

**Critical Discourse Analysis of Political Talk Shows of Bangladesh**

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**Abstract**

The present study aim at critically analyzing the underlying ideologies in the political Talk shows in Bangladesh. The study focuses on the content of the discourse of the talk shows to analyze how linguistic features are used to propagate the ideologies. For critical analysis of discourse of the talk shows, critical discourse analysis approach has been taken. The presumption of the present study is that manipulation takes place to control and influence the audience.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction:

The media market of Bangladesh is expanding with increasing number of satellite TV channels day by day. With it is increasing the number of talk show program. A single channel cannot be found where talk show program is not telecast. In fact, talk shows are one of the dominating programs of TV channels these days. All day- morning, noon, evening, late night- talk shows are shown; even for special occasions, special talk shows are arranged. Political talk show is one among them. Due to the political unrest of Bangladesh, public's interest to political talk shows is growing and hence growing the number of talk shows to catch up with it. There is hardly any channel that does not have political talk show in their program list. Political talk shows are where significant matters of politics that are related to public affair to the government are discussed. It is a big platform of conversation and reproduction of political discourse.

Since conversation is the primary form of socialized human interaction, it pervades all the spheres and levels of communication, playing a major role in the activities performed in human communities (Ilie, 2001, p. 213). Language is the key source of communication that is structured in different patterns. Critical discourse analysis grabs those patterns and inspects them critically "to get more insight into the crucial role of discourse in the reproduction of dominance and inequality" (van Dijk, 1993, p. 253). It goes beyond the immediate issues and "take an explicit sociopolitical stance: they spell out their point of view, perspective, principles and aims, both within their discipline and within society at large" (p. 252).

## **1.2 Objective of the Study:**

The objective of the study is to find out what strategies speakers of political discourse follow to influence the audience. Also how manipulation takes place in political talk shows and the more powerful groups of the society controls public discourse.

## **1.3 Significance of the Study:**

In present days, political talk shows are one of the majorly viewed programs of Bangladesh. At home, office, cafeteria everywhere people talk about the ongoing instability of the country. Insecurity about life is a constant worry for people. They are eager to know what the government and other parties are thinking about it, thus, the growing interest in political talk shows. This study tries to perceive how politicians use political discourse to influence and control the public as well as to exercise power over them.

## **1.4 Limitations of the Study:**

Very little work has been done on this topic. Therefore gathering sufficient data has been difficult. Also common people have been afraid to participate in the survey since this study concerns politics. Therefore, the researcher has not been able to convince more people for the survey.



## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### 2.1 History of Political Talk Show:

Since the earliest days of the media, talk shows had been broadcast on television. An American radio and television personality, Joe Franklin, introduced the first television talk show to the world. He hosted the show in 1951 first on WJZ-TV (later WABC-TV). Although in the first phase, topics such as lifestyle, comedy and so on were discussed on the shows, gradually social and political matters started coming up. Later in 1951 TV news pioneer Edward R. Murrow started his show *See It Now* on CBS network where he raised important social and political issues for debate. In fact, Murrow's 1954 confrontation with the then Senator Joseph R. McCarthy contributed to the political downfall of the Senator.. However, after Edward Murrow hosted another talk show named *Small World* in 1958, political TV talk shows have predominantly appeared in Sunday Mornings (Timberg, 2002).

### 2.2 Political Talk Show around the World:

Political talk shows are one of the most viewed programs on TV nowadays. Different channels of different countries broadcast talk shows that discuss matters of social and political interest of the country. This kind shows are usually telecast on Sunday mornings, thus, they are called Sunday Morning talk shows. In USA, the most popular Sunday Morning show is *Meet the Press*, telecast on NBC network; in Australia, *Insiders*, on ABC network; in UK, *The Andrew Marr Show*, on BBC One and in Japan *Nichiyō Tōron* (Sunday debate), on NHK network.

The pioneer of political talk show in Bangladesh is *Tritiyo Matra*. Starting from 17<sup>th</sup> July, 2003, it has been broadcast every day on Channel i. Other currently aired popular political talk shows of Bangladesh are *News Hour Extra*- ATN News, *Ekusher Rat*- Ekushey TV, *Muktabak-*

Channel 24, *RFL Goltable Boithak*- RTV, *Ei somoi*- NTV, and *Onno dristi*- ATN Bangla (Wikipedia)

### **2.3 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA):**

Critical discourse analysis is a substantial sub-area of discourse analysis which approaches to study language use as social practice. “Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context” (van Dijk, 2001, p. 352). CDA primarily focuses on social problems and political issues. Instead of just describing discourse structures, it attempts to explain them in terms of properties of social interaction and especially social structure (p. 353).

CDA aims to systematically investigate the relation between the structures of discourse ideologies by focusing on socio-political manipulations, persuasions, power asymmetries and exploitations. “Through CDA the manipulations or the statements which are used otherwise in the political scenario are magnified. These manipulations are helpful in figuring out the social power of a group over the society or another group” (Bilal, Ahsan, Gohar, Younis & Awan, 2012, p. 206).

In 1989, Fairclough proposes three dimensions of CDA. The first stage is description, observes the basic formal properties of the text (text analysis). The second stage, interpretation, tries to relate text and interaction- sees the text as the product of a process of production and as a resource in the process of interpretation. The third stage, explanation, endeavors to link interaction with social context- with the social determination of the processes of production and interpretation, and their social effects (p. 26).

## 2.4 Political Discourse:

The analysis of political discourse is a crucial part of discourse studies. According to van Dijk, 1997, political discourse is identified by its actors or authors, viz., politicians. He also says, “the vast bulk of studies of political discourse is about the text and talk of professional politicians or political institutions, such as president and prime ministers and other members of government, parliament or political parties, both at the local, national and international levels” (p. 12).

Politicians imply various strategies and techniques through political activities, acts and speeches to uphold their ideologies. Through political discourse, CDA deals with political power, power abuse or domination.

## 2.5 Characteristics of Discourse Analysis:

**a) Context:** The most important feature of pragmatics and discourse analysis is context. Yule (1996) gives a general definition of context, saying, “Context is the physical environment in which a word is used” (p.128). It is referred as the “environment” or “circumstances” in which language is used. They study the meaning of a word in a situation and how the knowledge of the time and place in which the words are uttered can influence the communication and the meaning of the word. Both pragmatics and discourse analysis give more importance on the meaning of the words in interaction and how the speaker’s meaning is dependent on assumption of knowledge which is shared by both speaker and listener (Cutting, 2008,p.2).

**b) Rhetoric Art:** Rhetoric is the art of speaking in public. It is, generally, used in political speeches or debates to persuade the public. This device increases attention to economic, foreign and civil rights policy and lead to increase in public concerns with those policies (Cohen in Memon, Bughio & IGopang, 2014, p. 81). This is a skill the politicians use to maneuver the public for popularity by speaking of the sensitive public issues in political speeches or debates.

## 2.6 Pragmatics:

Pragmatics is the study of relationships between linguistic forms and the users of those forms (Yule, 1996, p. 4). It is concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by the speaker or writer and interpreted by the listener or reader. It is the study of contextual meaning or more precisely, it interprets what people mean in a particular context and how the context influences what is said. It also involves how listeners or readers can make inferences about what is said to arrive at an interpretation of the speaker's or writer's intended meaning. This approach also explores how great deal of what is unsaid is recognized as part of what is communicated. Yule (1996) states it as the investigation of invisible meaning (p. 3). Then the question arises- what determines the choice between the said and the unsaid. Yule's answer is, "on the assumption of how close and distant the listener is, speakers determine how much needs to be said" (p. 3). In brief, pragmatics is the study of i) speaker meaning, ii) contextual meaning, iii) how more gets communicated than is said, and iv) the expression of relative distance.

### 2.6.1 Features of Pragmatics:

**a) Reference:** Reference is an act in which a speaker or writer uses linguistic forms to enable a listener or reader to identify something. By using some appropriate expression the speaker refers to something or someone, in other word, the expression is invested with reference by the act of referring. It is an act on the part of the speaker or writer. Pronouns such as I, you, he, this, that, etc. are used to replace some noun phrases so that repetition can be avoided. For example-

A: my uncle's coming home from Canada on Sunday + he's due in +

B: how long has he been away for or has he just been away?

A: Oh no they lived in Canada eh he was married to my mother's sister + + well

she's been dead for a number of years now +

(Brown & Yule, 1983, p. 28)

In this conversation, speaker A uses the expressions “my uncle” and “he” to refer to one individual and “my mother's sister” and “she” to refer to another.

Context plays an important role here. Without context, it is hard to guess what the speaker is talking about because lots of auxiliary verbs and modal verbs such as will, might, have, can't, etc. are used in conversations. For example- In a restaurant, one waiter brings the order of food for another waiter and asks him and hears in reply,

A: Where's the cheese sandwich sitting?

B: He's over there by the window.

(Yule, 1996, p. 20)

Normally, people would assume the “cheese sandwich” as a thing. However, given the context, the referent being identified is a person, not a thing.

**b) Presupposition:** Presupposition is defined in terms of assumptions the speaker makes about what the hearer is likely to accept without challenge. It is something the speaker assumes to be the case prior to making an utterance. Presupposition is generally thought as the relationship between two propositions. It is also known to be the common ground (taken by the speaker) of the participants in the conversation. For example-

a) My uncle is coming home from Canada.

b) My uncle isn't coming home from Canada.

c) I have an uncle.

(Brown & Yule, 1983, p. 29)

Here, sentence (c) is a presupposition of the speaker in uttering sentence (a) and sentence (b) as well.

**c) Implicature:** Implicature stands for something that means more than just the words seem to apply; it's an additional conveyed meaning. Grice (1975) uses the term 'implicature' to account for what a speaker can imply, suggest, or mean, as distinct from what the speaker literally says. In short, it means more being communicated than is said. Nevertheless, in order to interpret them some basic principles must be assumed to be in operation, which Grice (1975) calls "cooperative principle". To determine what is implied the listener need to know i) the identity of the referent, ii) the time of utterance, and iii) the meaning, on the particular occasion of utterance.

**i) Conventional Implicature:** Conventional implicatures are determined by the conventional meaning of the words used. According to Yule (1996), conventional implicatures are not based on the cooperative principles or maxims; they do not have to occur in conversations and they do not depend on special context for interpretation. For instance-

“He is an Englishman, he is, therefore, brave.” ( p. 31)

In the example, the speaker does not directly affirms that one property (being brave) follows from another property (being an Englishman), but the form of expression used conventionally implicates that such a relation holds.

**ii) Conversational Implicature:** The term is used to justify what a speaker can imply, suggest, or mean, as distinct from what the speaker literally says and it is deduced on the basis of the conversational meaning of words together within the context. It can be seen as an indirect way of expressing oneself. The conception of conversational implicature is the result of a general principle of conversation plus a number of maxims which speakers normally will obey. This

general principle is what Grice (1975) entitles the cooperative principle. This cooperative principle is supported by a series of maxim or conversational conventions, which are-

**Quantity:** The speaker-

- i) has to make his contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange).
- ii) should not make his contribution more informative than is required.

**Quality:** The speaker-

- i) should try to make his contribution one that is true.
- ii) should not say what he believes to be false.
- iii) should not say that for which he lacks adequate evidence.

**Relation:** The speaker must be relevant.

**Manner:** The speaker should-

- i) be perspicuous.
- ii) avoid obscurity of expression.
- iii) avoid ambiguity.
- iv) be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
- v) be orderly.

Grice says that when people communicate with each other, they do not always abide by the four maxims. In addition to the literal meaning of his utterance, the defiance of a maxim may cause the speaker expressing an extra meaning, which is conversational implicature. Below is an example- (The husband has just finished supper and wants to watch TV, leaving his wife alone to clear the table and wash dishes.)

Wife: Shouldn't you help me do some housework?

Husband: I have worked for nine hours.

(Song, 2010, p. 878)

Seemingly, the husband's answer is irrelevant to the wife's question; means he defies the maxim of relevance. In contrast, we must presume that the husband is standing by the cooperative principle and indicating something more than the literal meaning. The other meaning, that is conversational implicature, is that since he has worked for the entire day, he is too tired to help his wife to do any housework.

Let us consider another example- (The boss of a restaurant gives two pennies to a temporary worker who does washing for him.)

Boss: Here is your pay, boy.

Worker: I have worked for nine hours.

(p. 878)

In this conversational fragment, the second utterance is similar to the previous example and at first sight some may think that they have the same literal meaning. In addition to that, they both appear to be irrelevant to the utterance of the first speaker and it can be presumed that the maxim of relevance is deliberately broken. However, just from the same utterances it cannot be said that the two utterances have the same conversational implicature. Context is significant here. What the worker is trying to imply is that his boss is paying him less than the amount of time he has worked; he deserves more. The change of context must be taken into account, while the relationship changes from husband-wife to boss-worker.

**d) Inference:** This term is used to arrive at an interpretation for utterances or for the



connections between utterances. It may be the case that we are capable of deriving a specific conclusion from i) specific premises and ii) via deductive inference ((Brown & Yule, 1983, p. 33).

For example- a. If it's sunny, it's warm.

Inference- b. It's sunny.

c. So, it's warm. (p. 34)

Another example-

“in the kitchen there was a huge dresser and when anyone went in you see + the hats and coats were all dumped on this dresser” (p. 34).

Inferences:

- a) the hats and coats belong to the visitor to the house;
- b) the house has the dresser; and
- c) the dresser is in the kitchen.

Here, inference (c) is specifically mentioned in the example.

## **2.5 Research Questions:**

1. How the speakers in political talk shows influence the audience?
2. How do more powerful groups control public discourse?
3. How do the speakers try to justify themselves and persuade the audience to win their support?

### **Chapter 3: Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 The Participants:**

Total 110 people participated in the survey conducted for the research. Among them 58 were male and 52 were female participants. The participants were from different level such as students, housewives, businessmen and service holders. Out of 110 participants 35 were students, 20 were housewives, 16 were businessmen and 39 were service holders.

#### **3.2 The Instruments:**

For this research, two types of data had been used. First data was collected from 7 videos of political talk shows which the researcher downloaded from youtube. Then the researcher prepared a set of 16 questions for the audience to do the survey. There are 15 multiple choice questions and 1 opinion based question.

#### **3.3 Setting:**

The questionnaire was made for common people. The setting of the survey was both formal (classroom) and informal (residence).

#### **3.4 Method of Analysis:**

Mixed method had been applied to complete both qualitative and quantitative data. The data was analyzed in two steps: (1) analysis of the video of talk shows and (2) analysis of the survey of the audience. The responses to the questionnaire was converted into percentage and bar charts were made by using Microsoft Excel 2007© to represent the percentage. All the data were analyzed from a CDA perspective. The study finds out how political discourse is used to construct power and dominance, and also to manipulate and influence the society.

## **Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion**

### **4.1 Analysis of the Talk Shows:**

In this section the researcher will be analysing the data she found from political talk shows.

#### **4.1.1 Outline of the Program:**

**Show:** Tiritiyo Matra

**Telecast on:** Channel i. 8 January, 2015

**Anchor:** Zillur Rahman

**Guests:**

1. Dr. Manjur Ahmed Chowdhury (Political Observer)
2. Abdul Haque (Director, FBCCI)
3. Muhammad Musa (Former Secretary to Government, Secretary General, BCS Freedom Fighters and Mujibnagar Officers-Employees Association)

##### **4.1.1.1 Topic and Background:**

The topic of the show was “Hartal and Blockade” in Bangladesh. At that time, the said issue was one of the most feverishly discussed issues of the country as BNP was repeatedly calling hartals and blockades after the government obstructed their proposed rally on 5 January, 2015. All of the guests tried to present their opinion in terms of the situation; however, the focus of attention would be on Muhammad Musa.

##### **4.1.1.2 Analysis:**

When his turn came around 00:08:42 minutes, Muhammad Musa grabbed attention by stating his belief that BNP leader Begum Khaleda Zia was calling hartals to destroy the country. He became excited and started talking to Begum Zia directly. Bursting off, he demanded that

Begum Zia should call hartal in Pakistan instead of in Bangladesh because Bangladesh was not her country. At that point the host reminded him that he should talk about the present situation. Nonetheless, around 00:29:50 minutes Muhammad Musa requested the Bengali immigrants to call Tarek Rahman “tui rajakar (you are war criminal)” accusing him of showing disrespect to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. He was completely out of the topic and was busy outbursting on BNP. By the expression of others it was quite evident that they were enjoying his outburst and probably the audience as well.

#### **4.1.2. Outline of the Program:**

**Show:** Tritiyo Matra

**Telecast on:** Channel i. 18 March, 2015

**Anchor:** Zillur Rahman

**Guests:**

1. Syeda Ashifa Ashrafi Papia (Former MP, BNP)
2. Dr. Md. Azam Khan (Join-Secretary, Central Sub-Committee, AL)

#### **4.1.2.1 Topic and Background:**

The topic under discussion, broadcast on 18 March, 2015, was once again “Hartal and Blockade” in Bangladesh. At the opening, the anchor clarifies that because the subject of the consequence of hartal had been dwelled on many times, their focus would be on “when hartal and blockade will end?”

#### **4.1.2.2 Analysis:**

People had been in uncertainty and terror because of the continuous hartal and political unrest at that time. Insecurity about their life had been a constant worry, economy was at risk and

education was hampered. The anchor begun the conversation by asking the question that had been on everyone's mind to Dr. Khan,

*"...ai obosthar sesh kobe hobe?"* (00:00:53) (Bangla)

English Translation: *"...when will this catastrophe end?"*

In answer, Dr. Khan said that people had already started carrying on with their life even if there was hartal, which meant hartal was losing its effect. Then about the hampered education he referred to the BNP leader and politely requested her,

*"...ontoto ai komolpran shishuder shikkha baybosthar kotha chinta kore, uni ai fashionable hartal ebong fashionable ai oborodh etake bondho kore ekta space tairi korun je gonotrtrer jonnono...je ekta sthayee shomadhan..."* (00:02:21) (Bangla)

English Translation: *"...at least considering the educational hazard of the innocent children, she makes a space stopping her fashionable hartal and fashionable blockade so that for democracy...a permanent solution..."*

Here, he threw a jibe by calling the hartal *"fashionable"*. It was probably intended as a tease to the BNP leader since he did not explain how the hartal was fashionable. In fact, people would argue that the hartal was horrible because of the destruction it was bringing on the lives of people.. Nonetheless, it was definitely entertaining to the viewers. He bestowed the responsibility to the BNP leader that she should take initiative for a permanent solution of the problem, completely steering clear the government of their responsibility. It is noted that he avoided mentioning any scheme of the government to stop hartal, which created doubt whether the government had any plan in this case at all. However, the anchor did not let it go, he interrupted here. For any permanent solution dialogue between the two parties was necessary. Stating this fact, he clearly indicated the government's unwillingness for a dialogue.

In justification to this account, Dr. Khan gave excuse that the people's leader Shiekh Hasina (the prime minister) was always ready for a dialogue in order to give a proper election but she would not bend to throwing petrol bomb (during hartals, petrol bombs were blasted). Now, that was a weak excuse given on behalf of the government. People were dying every day. It is the responsibility of the government to ensure the safety of people's lives, to initiate whatever measure it takes to bring back the stability of the country. CDA helps to perceive from this statement that they (the government) do not care about the life of the mass people, that this is all about power play on their part.

The host then turned to Syeda Papia and asked her why hartal was still going on while it was apparent that people had been keeping on with their daily work in the midst of hartal. Syeda Papia got straight to the point using her voice tone to call attention to the logics she was laying out, putting stress on every word, sometimes leaned her head forward to emphasize some points. She gave counter arguments by posing few questions and AL's brutal actions against them. BNP's rally on 5 January, 2015 was disrupted by the government and AL. BNP was accused of some actions that they claimed they did not commit. Also AL leaders threatened BNP by using curse words which, as Syeda Papia pointed out, BNP never used. Stating these facts was obviously an attempt on her behalf to criticize AL's sense of language and, gain public sympathy and support.

In answer to a question of the anchor, Syeda Papia said that they could not request permission for another rally because BNP leader Begum Khaleda Zia was confined to her office. When Dr. Khan's turn came next time he raised his suspicion what was there in the office without which Begum Zia would not be able to attend a rally. Here, the host pointed out that in

spite of the court's order the government was not searching BNP's office or arresting anyone. In reply, Dr Khan said,

*"...gonotontrer sharthe amra sorbochcho shohonshilota dekhachhi..."* (00:20:51) (Bangla)

English Translation: *"...we are showing maximum tolerance for the sake of democracy..."*

During the whole time, both of the guests were trying to blame the opposite party. By the time the show ended, no solution came out of the discussion and it remained a show of power dominance.

#### **4.1.3 Outline of the Program:**

**Show:** Tritiyo Matra

**Telecast on:** Channel i. 9 September, 2015

**Anchor:** Zillur Rahman

**Guests:**

1. Surangit Sengupta (MP, Chairman, Parliamentary Standing Committee, Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs)
2. Dr. Asif Nazrul (Professor, Department of Law, University of Dhaka)

##### **4.1.3.1 Topic and Background:**

The show was about current affairs of the country, telecast on 9 September, 2015; several matters were talked about. The first matter that the anchor brought up was the raise of salary of government employees in accordance to the 8th national pay scale. There was widespread fear that the salary hike was likely to increase inflation. For the increased salary of 21 lac government employees, probably the common people would have to bear the burden of inflation more. In addition the public university teachers declined the pay scale saying it failed to meet their

expectations. Although there were two guests, the focus of attention would be on Surangit Sengupta's first 6 minutes (approximately) speech.

#### **4.1.3.2 Analysis:**

The host started off with Surangit Sengupta by inviting him to explain his quotation on the said matter,

*“beton digun hoyechhe, sheba dite hobe char gun...”* (00:00:54) (Bangla)

English Translation: *“salary has been doubled, service has to be given four times more...”*

Mr. Sengupta opined that since the income of the country had increased, salary hike of employees was expected. However, with this government must increase administrative skill and transparency to public. Standard of service to public had to be extended as the salary hike and other benefits that the government employees were getting were provided by public money. Inflation must be met considering there are people of low income. Mr. Sengupta supported the teacher's protest against national pay scale. He then brought up the subject of proposed vat on private universities and disagreed with the government calling it “discrimination”. He hoped the government would reconsider these policies.

#### **4.1.4 Outline of the Program:**

**Show:** Trito Matra

**Telecast on:** Channel i. 27 September, 2016

**Anchor:** Zillur Rahman

**Guests:** 1. Mohammed Shafiqur Rahman (President, National Press Club)

2. Dr. Zafrullah Chowdhury (Trustee, Gonoshasthaya Kendra, a Public Charity Trust)



#### 4.1.4.1 Topic and Background:

The show broadcast on 27 September, 2016 talked about many subjects. The last subject the host raised was the next election. How the election commission would be formulated, who would be the members were under discussion.

#### 4.1.4.2 Analysis:

Around 00:44:32 minute, the host asked Dr. Zafrullah Chowdhury's opinion on the raised matter. Dr. Chowdhury was able to put his opinion quite neutrally, criticizing both the government and the opposite party BNP. Reminding National Professor Abdur Rajjak's advice to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, he said that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina should organize a proper election so that a strong opposite party could rise because it is essential for politics. For a proper election to take place a strong, capable and ethical election commission is the first condition, he pointed out. If she could do that, she would gain victory according to him, even if she was defeated in the election. He also criticized BNP leader Begum Khaleda Zia for not bringing changes to their scheme as soon as possible. To have a proper election and democracy, one party had to be lenient- he stated.

At his turn, the first line Mohammed Shafiqur Rahman said was,

*"...ami ekta jinish bishwas kori je Sheikh Hasina, Bangabandhu konna, tar hate Bangladesher kono khoti hobe na..."* (00:47:25) (Bangla)

English Translation: *"... I believe one thing that Sheikh Hasina, daughter of Bangabandhu, no harm will come to Bangladesh from her..."*

With this sentence he gave an impression that he was going to talk in favor of the government. He stressed that Sheikh Hasina would organize a neutral election but before she wanted to make her plans for a developed Bangladesh come true.

#### 4.1.5 Outline of the Program:

**Show:** Tritiyo Matra

**Telecast on:** Channel i. 4 October, 2016

**Anchor:** Zillur Rahman

**Guests:** 1. Subhash Singha Roy (Chief Editor, Abnews24.com)  
2. Maj Gen (retd) Syed Muhammad Ibrahim, Beer Pratik  
d(Chairman, Bangladesh Kalyan Party)

##### 4.1.5.1 Topic and Background:

The topic of the show was current affairs of the country, broadcast on Channel i, 4 October, 2016. This topic is quite the same as the previous one. The issue of the next election was coming up because the validity of the election commission was about to be expired. The election commission had to be made anew and the host focused on this subject.

##### 4.1.5.2 Analysis:

The host started the conversation by referring to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's reply to the question of the journalists that if the election commission was to be made according to the proposal of BNP, that commission will create only forged voters. He asked Subhash Singha Roy that if it was possible to make an election commission keeping BNP out of it. In answer Mr. Roy recited a citation that praised the prime minister,

*'Bangladesher prodhanmontri Shiekh Hasina, apnar pita Bangladesher jonno jibon utshorgo korechhen, ar apnio bar bar nijer shwadhinota bishorjon diye nijer jibonke biponno kore desher gonotontrer punorjonmo ghotiyechhen...'*

He talked approximately for 8 minutes and within this time he rattled on commendations of the Prime Minister. Never once the question of the host been answered.

After that the host asked Syed Muhammad Ibrahim about the question Mr. Roy raised on BNP's scheme of politics. Incidentally, it was Syed Ibrahim's birthday. He brought two gifts- a small size Quran Sharif for the anchor and a book he wrote named "Parbotto Chottogram Shanti Prokrya O Poribesh Paristhitir Mullayan" for Mr. Roy. Before presenting the gifts he admitted that he brought both gifts purposefully. While presenting the book, Syed Ibrahim gave a hint on his purpose, mentioning the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord,

*"...churanto porjayta bortoman prodhanmontri manonyo Sheikh Hasinar hat diye...shompadito hoyechhilo kintu shuruta hoyechhilo amaderi moto loker hate..."* (00:11:51) (Bangla)

English Translation: *"the final process was completed by honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina...but the initiative was taken by people like us..."*

Here, he indirectly replied back to Mr. Roy's previous praise for Prime Minister, implying that the Prime Minister is not the only one, there are other people whose contribution to the country could not be ignored. Presenting the book to Mr. Roy in a TV show was probably a way to emphasize this fact to the public.

#### **4.1. 6 Outline of the Program:**

**Show:** RFL Goltable

**Telecast on:** RTV. 21 November, 2013

**Anchor:** Unknown

**Guests:** There were 6 guests. Among them 4 guests are important for this discussion from a 24 minute clip of the whole program.

- 1.** Mohammed Shahriar Alam (State Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh)

2. Barrister Andalib Rahman Partho (Chairman, Bangladesh Jatiya Party-BJP)
3. Barrister Nasir Uddin Ahmed Ashim (Human rights affairs Secretary, BNP)
4. Mahi B. Chowdhury (Former parliament member)

#### 4.1.6.1 Topic and Background:

In this clip of the program, the guests were talking about election, constitution, hartal and other matters.

#### 4.1.6.2 Analysis:

At his turn, referring to Barrister Ashim, Mohammed Shahriar Alam said,  
*"...ektu age Ashim bhai bollen tar boktobb je manonio birodhidolio bharprapto mohasochib chhatrodoler puroshe aghat korar jonno e kothaguli bolechen...oi boktobbo ta kintu amader bamdike je tinjon bose achhen tader khetreo projojjo..tara o hartal deke nijera keo mathe namenni."* (00:00:07)

English Translation- "...a while ago Ashim bhai said in his speech that honorable oppositional acting secretary general said such things to attack to the masculinity of chhatrodol...that speech is applicable to the 3 people sitting on our left side...they themselves too did not attend after calling hartal..."

His intention behind this dialogue was to attack the other 3 guests personally. Then Barrister Andalib attacked Md. Alam in turn,

*"...hartal virodhi michile ami apnake jibone dekhini..."* (00:06:36)

English translation- "I have never seen you in demonstrations against hartal..."

Both of them intended to prove who could have power over another by verbal attack on each other. It is a way for them to justify themselves and control particular discourse situation.

#### 4.1.7 Outline of the Program:

**Show:** Trito Matra

**Telecast on:** Channel i. 9 October, 2013

**Anchor:** Zillur Rahman

**Guests:** 1. Subhash Singha Roy (Chief Editor, Abnews24.com)  
2. Dr. Manjur Ahmed Chowdhury (Political Observer)

##### 4.1.7.1 Topic and Background:

The topic of the discussion was rampal coal-based power station that had been planned to build in Sundarban- the biggest mangrove forest in the world. Despite the nationwide protest, the government was adamant about this project. Various issues regarding rampal power station was discussed.

##### 4.1.7.2 Analysis:

When asked for his comment on the said issue, Subhash Singha Roy reasoned, *“...shara prithibite shob miliye...boro biddiyut ashe koyla theke...karon hochhe koyla theke biddiyut utpadoner shei biddiyuter khorochta kom. Kintu...koyla bhittik biddiyut prokolper jeta sobcheye boro dorkar- ekta hochhe jai, arekta hochhe pani...ar okhane apni jogajog byabosthata kemon bhabe korben. Jogajog byabosthar moddhe- apni train e kore jodi ante paren, shei koyla khub e shachchhonde neyoa jai. Kintu...jolpothe aro shohojlobvyo hoye jai. Je karone kintu selection of place kintu rampal.”* (00:03:44)

English translation- “around the world...major amount of electricity is produced from coal...because production of electricity from coal costs low. But...the most necessary things for a

coal-based power plant- one is place, another is water...and how you are going to arrange the communication system. In case of communication- if you can transport by train, you can carry the coal very easily. But...through waterway it is easier. For that reason alone the selection of place is rampal.”

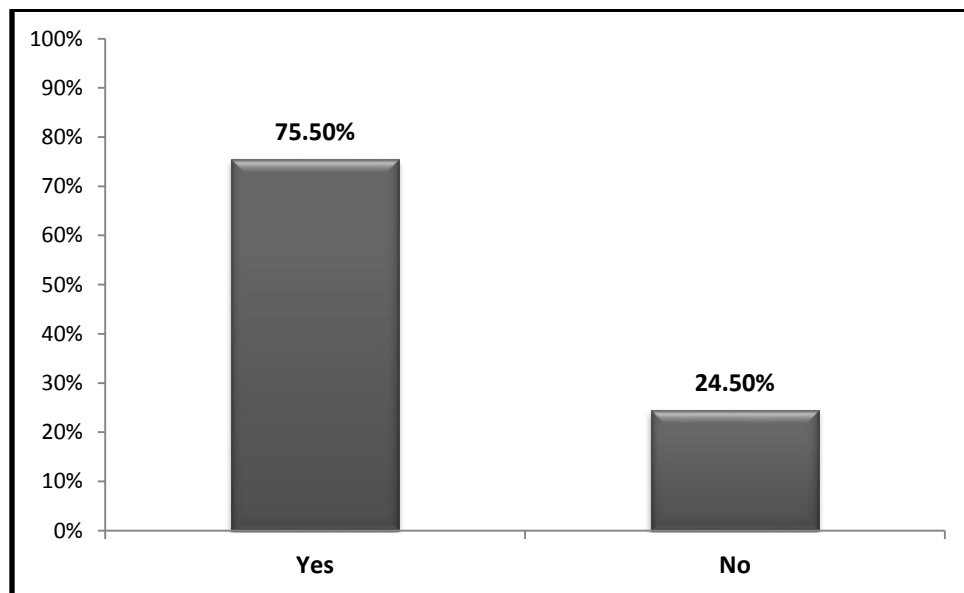
In this part of his speech, Mr. Roy aimed to show the audience some reasons that they might not know. Uttering these reasons may lead the audience to be persuaded of the raised matter.

#### 4.2 Findings of the Questionnaire:

For survey, 16 questions were given and 110 people participated in it. In the following the researcher is going to discuss the results of the survey.

##### Question 1: Do you watch political talk shows on TV?

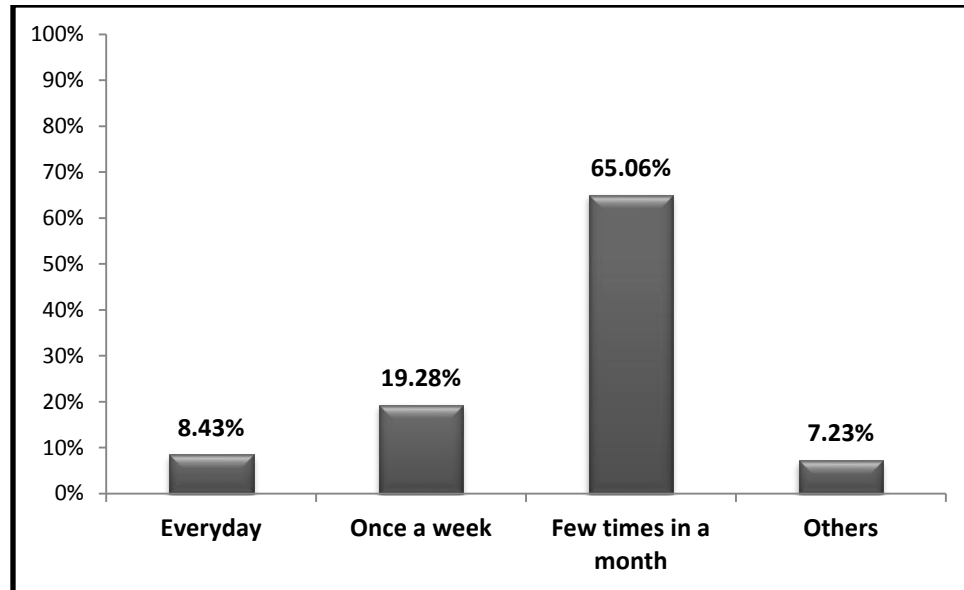
Among 110 participants 75.5% said that they watched political talk shows and 25.5% said they did not watch political talk shows. The responses of the participants are showing in the following chart.



**Figure 1: Do you watch political talk shows on TV?**

**Question 2:** How often do you watch political talk shows?

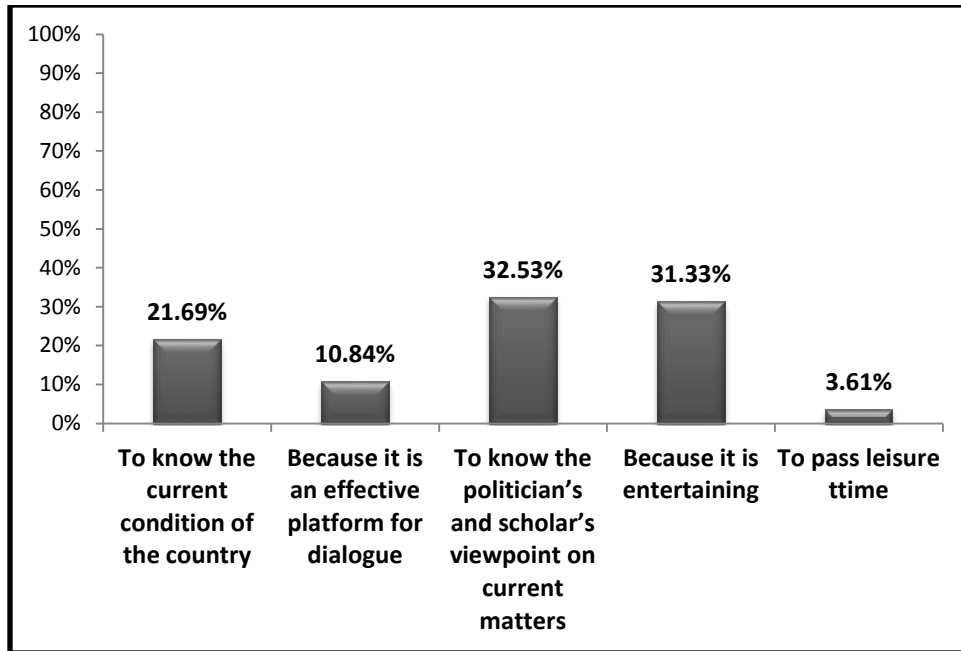
The survey showed that 8.43% people watched political talk show everyday, 19.28% people watched once a week, 65.06% watched few times in a month and 7.23% watched other amount of time. It could be said that political talk shows are quite frequently viewed program in Bangladesh.



**Figure 2:** How often do you watch political talk shows?

**Question 3:** Why do you watch political talk shows?

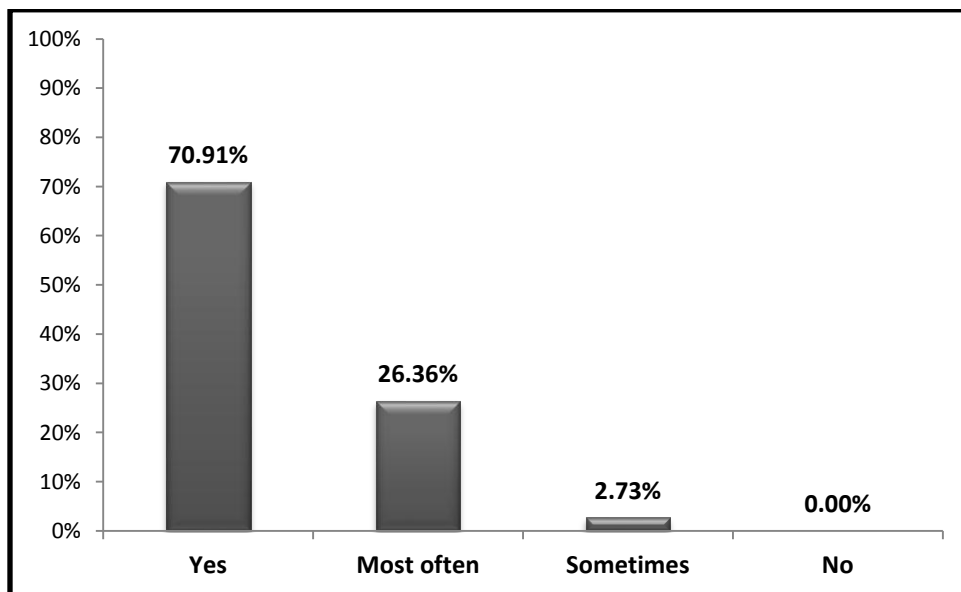
According to 21.69% people, they watched political talk show to know the current condition of the country, 10.84% watched because they thought it was an effective platform for dialogue. 32.53%, watched because they wanted to know the politician's and scholar's viewpoint on current matters, 31.33% watched because they found it entertaining and 3.61% watched to pass leisure time.



**Figure 3: Why do you watch political talk shows?**

**Question 4:** Do you think opinions of the talk shows are politically biased?

Majority of people, 70.91%, thought that opinions of the political talk shows were biased, 26.36% said most often whereas 2.73% said sometimes. None of them thought that they are not biased.

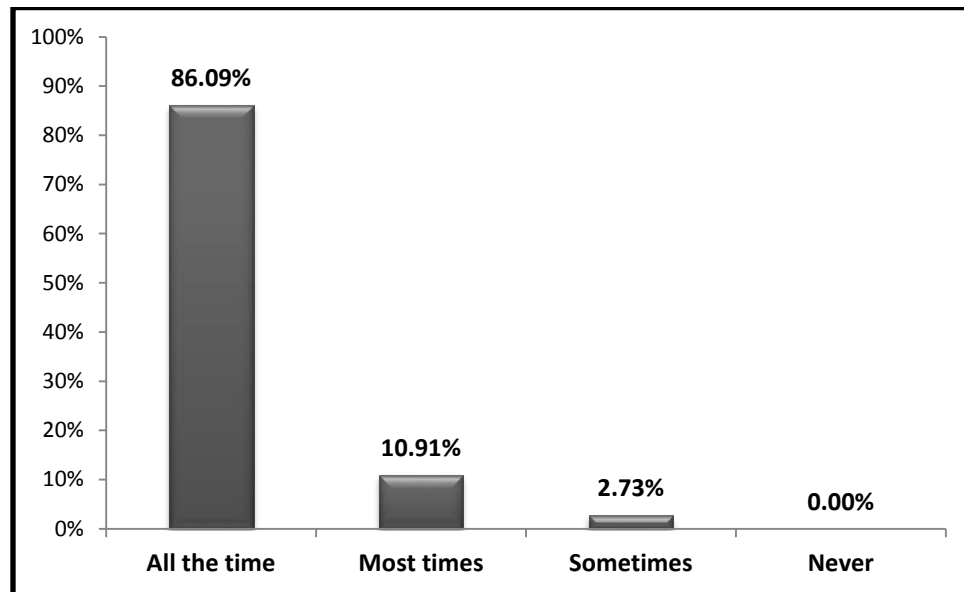


**Figure 4: Do you think opinions of the talk shows are politically biased?**



**Question 5:** Do you think politicians try to influence people through manipulations in the talk shows?

In answer to this question, 86.09% said that politicians tried to influence people through manipulations in the talk shows all the time, 10.91% thought that politicians did it most times and 2.73% thought that they (politicians) did it sometimes. No one thought that they did not try manipulation.



**Figure 5: Do you think politicians try to influence people through manipulations in the talk shows?**

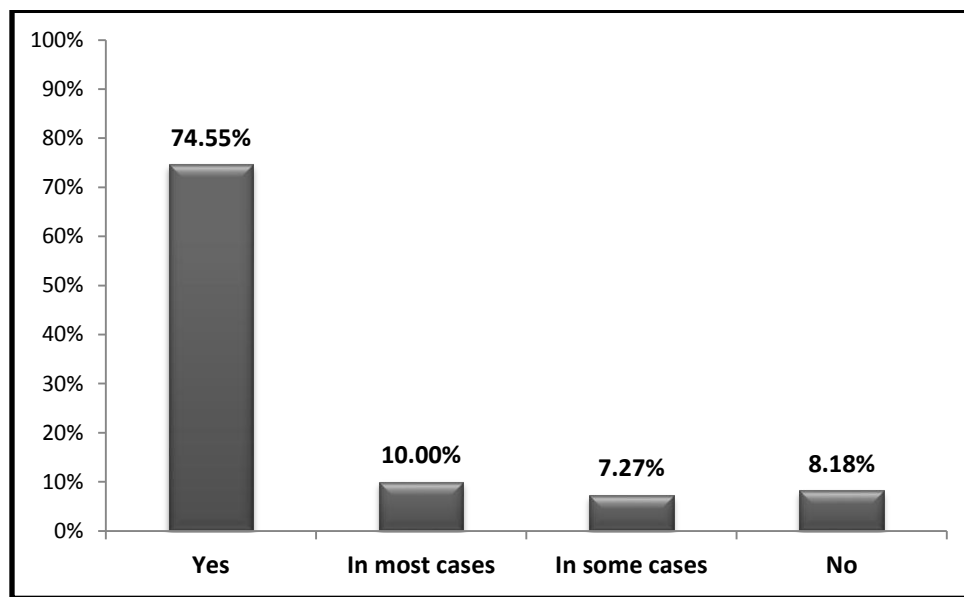
**Question 6:** How do you think politicians try to manipulate the audience?

Most of the people opined that in the talk shows speakers frequently mentioned issues concerning public sentiment to gain their support. They talked about their own achievements and the opposite party's failure all the time for the same reason. Some even thought that blaming each other whenever something happened that concerned public, was a way to gain sympathy from the public so that they could avoid responsibility. Few people also stated that the speakers used their personal or party related sensitive issues as a mean to get the public to vote them.

Talking about history that were attached to the public's emotion, was another way to influence them, commented the participants. Sometimes instead of answering the question, they start pointing out facts that were irrelevant to the subject discussed which are generally about their accomplishments or praise of their party member or the leader, commented the participants.

**Question 7:** Do you think political talk shows are just a platform of power dominance between the government and opposite parties?

Most of the people, 74.55% said that they thought political talk shows were a platform of power dominance between the government and opposite parties, 10% said it was so in most cases and 7.27% said in some cases. The rest 8.18% did not think such was the case.

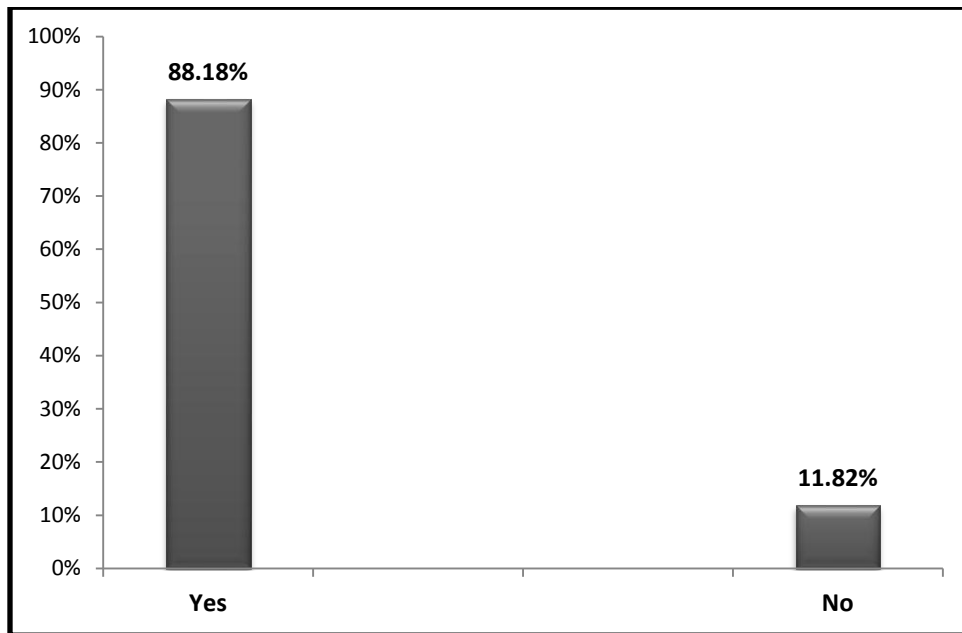


**Figure 6: Do you think political talk shows are just a platform of power dominance between the government and opposite parties?**

**Question 8:** Do you think the speakers attempts to control the audience and their opponents by administering certain arts in their manner of speaking?

In this question the researcher tried to find out if the participants thought that the speakers used their tone of voice, body language or the glorification of their parties as wa way to control

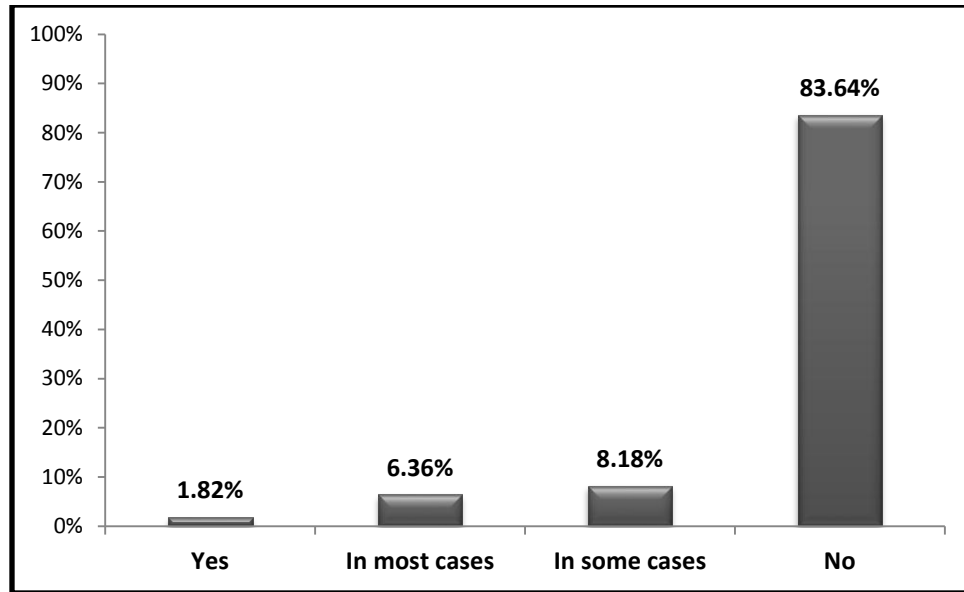
and convince the audience and other speakers of the show. 88.18% of them believed that the speakers did, the rest 11.82% did not believe so.



**Figure 7: Do you think the speakers attempts to control the audience and their opponents by administering certain arts in their manner of speaking?**

**Question 9:** Do you think political talk shows can answer to public queries of the reasons and solutions of the socio-political problems?

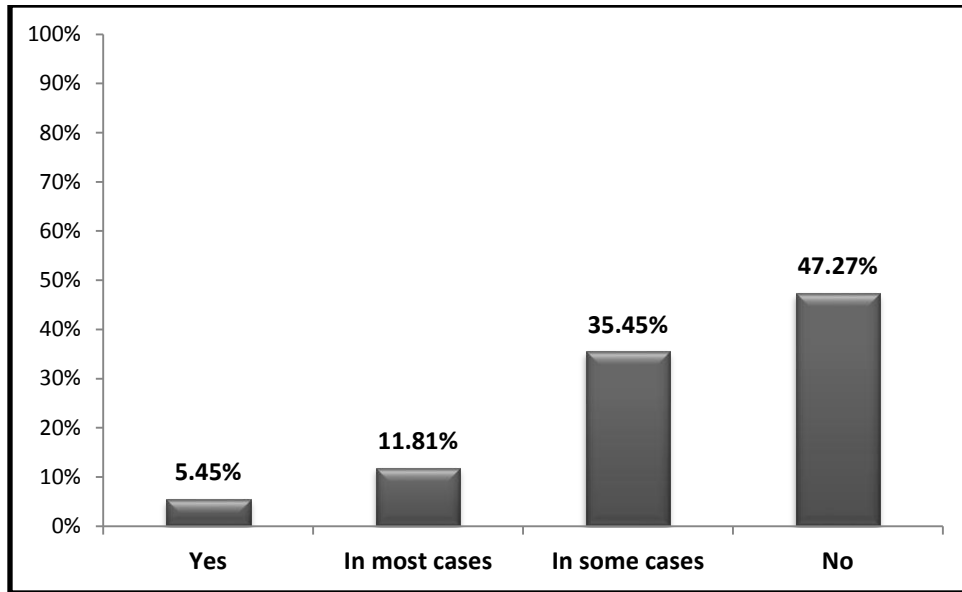
In answer to this question, only 1.82% said yes, 6.36% said in most cases and 8.18% said in some cases. However, majority of them which is 83.64% opined that they did not think political talk shows could answer to public queries of the reasons and solutions of the socio-political problems.



**Figure 8: Do you think political talk shows can answer to public queries of the reasons and solutions of the socio-political problems?**

**Question 10:** Do you think politicians deliver something that can create political awareness among the audience?

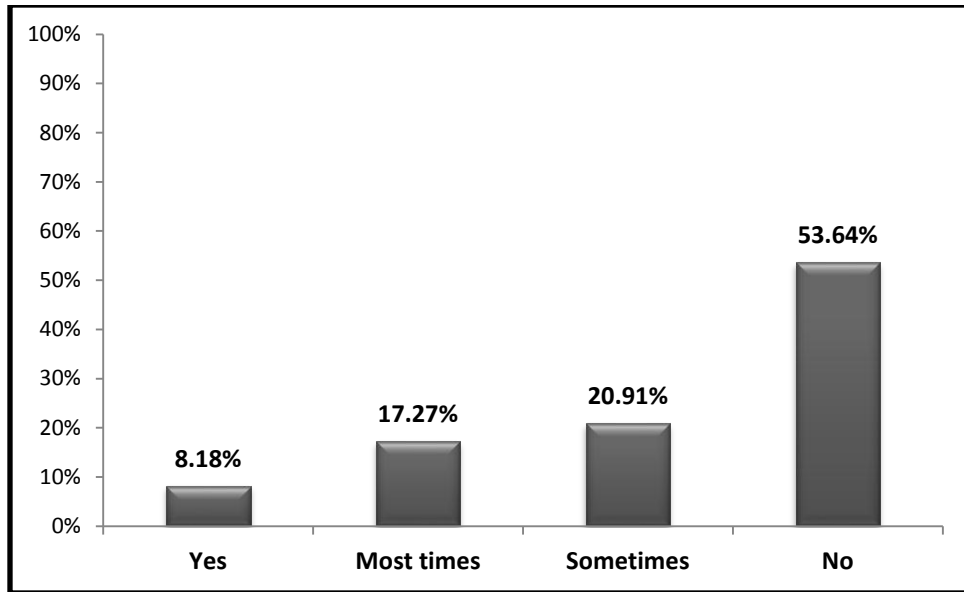
In response to this question, 5.45% answered that yes, politicians delivered something that could create political awareness among the audience, 11.81% said they did mostly whereas 35.45% said they did very little. Therefore, 47.27% did not believe politicians delivered something that could create political awareness among the audience.



**Figure 9: Do you think politicians deliver something that can create political awareness among the audience?**

**Question 11:** Do you think the government and opposite parties are able to convince people about their agendas through political talk shows?

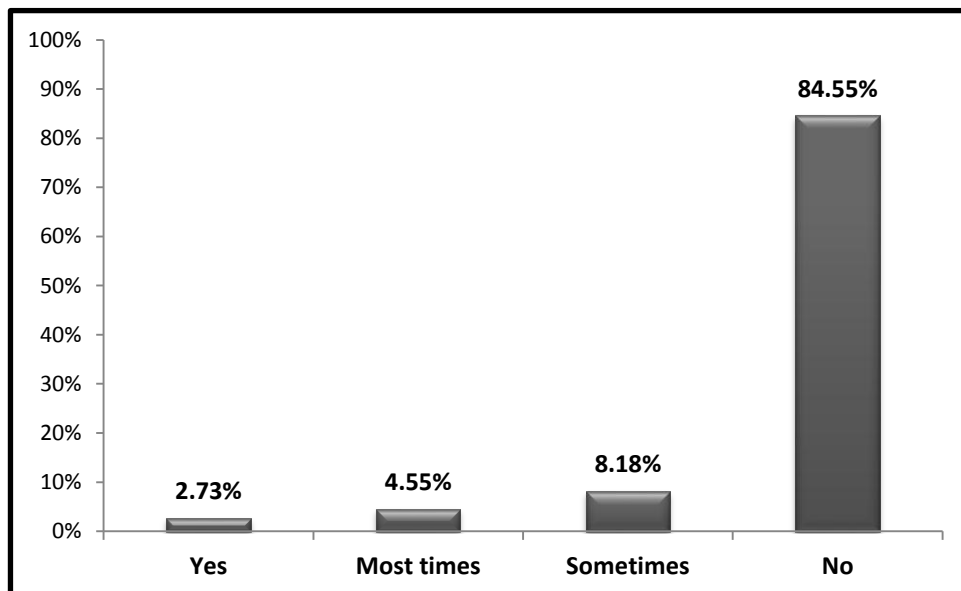
Only 8.18% people agreed on this. 17.27% said most times people are convinced and 20.91% said sometimes. The rest 53.64% did not believe that people are convinced the government and opposite parties through political talk shows.



**Figure 10: Do you think the government and opposite parties are able to convince people about their agendas through political talk shows?**

**Question 12:** Do you think political talk shows have any positive impact on the contextual problems?

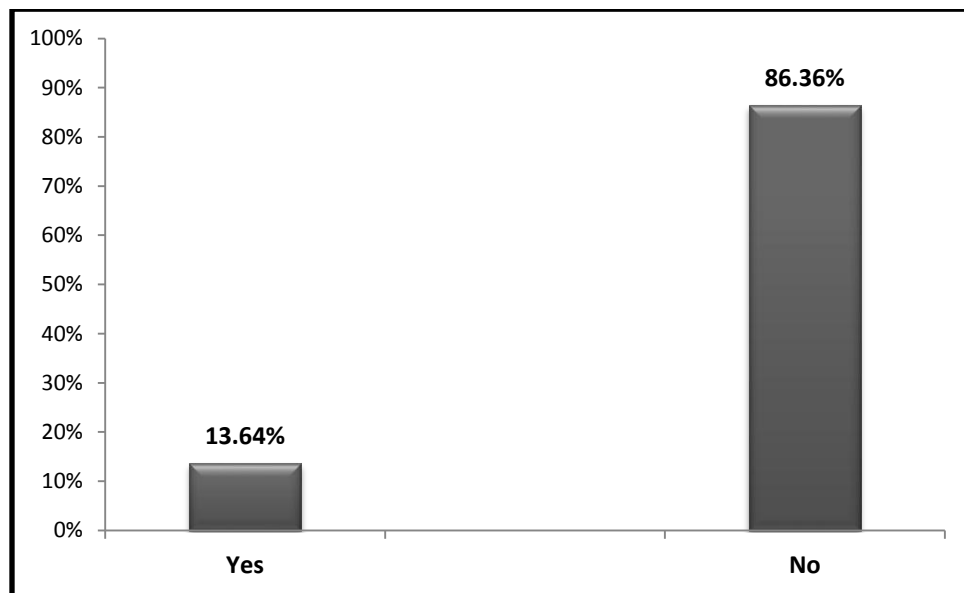
In response to this question, 2.73% participants said yes, 4.55% said most times, 8.18% said sometimes and 84.55% said no, they did not think political talk shows had any positive impact on the contextual problems.



**Figure 11: Do you think political talk shows have any positive impact on the contextual problems?**

**Question 13:** Do you think political talk shows make conscious movement on the young generation?

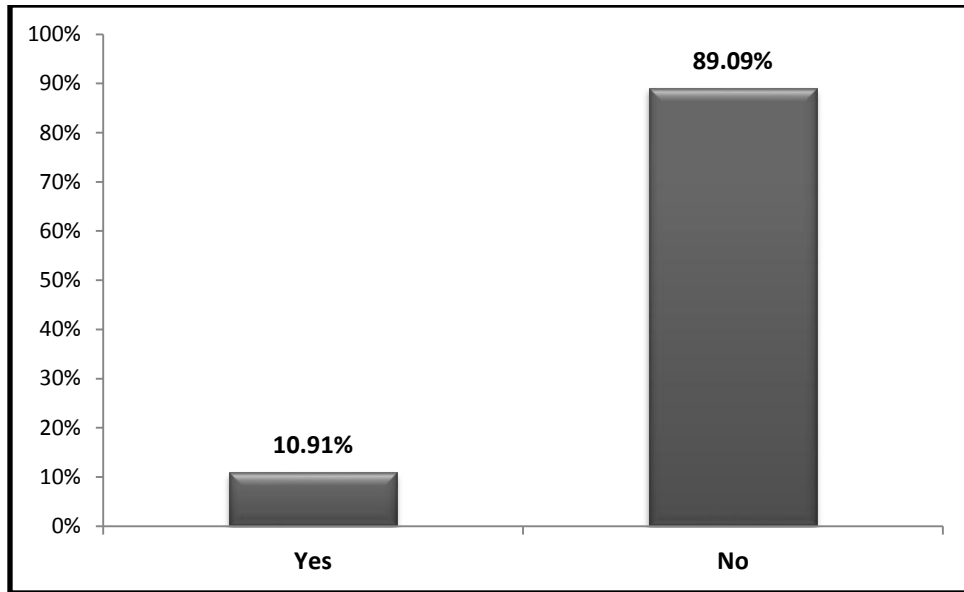
The purpose of this question was to find out if political talk shows were able to inspire the young generation of Bangladesh. 13.64% said yes, and 86.36% did not believe political talk shows made conscious movement on the young generation.



**Figure 12; Do you think political talk shows make conscious movement on the young generation?**

**Question 14:** Do you think political talk shows can create a platform of communication between the government and public?

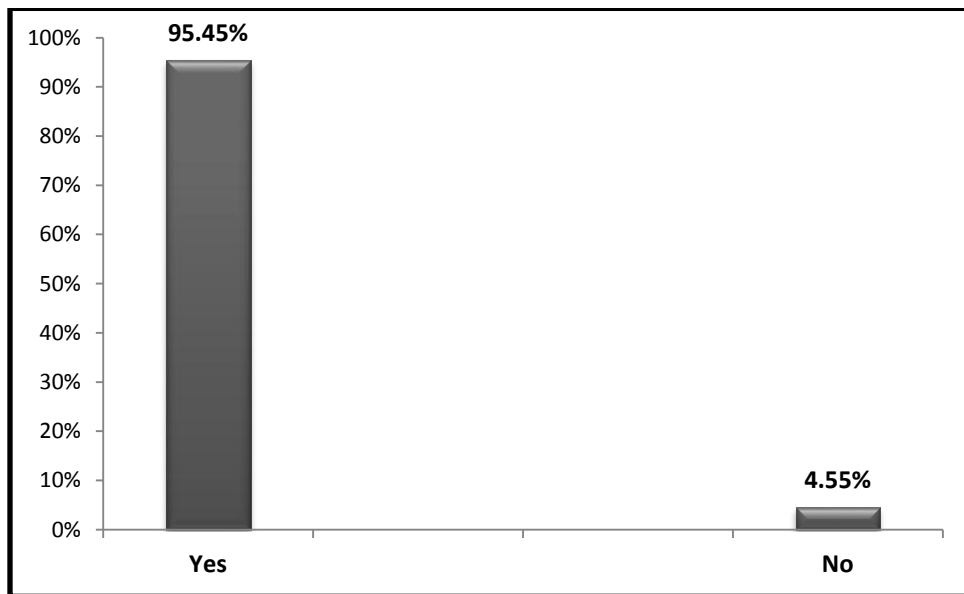
In answer of this question, 10.91% responded in positive, that they thought political talk shows could create a platform of communication between the government and public. However, the majority of the participants, 89.09%, did not think so.



**Figure 13: Do you think political talk shows can create a platform of communication between the government and public?**

**Question 15:** Do you think in the political talk shows politicians try to manipulate people to get vote?

95.45% of the participants believed that in the political talk shows politicians tried to manipulate people to get vote, whereas only 4.55% did not believe so.

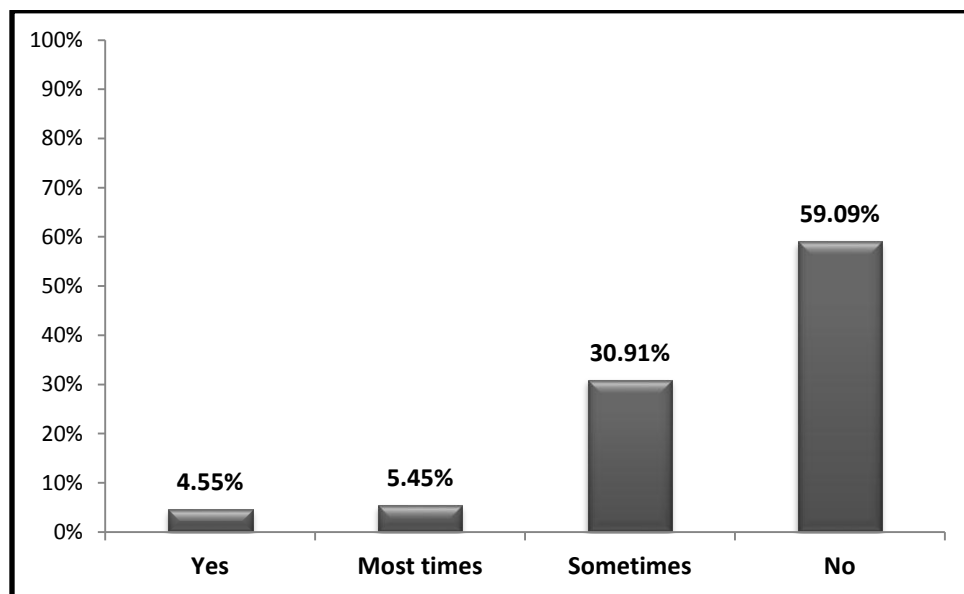




**Figure 14: Do you think in the political talk shows politicians try to manipulate people into getting vote?**

**Question 16:** Do you think politicians are able to convince people enough to get vote through manipulation?

4.55% participants thought that politicians are able to convince people enough to get vote through manipulation, 5.45% believed it happened most times and 30.91% believed it happened sometimes. 59.09% did not agree that manipulation could get the politicians into getting vote.



**Figure 15: Do you think politicians are able to convince people enough to get vote through political talk shows?**

### 4.3 Analysis of the Research Findings:

CDA focuses particularly on the relationship among power, discourse and ideology, and studies how more powerful groups enact power, dominance and manipulations by text and talk in the social and political context. Speakers follows various ideologies (ideas, beliefs, values etc.) to dominate public discourse as well as to influence the public so that their control over the

social and cultural affairs of the country is ensured. They have created their ideologies in political discourse through emotional attachment, rhetoric art of speaking, refutation, verbose style, mind control, historical reference and even verbal attack that they apply in political speech as well as in political talk shows.

van Dijk's (1993) verbose style of speaking, where irrelevant information is ciphered in political speeches or debates, is frequently seen in the political talk shows. In an episode of *Tritiyo Matra*, telecast in Channel i. on 4 October, 2016, one of the guests Subhash Singha Roy uttered a series of appraisal of prime minister Sheikh Hasina for almost the entire time he spoke for the first 8 minutes. Although the host asked him if it was possible to make an election commission keeping BNP out of it, in his speech, Mr. Roy spoke more of the prime minister than answering the question. In the episode of 27 September, 2016, Mohammed Shafiqur Rahman while commenting on election expressed his belief that no harm *would* come to Bangladesh from *the* daughter of Bangabandhu. *According to* Grice's (1975) cooperative principle *he should have talked more about the facts than what he believed since his beliefs were irrelevant in that regard*. It is quite a subjective approach the speakers follow by mentioning the glorification of the leader or their beliefs to get the audience's support.

The mind control theory of van Dijk (1993) proposes that the mind of the audience can be controlled by pointing out facts that they do not have enough knowledge about. The information Syed Muhammad Ibrahim gave on 4 October, 2016 episode of *Tritiyo Matra*, and Subhash Singha Roy gave on 9 October, 2013 episode, most of the audience were unknowledgeable about those facts. Stating such facts makes the audience believe the information to be accurate.

Another way politicians try to influence the public and control discourse situation is refutation. On 18 March, 2015 episode of *Tritiyo Matra*, after Dr. Md. Azam Khan accused BNP

of throwing petrol bomb, Syeda Ashifa Ashrafi Papia gave counter argument by stating the government's brutal actions against them and also the fact that they were accused of some illegal act that they did not commit. She also pointed out the fact that the government party used curse words against BNP which BNP never reciprocated. Criticism is obviously a subtle way to both refutation and gaining public sympathy.

Speaking of issues that might be attached to the public's emotion is also a way to manipulate them. In the same episode mentioned above Dr. Md. Azam Khan requested BNP to stop hartal considering the educational hazard of children. Cognizant of the fact that education and children are matter of public sentiment, he attempted to use it to their advantage.

Rhetoric art or manner of speaking is also an effective way to control the audience. Sometimes speakers use their body language and tone of voice, sometimes they speak in a discreet way or state facts that concern public. In his speech on 9 September, 2015 episode of *Tritiyo Matra*, Surangit Sengupta spoke in favor of public on the raised matters- showed concern for them. On 18 March, 2015 episode, when the host commented that in spite of the court's order the government was not searching BNP's office or arresting anyone, Dr. Md. Azam Khan replied that *they were* showing maximum tolerance for the sake of democracy. *This was also a way to justify their action to the audience.* In the episode of 27 September, 2016, Dr. Zafrullah Chowdhury criticized both the government and opposite party; suggested that both of them should be lenient to some extent for the sake of a proper election. The other guest Mohammed Shafiqur Rahman said that the prime minister would organize a neutral election but before she wanted to make her plans for a developed Bangladesh come true, to comment on the same question. It was a careful act on his part to persuade the audience. The citation Subhash Singha

Roy read out at the beginning of his speech in *Tritiyo Matra* 4 October, 2016 episode fine-drawn way to control the attention of the audience.

Speakers sometimes bring up history in order to emphasize their opinion and control discourse situation. In *Tritiyo Matra*, 27 September, 2016 episode, Dr. Zafrullah Chowdhury gave a suggestion to the prime minister by giving her a reminder of National Professor Abdur Rajjak's advice to Bangabandhu. By bringing this history up, he created an environment to have the support of the audience.

In justification of their actions, politicians sometimes make personal attack on each other verbally. In RFL Goltable 21 November, 2013 episode, broadcast on RTV, 2 of the guests Mohammed Shahriar Alam and Barrister Andalib Rahman Partho made verbal assault on each other in purpose of justifying themselves.

In political talk shows politicians use persuasive discourse to control the audience and exercise power over them. To know the audience's point of view in this matter, the researcher conducted a survey among 110 people. 86.09% of the audience believed that manipulation occurred in political talk shows all the time. To answer the question if political talk shows were a platform of power dominance between the government and opposite parties, 74.55% of them said yes, they believed so. To identify how manipulation occurred, they specified that speakers made use of issues of public sentiment (emotional attachment), their own or leader's accomplishments that were unnecessary in that context (verbose style) to provide reasons for the audience to believe them. The researcher also asked if they thought the speakers used their body language, tone of voice or the glorification of their parties (rhetoric art) to influence them. 88.18% of the participants answered in the affirmative.

The researcher asked other questions to figure out if politicians were able to

persuade the public by talking about matters that were actually of any use to them in the political talk shows. 83.64% opined that political talk shows could not answer to their queries of the reasons of the socio-political problems. 84.55% stated that politicians did not make any positive impact on the contextual problems political talk shows. 89.09% said that they could not create a platform of communication between the government and public. In response to the question if politicians delivered something that can create political awareness among the audience, 47.27% said they did not but 35.45% said they did very little amount. 86.36% agreed that they were not able to motivate the young generation. Instead politicians tried manipulation to persuade people to get vote in political talk shows, as claimed by 95.45% of the participants. However, from question 11 and 16 the it can be seen that most of the participants, 53.64% and 59.09%, disagreed with the fact that they were persuaded in any way.

Nevertheless, people watch talk shows. From the survey it is evident that 75.5% participants watch political talk shows for different reasons. The researcher put some choices in the question (question 3) to know why people watch political talk shows. It is intriguing to find out that 31.33% of them watch because they find it entertaining. If we look at the outburst of Muhammad Musa on *Tritiyo Matra* 8 January, 2015 episode, we will probably understand why people find political talk shows entertaining.

## **5. Conclusion**

### **5.1 Conclusion:**

Critical discourse analysis aims to find out hidden issues and motives behind various discourse that are embedded in the society by examining them from a critical point of view. It scrutinizes how the more powerful groups of the society utilize political discourse to control and influence the less powerful groups for their advantage. The textual struggle for meaning is the precise equivalent of the social struggle for power (Fiske in Matheson, 2005, p. 6). Because of the expansion of media, political talk shows have become both an intriguing program for the public and a large platform for the politicians to administer power and dominance over the society. From the findings of the study it can be said that skillful manipulation is what the politicians use to justify themselves and influence people. They utilize different linguistic devices such as text production strategy and ideologies to engender power relations and control the mass population of the country.

### **5.2 Recommendations:**

- Speakers in political talk shows should be concerned with matters that reflect public interests and try to answer to their queries of the social and political problems of the country.
- Instead of blaming their respective opposite parties, their aim should be coming up with solutions of the problems that hinder the natural course of the life of the citizens and ideas how to implement them.
- They should focus more on the facts of the discussed matters than expressing their beliefs that are irrelevant to that particular context. They should avoid delivering more

than that are necessary. In lieu of manipulation, they should consider telling public the truth.

- Topics and discussions in the talk shows should be arranged in such a way that it can help create communication between the government and public, also make positive impact on the society.

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## Appendix

### Questionnaire for the Audience

**Name:**

**Gender:**

**Occupation:**

1. Do you watch political talk shows on TV?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
2. How often do you watch political talk shows?
  - a) Everyday
  - b) Once a week
  - c) Few times in a month
  - d) Others
3. Why do you watch political talk shows?
  - a) To know the current condition of the country
  - b) Because it is an effective platform for dialogue
  - c) To know the politician's and scholar's viewpoint on current matters
  - d) Because it is entertaining
  - e) To pass leisure time
4. Do you think opinions of the talk shows are politically biased?
  - a) Yes
  - b) Most often
  - c) Sometimes

- d) No
5. Do you think politicians try to influence people through manipulations in the talk shows?
- a) All the time
  - b) Most times
  - c) Sometimes
  - d) Never
6. How do you think politicians try to manipulate the audience?
7. Do you think political talk shows are just a platform of power dominance between the government and opposite parties?
- a) Yes
  - b) In most cases
  - c) In some cases
  - d) No
8. Do you think the speakers attempt to control the audience and their opponents by administering certain arts in their manner of speaking?
- a) Yes
  - b) No
9. Do you think political talk shows can answer to public queries of the reasons of the socio-political problems?
- a) Yes
  - b) In most cases
  - c) In some cases
  - d) No

**10.** Do you think politicians deliver something that can create political awareness among the audience?

- a) Yes
- b) Mostly
- c) Very little
- d) No

**11.** Do you think the government and opposite parties are able to convince people about their agendas through political talk shows?

- a) Yes
- b) Most times
- c) Sometimes
- d) No

**12.** Do you think political talk shows have any positive impact on the contextual problems?

- a) Yes
- b) Most times
- c) Sometimes
- d) No

**13.** Do you think political talk shows make conscious movement on the young generation?

- a) Yes
- b) No

**14.** Do you think political talk shows can create a platform of communication between the government and public?

- a) Yes

b) No

**15.** Do you think in the political talk shows politicians try to manipulate people into getting vote?

a) Yes

b) No

**16.** Do you think politicians are able to convince people enough to get vote through manipulation?

a) Yes

b) Most times

c) Sometimes

d) No