Trinary Views of Secularism: Transitional Ideological Perception of Tertiary Educated People in Bangladesh

Shawon Talukdar

Affiliation not available

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Abstract

This study attempts to explore the perception of secularism among the present generation in Bangladesh when this country celebrates its golden jubilee of independence. This paper follows mixed methods, namely convenience surveys and content analysis of credible secondary sources. This study attempts to explore the meaning of secularism that the educated young population comprehends and to understand their perception. It is interesting to see that many of them opine about having ‘state religion’ besides ‘secularism’ as a basic constitutional principle (61.9%/38.1%). They believe in equal treatment for all minority religions, while at the same time they share their perception of giving priority to ‘Islam’ as the dominant religion (57.1%), which could be labelled ‘paradoxical’. This article argues that the ideological perception is going into transition among young people in Bangladesh, which is different from the previous linear understanding of pro-secular and anti-secular dynamics. This paper also provides some pragmatic way outs from young people on how to secure the rights of minority religions in Bangladesh.

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