Islam and Online Piety in Bangladesh

Md. Sayeed Al-Zaman
Email: msalzaman@juniv.edu

Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Dhaka, Bangladesh

ABSTRACT

Due to various social advancements, Bangladesh has become more welcoming to digital technologies. Thus, a significant online community is flourishing here. Almost half of the country's entire population uses the internet. The digital neighborhood is becoming larger the mediated interaction. What we now call online is nothing but a reflection of offline except its physicality. Like other social phenomena, religion and religious discourse is also a part of cyber society. Belief in cyberspace is often dubbed as "cyber-religion". Debates on religion often harm the opposite group and contend faiths transform peace into communal animosity beyond cyberspace. Thus, society gets heated by hostile collective performances. In contemporary Bangladesh, online piety is an exclusive phenomenon that has considerable importance. By observing the dynamics of online religiosity, this paper focusing more on social media tries to present a concise overview of digital Islam(ism) and the social psychology of online Islamic piety in the context of Bangladesh.

Keywords

Islam; Bangladesh; communalism; online piety; Muslim; social media

INTRODUCTION

Pretending to be someone else or incognito by negating and adapting specific virtual space characteristics that often contradict real-life persona is often addressed as identity construction (Jordan, 1999). Thus, a thief in real life can portray him as a charitable and murderer who may seem humane in cyberspace in the guise of pseudo-identity. Such identity fluidity also prevents to understand the true nature of the netizens. Bangladesh has been experiencing an intense influx of virtual residents since the 2010s. It seems five key reasons are backing up this extraordinary technological transformation ab initio: (a) increased individuals' income so do their affordability of digital devices; (b) increased digital literacy that let individuals comprehend the functions of the digital system; (c) expanded technology market that offers a plethora of digital apparatuses and services; (d) scopes of broad and intense communication and networking than the traditional communication, and (e) massive source of information and rooms of alternative activism. In 2001, the number of internet users constituted merely 0.1% of the total population, where it raised to 55.34% in 2018, with 92.47 million users (BTRC, 2018).

Following this remarkable surge of the online population, a new wave of online religious piety has also emerged, which is often othering the religious minorities. Islam has emerged as the dominant cyber religion, likewise offline (Al-Zaman, 2020). In practice, this recently developed online piety is not new but an inevitable outcome of a long religious legacy that had been dwelling and playing an effective role in Bangladesh's politics throughout the British and Pakistan period. In the online community's primary observation, beyond tender online religiosity, I suspect Bangladesh society might face a new kind of crisis regarding religious fanaticism based on cyberspace. Unless the radicalization of the digital public sphere put on hold immediately, the social peace and congruence among religious communities would be at stake.

This paper aims to discuss the address cyber-religion, focusing on Islam in terms of (a) Islamic practices that are more related to spirituality and (b) political Islam that is more adjacent to power and authority. Both tendencies share several standard and distinctive features. In this regard, I have observed few necessary hallmarks of the Muslim netizens: how they practice and perceive religion in cyberspace and how the political Islamists as interest groups tend to exploit the comparatively benevolent Muslims to effectuate their agendas. I have also attempted to explicate the mechanism of online piety as a new phenomenon that positively influences the Muslim netizens in Bangladesh. For the discussion, I have thereby put deliberate emphasis on social networking sites (SNSs) that are overwhelmed with religious content. It is important to note that, apart from empirical data-based objective analysis, this paper's arguments have been presented from a more subjective and more relaxed style.

DISCUSSION

What is Online Piety?

The term piety has been used here to denote the quality of being religious: how people perceive and act according to their personal religious beliefs. Although "cyber faith", "cyber-religion", "online religion", and "online piety" are relatively new terms in the study of digital sociology, these are now being used in scholarly discourses to signify modern version of religions and religious practices. These new-age nicknames demonstrate an emerging alliance between computer technology and religion since people are bringing their spiritual lives into cyberspace (Bauwens, 1996). Therefore, online piety can be defined as both performing religious activities online and expressing faithfulness toward religion.

Hybrid technology and cyber communication are mushrooming around the world that has been surging after social media arrival. A seed of online piety has also been implanted that is ballooning hastily. The omnipresence of "digitalized God" in people's lives is budding. Cyberspace is hosting various clandestine and visible religious communities. The major religions have already found out their new virtual but, to some extent, more effective nest in cyberspace. Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, Judaists, and Muslims partake in online religious activities, such as discourses and sermons, to show their religious devotion, which often leads to religious feud (Campbell, 2010). The religious institutions are also following the online devotees and swiftly becoming virtual. Econet (Christianity), H-Judaic (Judaism), BuddhaNet (Buddhism), Renaissance (Islam), and so on, are the online religious institutions during the 1990s (Campbell, 2010).

What influences the tendency more is the flexibility of digital media. It provides more opportunities to communicate, find like-minded people, and form communities with lesser effort than the offline. Thus, religious websites full of spiritual contents, such as sacred text and photo, audio and video of religious sermons, digital religious institutions, such as a virtual church, mosque, pagoda and temple, and religious devotees filled with both piety and zealots, have constituted a religious climate in cyberspace.

As a dominant world religion, Islam is no exception in this regard that has recently been transformed into "cyber-Islam". The growth of the internet is unprecedented and impactful in Muslim societies. The so-called traditional Muslims from developing countries like Bangladesh was perhaps thought to be unadvanced in modern technologies. However, the scenario has been changing remarkably. As a bulk of the Muslim population is now accommodating themselves within the digital culture. They are becoming efficient in using new-age technologies. The characteristics of networked online Muslims often differ from those who are offline. Bunt observes:

> "Specific forms of online or digital Islam, distinct from offline or analog Islam, have developed. A place of religious instruction may only exist in a virtual context. A network or community may only gather online. Their name may not have a real-world equivalent" (Bunt, 2009:01).

Bangladesh, as a least developed country (LCD), has experienced an economic boom from 2014 to 2018, and GDP is also rising every consecutive year: from 6.061% in 2014 to 7.284% in 2017 (World Bank, 2018). As a result, the consumption of modern goods is also increasing. Besides, the underlying ideological ground is also shifting from liberal to radical, and a new wave of Islamic revivalism is knocking at the door (Islam & Islam, 2018). It is yet to decide whether this version of cyber-Islam is more religious or more political. Religious cyber-Islam seems more benevolent, peaceful, and private, whereas political cyber-Islam is undoubtedly related to the communal power politics and segregation.

Islam and Online Piety in Bangladesh

Two interrelated propensities are palpable in contemporary Bangladesh: technological proclivity and religious proclivity. A combination of these two propensities has given birth to a unique phenomenon: the use of digital technology for religious purposes. Distribution and acceptance of new concepts and materials depend on five types

of people: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards (Rogers, 1983). Thanks to increased income and purchasing capacity, people are going for digital devices and buying new communication services: internet, smartphone, computer, tab, virtual reality, and so on. Although Bangladesh is not the primary innovator of digital devices, perhaps the affluent and ballooning middle-class people are posing as early adopters and early majorities due to their income, literacy, access, and social status.

Religious show off has often been seen in SNSs where Muslim individuals display or want to display the extent and strength of their faith and servility toward Islam. In many Facebook groups such as Evergreen Bangladesh and Valobasar Bangladesh, users post photos of Muslim women wearing burkha or "Allah's miracles" with the sensational caption to stir up Islamic sentiment among other users. They sometimes ask others to write down "Amen" in the comment sections if they want to be "proper Muslim". What most staggering is the legalization of male-domination in cyberspace in the guise of Islamic piety. Women, if they want to be outspoken or independent, are readily subdued in several ways. Of them, prevalent one uses Islamic reference and "norm" to castigate women's appearance and attitude. Self-proclaimed moral police and the guards of Islam often give fatwa: Wearing t-shirt is haram for women; Women must wear burkha, otherwise may be molested; "Indecent" women should be raped as Islam do not allow "vulgarity", and so on. Thus, online misogyny under the veil of Islamic piety and moral policing is surging.

On the other hand, many users perceive online a wonderful place to express their gratitude to Allah. That is why they spread benevolent and mild Islamic sermons from the Quran, Hadith, and often secondary Islamic literature. Ideal stories from Prophet's life, the sunnah, what should not be Muslim do to others, and how to lead a fruitful life are often discussed among Islamic online cliques. Such discussion is not primarily intended to harm but the betterment of the commune. Furthermore, vitriol and disparaging epithets and language are unseen in such discourses. Instead, those are mostly filled with compassionate remarks. Although smaller in numbers, these Muslims perhaps follow the Sufi tradition of Islam that teaches them to do good and be kind to others.

Online religious communities not only uphold and circulate their religious belief and worldview but also often have the determination to force and impose their ideology upon others. Thus, a chaotic situation develops. Not every Muslim has enough compassion toward other believers, and they deny the idea of peaceful religious coexistence. Such religious orthodox people create a fear-mongering situation in a virtual world that often overflowed and sabotaged real-life cohabitation. Bangladesh has been enduring continuous social unrest due to practicing radical religious behavior by many in cyberspace. Thus, online extremism is soaring drastically (Al-Zaman, 2019; Minority Rights Group International, 2016). Ramu Violence in 2012 on Buddhists, attack on Hindus in Pabna 2013, attack on Hindus in Comilla in 2014, Nasirnagar Violence in 2016 on Hindus, Thakurpara attack on Hindus in 2017 are some remarkable incidents of online-initiated communal violence unleashed upon religious minorities by fanatic Muslims, although the list is quite long (25,000, 2012; Topu, 2013; "Hindu households", 2014; Manik & Barry, 2016; Badal, 2017).

A commonplace but surprising plot has been unearthed behind each of these violent offenses: The Muslim perpetrators in the guise of Hindus or Buddhists create social profiles and distribute hate speeches against Islam from those profiles (Al-Zaman, 2019, 2020). Most of the communal contents are either doctored photos or constructed speech. These provoke mass hysteria to rise against religious minorities, and amid such situations, any attempt to unravel the covert picture to assuage Muslims' fury has been seen absent. On the other hand, recruiting Jihadi online has been being used by extremists' groups for the last few years. Following these ins and outs, The Guardian entitled the internet as the "biggest breeding ground for violent extremism" (Travis, 2012). Thereby, in nourishing social unrest and confrontational politics, backed up by evidence, it can firmly be stated that online piety is not only an indication of free religious expression but also a major driving force of disrupting communal harmony.

Why such religious confrontation in "secular" Bangladesh? Is Bangladesh built as a secular state? Bangladesh (previous Bengal and East Pakistan) was never completely secular since the religious contestation was very much alive throughout the previous century, more precisely from the 1940s. After 1971, the so-called "secular" nation, without taking proper steps to secularization, failed to reinvigorate one of its four principles of the Liberation War: democracy, socialism, nationalism, and secularism. Furthermore, taming communal confrontation and or social negation of Islam did not happen in Bangladesh. Instead, it has been penetrated in almost every aspect of national and individual life during the later regimes of Ziaur Rahman (1975-81) and H. M. Ershad (1982-90). Thereupon, secularism receives a significant failure.

Muslims constitute the most considerable portion (90.39%) of the total population in Bangladesh. Change in Bangladesh religious demography is very subtle though significant. Since 1981, the Muslim population has increased by almost 4%, whereas the Hindu population, the largest religious minority, reduced at the same rate until 2011 (BBS, 2014). Therefore, it might be hypothesized that the ongoing exodus of the Hindu population from Bangladesh to India after the partition and the liberation war is a consequence of Islamic zealots ("No Hindus", 2016). Furthermore, the contribution of an adverse online environment in making religious minorities psychologically refugees galore.

Youths as digital natives (Prensky, 2001) and Muslims are relatively more pious and becoming more prone to Islam than their previous generations. It is to note that youths are the prime user of new media. Although some are irregular in religious practices and rituals, they have a firm belief in religious doctrines. A study shows that 96%, 89%, and 86% of youth consider regular prayers, read sacred texts, and fasten highly important religious activities (Graner et al., 2012). Another study shows the growing religious orthodoxy among university students due to frustration, loneliness, drug addiction, lack of proper vision and guidance, and affluence (Jamal, 2017). Therefore, it is fathoming that a large portion of these youths might act as a pioneer and harbinger of Islam and circulate religious homilies posing pious in digital platforms.

Social Psychology of Online Piety

Two tiers of people are dominating Bangladesh's digital public sphere who are fostering online piety there. Firstly, the modernizers who belong to the first category. Filtering and accessing correctly, these people are willing to embrace new ideas and beliefs received through digital communication with keenness. They are the key agent of social transformation. In contrast, the traditionalists are preventive, stand against changes, and favor the existing social practices and customs. In cyberspace, these people show up their popular fervor of preserving so-called traditional vigor, history, and belief rejecting newness. However, when contradictions happen between prior religious belief and a new but logical one, the modernizers accept and transport the comparatively better one, whereas the traditionalists severely suffer from mental inconsistency (Griffin, 2012). They then either take a firm position on their former stance, or acquire new knowledge related to their belief to counter and outweigh the new belief, or face and accept some particular aspects of the new idea that do not violate their predispositions instead reinforce their existing belief (McLeod, 2018). All these actions are taken to mitigate psychological contradiction.

Religion, since the history of human cognition, has emerged as a stable psychological force. Needless to say that every religion has a significant appeal to its followers, and significant religions provide a complete code of conduct. Although individuals are simultaneously sovereign and dependent by nature, they, perhaps, would love to be confined into an attributed framework. Generosity and cruelty both depend on one's religious belief and how it is used. We have already experienced the colors of religious politics and its grave consequences in Iraq, Indonesia, Bosnia, Rwanda, Sudan, and Afghanistan. A new religious game has started in cyberspace from the last few decades, which we already titled "online piety". Investigating the psychology of online devotees, it needs to explore why and how it works.

Following the concept of rhetoric given by Aristotle, every religion functions with the three key actions: logic, emotion, and fear (Griffin, 2012). Religious rhetoric at first pursues the potential followers to do or not to do something by promulgating this is right, and this is wrong backed up by logic. To strengthen the religious code of conduct, then religion uses emotion to influence the cohorts' behavior patterns. Afterward, fear appeal circulates that if they do not act according to the manuscript, the consequence would be dreadful. Religious fear can be categorized into two types: (a) this world or mundane fear that threatens individual as a follower to be more devotee otherwise they would have ended up in isolation and criticism which people fear (Russel, 1996); and (b) that world or afterlife consequences that remind religious man to be faithful to his God or else he would be deprived of heaven (Carlisle, 2013). Thus, champions of Islam: Imam, Mullah, Huzur, and Pir motivate the potential acolytes to follow the Islamic way of life.

Apart from all its ills and politics, Islam is considered a complete way of life for many of its followers to achieve spiritual appeasement and heavenly feelings. Since religion has been accommodated in cyberspace, the devotees of Islam are also expressing their loyalty toward their belief by practicing essential religious rites online. In cyber society, Muslims, who are solely in search of the Islamic holiness and the mercy of Allah apart from any dogmatism, what we call the Quranic teachings, voice their inner fidelity to Islam that helps to find out same-minded individuals who together subsequently form diverse religious clans, interact within groups, and establish intergroup communication (Rahman, 1963).

Individuals in such factions tend to be sober and sympathetic to the other believers as they patronage peace and prosperity, neither segregation nor conflict. Online discourse on Islamic issues often leads to refine and produce healthier doctrines for society and humankind (Bunt, 2009). In other ways, in conciliating inner evils and harmful instincts, cyber-Islam is working as one of the most delicate instruments in Bangladesh provides a strong bonding among spiritual-minded Muslims while perhaps *falsafah* (Islamic philosophy) influences them a lot in this regard (Horten, 2018).

As a social religion, Islam plays a crucial role in maintaining conformity and cohesion among individuals in society. In general, people are motivated by their peers, and to them, alikeness bears meaning to life. Durkheim designates religion as a useful source of social cohesion, stating religion as "a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community" (Durkheim, 2008). It knits social individuals together through a commonly shared story as a thread (Harari, 2018). As a result, most of the Muslims do not want to be different and alien to their social community because it threatens one's identity and status within a society. Thus, fearing being

excluded, individuals often imitate their peers' behavior in either subconscious or nonconscious manner (Chartrand & Bargh, 1999). Seculars and atheists who negate and reprimand Islam, for example, are incredibly marginalized and poorly treated in Bangladesh's online environment.

Individuals' blind self is highly dependent on how others evaluate them so that opinions from community members are considered highly significant for a person (Luft & Ingham, 1955). Thus, to be like the other community members and belong to a "Muslim society", individuals often perform according to the unseen social manuscript in public spaces and cyberspace championing Islamic sentiments. To know who one is, individuals return to their socio-cultural roots. In this regard, Islam is offering the most suitable identity to most people in Bangladesh. Political Islam and religious nationalism have helped Islam establish a deep root in the Bangladesh society and become an unavoidable public life component. Thereby, in identity construction, Islam plays a decisive role. His group membership heavily influences a person's identity in a collectivistic culture, which offers a sense of self and belongingness (Ammerman, 2003). Hence, Bangladesh netizens are also in constant search of their social and individual identity in cyberspace. Most often, they ended up accepting religious identity, considering relative sociopolitical-cultural consequences.

Individuals want recognition from their peers. To be prominent and adored in society, the contribution of digital media is immense. In virtual spaces, the identity of a person is reproduced. Reconstructing new identity, fraud as a netizen could easily persuade others in his piousness and philanthropic virtue; no one would object. Thus, by projecting a positive self in cyberspace by self-censoring and tailoring oneself, individuals can get enough recognition that shapes their self-esteem and self-identity. Sometimes, individuals rediscover their hidden-self while representing themselves in virtual (Bell, 2001). It has also been seen that someone's determination and dedication toward Islamic belief earns respect and applause for him in cyberspace.

People who are usually callous about their socioreligious-cultural practices nevertheless become incredibly devoted guardians of their virtual faith. Some people use to be more innocent-like-being in virtual is undoubtedly linked with the person's real-life gain. Tremendous socio-political benefits encourage many individuals to pretend to be a devotee. It amplifies social status with even no harm at all. However, in the so-called Islamic society of Bangladesh, religion, in some cases, has become an efficacious ladder to reach the zenith of prestige and respect. To date, an Imam gets more admiration and recognition in the Bangladesh society than a teacher does (Ovi, 2018).

CONCLUSION

No panacea exists to heal all the sickness dwelling amid human societies. Muslim-dominated society in Bangladesh often has been enjoying both communal congruence and communal segregation in the digital age. Real people from the tangible world are shifting into cyberspace. Religion, too, would not possibly able to continue its operation without its devotees. Hence, it is following them as well where they belong, in digital space. Where there is sugar, there are bound to be ants. Apart from a little glimpse of coexistence, what the Bangladesh cybersociety is now experiencing is the digital showoff of exaggerative religious sentiment. Digital schismatics most often, in this respect, have failed to welcome the voice of religious minorities. Instead, dominant Muslims try to expel the subordinates from public discourse, further reinforcing their dominance. On the other hand, debates and criticism on Islamic issues are implicitly prohibited from addressing it "infidelity". The imposition of own opinion, practice, and belief upon others in the name of religion is a growing tendency. All seem silent against such malpractice as everyone fears to be recognized as impious. As a result, an unbecoming consequence is looming amid this "muted" (cyber)society. Nothing is wrong with God or even religion itself, preferably, its ill-humored defenders and leaders who weaponize faith.

The coexistence of the manifold beliefs and their followers would be ideal. However, tolerance has been evaporating increasingly. A new event has been rising: "we" versus "they". Muslim people act as the majority public holding a "we" sensation subduing the "they" who are the marginalized religious groups. Islam in Bangladesh, as it has been seen before time to time, is just a makeshift mask to many individuals to earn social status, right name, multifarious aids, recognition, and so on, as cited before. Online Islam and piety, in such cases, has little to do with God but politics and power. To sustain national unity and peace within society, congruence between various communities is imperative. Some Muslims are working on that while others are not. Meanwhile, Bangladesh now has the most declining society in terms of vivid socio-political failures, and disharmony and tension between its socio-cultural communities. Therefore, the growing incidents of bigotry and online Islamism in Bangladesh is nothing but a prologue of forthcoming tragedy if proper steps are not taken immediately.

REFERENCES

25,000 Muslim rioters torch Buddhist temples, homes in Bangladesh. (September 30, 2012). *RT*. Retrieved from:

https://bit.ly/2nbJZs4

Ammerman, Nancy T. (2003). *Religious Identities and Religious Institutions*. In Dillon, Michele (ed.). The Handbook of the Sociology of Religion. London: Cambridge University Press, available at: Google Books.

Al-Zaman, M. S. (2019). Digital Disinformation and Communalism in Bangladesh. *China Media Research, 15*(2), 68-76, doi: 10.31235/osf.io/8s6jd.

Al-Zaman, M. (2020). Religious Communication in Digital Public Sphere. Jurnal Penelitian, , 29-42, doi: 10.28918/jupe.v17i1.2450.

Badal, Liakat Ali. (November 10, 2017). Mob sets upon Hindu village over rumoured Facebook post. *Dhaka Tribune*. Retrieved from: https://bit.ly/2CqKQhK

Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS). (2014). *Bangladesh Population and Housing Census 2011*. Bangladesh: Ministry of Planning, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Retrieved from: https://bit.ly/2ruGS0e

Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC). (October, 2018). *Internet Subscribers*. Retrieved from: https://bit.ly/2rbNSjA

Bauwens, Michel. (1996). Spirituality and Technology: Exploring the Relationship. *First Monday, 1* (5), doi: 1.10.5210/fm.v1i5.496.

Bell, David. (2001). *An Introduction to Cybercultures*. London: Routledge, doi: 10.4324/9780203192320.

Bunt, Gary R. (2009). *iMuslims: Rewiring the House of Islam*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, available at: Google Scholar.

Campbell, Heidi A. (2010). *When Religion Meets New Media*. London: Routledge, doi: 10.4324/978020369537.

Carlisle, Clare. (December 02, 2013). Is religion based on fear? *The Guardian*. Retrieved from: https://bit.ly/2HxNkKo

Chartrand, T. L., & Bargh, J. A. (1999). The chameleon effect: The perception-behavior link and social interaction. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 76*(6), 893-910, doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.76.6.893

Durkheim, Emile. (2008). *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (J. W. Swain, Trans). New York: Dover Publications, Inc, available at: Google Books.

Graner, Elvira, Yasmin, Fatema S., & Aziz, Syeda S. (October, 2012). *Giving Youth a Voice: Bangladesh Youth Survey 2011*. Dhaka: Institute of Governance Study, BRAC University, doi: 10361/10985.

Griffin, M. (2012). *A First Look at Communication Theory* (8th ed.). New York: McGraw Hill, available at: Google Books.

Harari, Yuval Noah. (2018). *21 Lessons for the 21st Century*. London: Jonathan Cape, available at: Google Scholar.

Hindu households, temple attacked in Bangladesh. (May 05, 2014). *The Times of India*. Retrieved from: https://bit.ly/2EwEyyq

Horten, M. (December 19, 2018). 'Falsafa'. In M. Th. Houtsma, T.W. Arnold, R. Basset, & R. Hartmann (ed.). *Encyclopedia of Islam* (1913-1936). doi: 10.1163/2214-871X_ei1_SIM_2269.

Islam, Md. N., & Islam, Md. S. (2018). Politics and Islamic revivalism in Bangladesh: The role of state and non-state actors. *Politics, Religion and Ideology*. Doi: 10.1080/21567689.2018.1493382.

Jamal, Eresh Omar. (December 19, 2017). Why is youth extremism on the rise? *The Daily Star*. Retrieved from: https://bit.ly/2EJK2Gt

Jordan, Tim. (1999). *Cyberpower: The culture and politics of cyberspace and the Internet*. London: Routledge, available at: Google Books.

Luft, J., & Ingham, H. (1955). "The Johari window, a graphic model of interpersonal awareness". *Proceedings of the Western Training Laboratory in Group Development*. Los Angeles: University of California, Los Angeles Extension Office, available at: Google Scholar.

Manik, Julfikar Ali, & Barry, Ellen. (November 02, 2016). Hindu temples and homes in Bangladesh are attacked by Muslim crowds. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: https://nyti.ms/2GzIvoO

McLeod, S. A. (2018). *Cognitive dissonance*. Retrieved from: https://bit.ly/2t2YT5x

Middle-class burgeoning. (February 04, 2018). *Daily Sun*. Retrieved from: https://bit.ly/2QFFdov

Minority Rights Group International. (2016). *Under Threat: The challenges facing religious minorities in Bangladesh*. Sweden: Minority Rights Group.

No Hindus will be left in Bangladesh after 30 years: Professor. (November 22, 2016). *The Hindu*. Retrieved from: https://bit.ly/2A7T1Ou

Ovi, Sayeed. (October 08, 2018). Rise of online piety in Bangladesh: How extremism found a new nest cyberspace? *The Independent*. Retrieved from: https://bit.ly/2E5Tp4s

Ovi, Sayeed. (October 31, 2018). Digital religion and "othering" the co-cultures. *The Asian Age*. Retrieved from: https://bit.ly/2OZL9b3

Prensky, Marc. (October 2001). Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants. *On the Horizon, 9* (5), 1-6. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/10748120110424816.

Rahman, Syedur. (1963). *An Introduction to Islamic Culture and Philosophy* (3rd ed.). Dhaka: Mullick Brothers.

Rogers, Everett M. (1983). *Diffusion of Innovations* (3rd ed.). New York: The Free Press, available at: Google Books.

Russel, Bertrand. (1996). *Why I am Not A Christian*. London: Routledge, doi: 10.4324/9781315099552.

The Fund for Peace. (2018). *Fragile States Index 2018*. Washington: The Fund for Peace (FFP). Retrieved from: https://bit.ly/2Qzs3ss

Topu, Ahmed H. K. (November 03, 2013). Hindus attacked in Pabna. *The Daily Star*. Retrieved from: https://bit.ly/2LzigOl

Travis, Alan. (February 06, 2012). Internet biggest breeding ground for violent extremism, ministers warn. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from: https://bit.ly/2EL1OJV

World Bank. (2018). GDP Growth. Retrieved from: https://bit.ly/2CldbWO