type of news does not play any major role for analyzing politics. But talk shows can give us this freedom. Agenda setting theory was first described by the theorists Maxwell McCombs and Donald Show in 1972. They referred; mass media have the ability to transfer the salience of items on their news agendas to the public agenda. (Griffin: 2003)¹²

This study tried to find out whether a talk show can set agenda or not. The study showed that 26% of the respondents were agreed on setting agenda by talk shows. But 74% of the respondents envisaged that talk shows did not set any agenda. This answer is really significant. In comparison to other countries Bangladeshi talk shows do not set agenda consciously rather their motive is to host a show or support own political parties.

At present Bangladesh is experiencing a turbulent political situation. As a part of the society, it is one of the duties of talk shows to find a way to solve this crisis. Most of the TV viewers think that talk shows could play a momentous role to solve political crisis. In

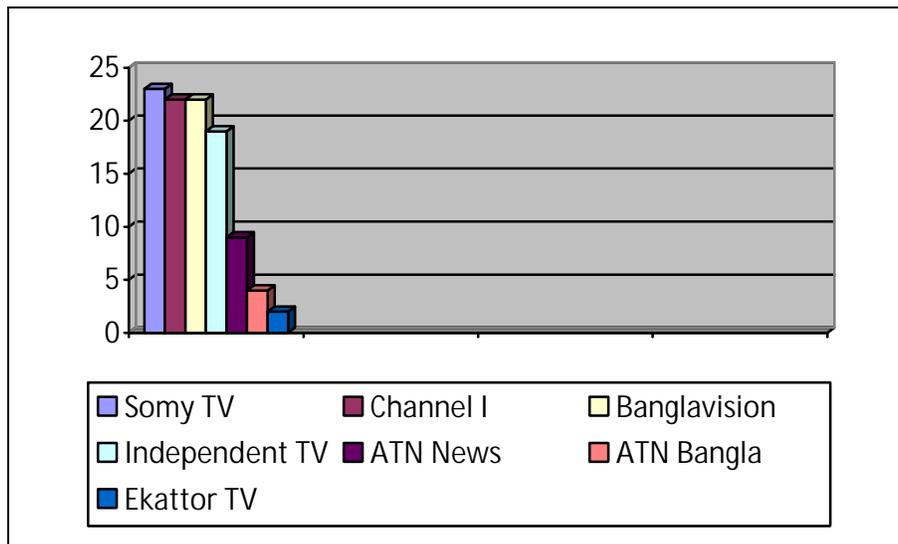
this study it was found that 52% of the respondents assumed talk shows can find a path to resolve this crisis. On the contrary 48% of the respondents did not agree with this. Overall it was positive that, talk shows could play a major role to solve the crisis. This data is presented in the following table:

Table: 7

Answers	Interval	%
Yes	26	52
No	24	48
Total	50	100

Researchers selected seven channels from recent Television Ratings Point (TRP). The conception of TV viewers is really clear on the political role of TV channels. Among all channels, Somoy TV was the most neutral channel as 23% of the respondents named it. After that 22% of the respondents named Channel I and Bangla vision respectively on their neutral role. 19% of the respondents named Independent TV as a neutral TV channel.

Figure 8: Neutrality of TV Channels



At the same time respondents were asked to name the channels who worked for opposition parties. In this data, none of the respondents named Ekattor TV. They said (60%) Bangla vision works for opposition parties like Bangladesh Nationalist Parties, Bangladesh Jamayte Islami and other similar parties. The most probable reason for this was that, the Bangla vision got license during BNP period. 20% of the respondents named ATN Bangla who works for opposition parties. Somoy TV was named by 10% of the respondents. This data is presented in the table 8 :

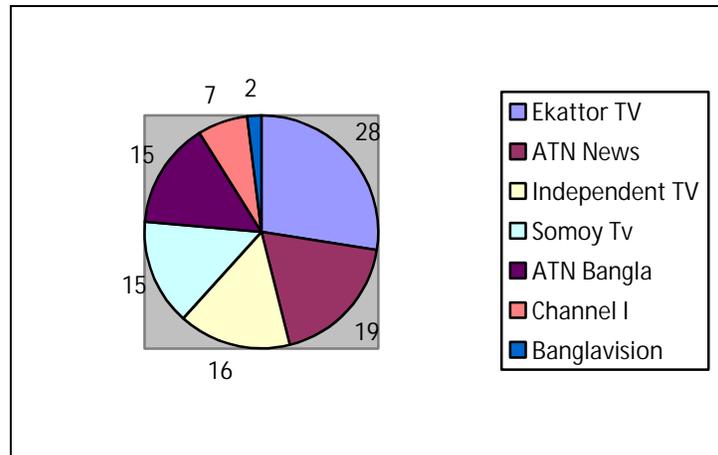
Table: 8

Channel	Opposition (%)
Somoy TV	10
Independent TV	5
ATN News	0
ATN Bangla	20
Channel I	5
Banglavisision	60

The respondents were asked about the channels who works for the government and the researchers found interesting answers. Ekattor TV was in number one who works for the government according to the audiences. Then the name of ATN News, Independent TV and Somoy TV and ATN Bangla came. The percentage values of these TV channels were in double digit. These TV channels have higher tendency for supporting the government who since they have received their TV license in the period of Awami League.

From this answer we can assume that, these TV channels which got their license in Awami League period usually support the government from their political loyalty and gratefulness. The detailed data is presented in the following pie chart:

Figure 9: Who Works for the Government



78% of the Respondents said that TV channels attracted viewers by these talk shows. So, we can assume that, talk shows were taking the place of other entertainment programs. Talk shows are thus now one of the major sources of entertainment. On the other hand 22% of the respondents thought that, talk shows do not attract viewers. Same type of answers came when the respondents were asked whether talk shows were boring or not. 62% of the respondents said that, talk shows were interesting and that they were enjoying it together with their family. However, 38% of the respondents said that talk shows were boring anyways.

Discussion

This study has aimed at the influence of politics and its analysis in the talk shows of Bangladesh TV channels.. We found that, talk shows are really interesting now-a-days to the audiences. 62% of the respondents thought that, talk shows are attention-grabbing. They enjoy these shows. For this reason, we see that talk shows have a good amount of late night viewers. Viewers also think that, these talk shows attract them. We see this reflection on the content of different channels. There are many talk shows which are shown every day in many different TV channels in Bangladesh. Viewers are now cautious of political ideology of the most TRP rated channels. We can relate to these new channels. Because the Awami League government led government approved licenses for new TV channels. We see that, respondents named these channels as a supporter of the Awami League government. We see this tendency to Ekattor TV, Somoy TV, Independent TV and ATN News. It is to be mentioned that these four channels began their operations in Awami League government period. 52% of the respondents thought that, talk shows can bring out a solution for the political crisis of the country. It portrays that, talk shows have the ability to solve crisis of the country or it can show a path for this. When we see talk shows, it plays an important role for building the mind and the way of thinking of the viewers. So, talk show producers and moderators emphasize on politics. We saw that 41% of the respondents said that, talk shows gave importance on politics. At the same time, respondents were careful on intentional talk shows too. Sometimes, TV owners and producers make talk shows for their own sake and 80% of the respondents agreed on this argument. From this study, we can assume that talk shows are playing a bitter-sweet role in our society. When talk shows can direct the alleyway to solve political crisis, at the same time talk shows try to set agenda for their own purpose.

Conclusions

The objective of this study was to explore how does the talk shows of Bangladesh TV channel reflect the politics or engage in politics and what are the opinions of the TV viewers regarding this. We saw that talk shows gave priority on politics. They change their shoes when the government is changed. From this survey, the researchers have come to this ending that, talk shows are really helpful for the viewers to analyze the political environment since they have the capability of setting agenda and creating awareness. Bangladesh is passing an unstable time in politics and the he political scenario of the country is getting worn day by day. Government and opposition parties are in confrontation. People seek objective and impartial shows to understand the situation. Creating talk shows for own purpose creates a world of imagination among the TV viewers. If the TV owners and producers use talk shows for good purpose, Bangladesh will get benefited from this. The friable democracy of the country can therefore rise in a strong feet.

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