

Election and the Rural Voters: A Pre-Election Study on the Parliamentary Election of Bangladesh

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a) Researcher's Identity

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b) Objectives

The main objectives of the study were to know the following things:

- i. Selected socio-economic characteristics of the voters;
- ii. Voters' familiarity with the background of the candidates;
- iii. Nature of communication between the voters and the candidates;
- iv. Factors to be considered by the voters for casting their votes;
- v. Voters' choices for different political parties; and
- vi. Recommendations of the voters for the political stability of the country.

c) Executive summary

The study was conducted in three constituencies of Bogra district before the parliamentary election, 1979. Through this study an attempt was made to get an idea about the socio-economic background of the voters, their familiarity with the candidates, nature of communication, factors considered for casting votes, choices for different political parties and the recommendations of the voters for future political stability of the country.

Data were collected by some staff members of the Academy who hailed from the constituencies under study. These investigators interviewed voters through a simple questionnaire. The findings of the study can be summarized as follows:

1. The age of the voters interviewed ranges between 18 to 65 years and the majority (64%) are within the age group of 18 to 35 years. the mean of age is 34.13.

2. The voters are of different educational background which varies from illiteracy to graduation. But the majority of them (76.7%) are literate.
3. The highest number of voters (62.3%) is engaged in farming. The number of service holders is more in Bogra constituency than those of the other two constituencies.
4. Regarding the voters familiarity with the candidates, it has been found that more than 80% voters know the names, party affiliations and election symbols of the candidates. The level of knowledge varies from one to all candidates with a high concentration of three to four candidates.
5. The candidates have some kind of communication (65.4%) with voters and with the other it has been reported to be no communication. The communication has taken place both at personal as well as at mass level. In most cases (53%) this has been through personal contact.
6. About factors considered by the voters for casting votes 15.7% voters have not mentioned anything and the rest have mentioned that candidates' past achievements and activities (80.3%), education (8.6%) and honesty (1.3%).
7. Of the 300 voters interviewed, 70 respondents (23.3%) have not given any choice for any political party and the rest of 230 (76.7%) have given their choices for six different political parties including independent candidates. The choices of the most of the voters (61%) have been found for Bangladesh Nationalist Party.
8. 8. Most of the voters (61.7%) have not given any recommendation for future political stability of the country and the others have given various recommendations. The highest number of voters (16%) has recommended the rule of law for the political stability of the country. Approximately all the voters in Kahaloo have recommended the establishment of Islamic rule.