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দাপ্তরিক গোপনীয়তা আইন ও তথ্য-অধিকার

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Authors' Name	Article	Page
Dr. Abul Mansur Ahmed	Heritance of British Colonial Press Laws and Regulations: A critical overview	1
Dr. Afroza Begum	Revisiting Domestic Violence as a Gross Violation of Women's Fundamental Rights to Freedom from Torture	9
Dr. Begum Asma Siddiqua	Reviewing the Interpretation of the Inheritance Law with Special Reference to Kalala	25
Dr. M. Abdul Hannan	Right to Reasonable Investigation Process in Criminal Justice in Bangladesh	37
Dr. M. Anisur Rahman	General Election in Bangladesh 2001: An Evaluation	49
Md. Abdul Alim	Land Administration in Ancient Bengal	63
Md. Abdur Rahim Mia	Sexual Exploitation of Children: A Critical Analysis with Reference to Bangladeshi Law	77
Dr. Md. Ahsan Kabir & Md. Hashibul Alam Prodhan	Ombudsman: A means of good governance in Bangladesh	95
Md. Ismail Hossain	Parole: Philosophy and Operation in Bangladesh	109
Md. Khurshid Alam & Mohammad Towhidul Islam	The Legal Regime of Management and Settlement of Khas Land in Bangladesh	119
Dr. Md. Maimul Ahsan Khan	Women's Rights in Islamic Legal System vis-à-vis Conventional System	139
Md. Sahidul Islam	Statutory and Traditional Approach to and Dissolution of Marriage in Hindu Law: A Comparative Study between Bangladesh and India	161
Md. Shahidul Islam	Women in Islam - A Critical Analysis	169
Mostafa Mahmud Naser & Mohammad Sarwar Alam	Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in the Legal System of Bangladesh: Successes and Challenges	181
Dr. Muhammad Faiz-ud-Din & Md. Sahal Uddin	Guardianship in Islam: A legal study	201
মুস্তাক আহমেদ ও মো: সাহাল উদ্দীন	দাপ্তরিক গোপনীয়তা আইন ও তথ্য-অধিকার	211

General Election in Bangladesh 2001: An Evaluation

Dr. M. Anisur Rahman*

0.0 Introduction

The term of the seventh Parliament came to end on July 13, 2001. According to the Constitution of Bangladesh, parliamentary election was to be held under Non-Party Caretaker Government within 90 days.¹ Therefore, the Non-Party Caretaker Government headed by Justice Latifur Rahman, entered upon the office on July 15 - two days after the expiration of five-year terms of the seventh Parliament.² The Chief Adviser of the Non-Party Caretaker Government, Justice Latifur Rahman, appointed his 10-member Council of Advisers the following day of his taking oath on July 15.³ The Chief Election Commissioner M.A. Syed called on the Chief Adviser on July 17, 2001 to discuss the various aspects specially the date of election.⁴ Thereafter the Election Commission be declared the election schedule on August 19, 2001 and accordingly election was held on October 1, 2001.⁵ With a view to judge the evaluation of the eighth parliamentary election, the whole discussion is divided into the following subheading:

- (0) Electoral Rolls
- (0) Declaration of election schedule
- (0) Code of Conduct for the Candidates
- (0) Voting
- (0) Counting
- (0) Declaration of Election Result
- (0) Comments on the election by political leaders, press and election observers.

0.0 Electoral Rolls

The eighth parliamentary election was held on the basis of the electoral rolls which was prepared by voter registration drive conducted nationwide during the month of May and June 2000. This is the 6th electoral Roll since independence of Bangladesh. According to the Election Commission, this was a totally new voter list compiled from fresh data collected by registration officials who went door to door.⁶

The Election Commission declared the following schedule for nationwide voter registration:⁷

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- | | | |
|--|---|---------------------|
| (1) Collection of voter information through door-to-door visit by the enumerators | : | May 15 to 31 2000 |
| (2) Verification of collected information by the supervisors | : | June 1 to 13, 2000 |
| (3) At least 10% work verified by ARO | : | June 14 to 29, 2000 |
| (4) Preparation and publication of draft electoral roll | : | July 18, 2000 |
| (5) Deadline to receive claims for deletion and correction in the draft electoral roll | : | August 3, 2000 |
| (6) Disposal of claims against electoral roll by revising authority | : | August 20, 2000 |
| (7) Publish final electoral roll | : | October 26, 2000. |

In order to complete this gigantic task successfully the Election Commission temporarily appointed 83 Registration Officers, 6107 Assistant Registration Officers, 67898 Supervisors and 267374 Enumerators from the persons employed in government, semi-government and non-government organizations.⁸

Then the Election Commission arranged training programs for all personnel who are directly involved in the voter registration process to perform their duties efficiently. A total of 381,200 personnel were trained under the financial assistance from United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).⁹

The final electoral rolls circulated prior to October 1, 2001 election included 7,50,66,721 registered voters.¹⁰ The highest number of voters 633435 was recorded in Dhaka-5 constituency while the lowest number of voters 119242 was found in Dhaka-1 constituency.¹¹

Controversy over the Roll

The Preliminary electoral roll published by the Election Commission raised different controversies. Various reports in the news media and allegations made by various political parties and people indicate a lack of confidence on the accuracy of the list. While some questioned the disproportionate increase, as stated above, many complained that they were not included in the roll. Mentionable, the Election Commission also received complaints regarding the list from some areas including Bhola, Laxmipur, Jhalokathi, two slums in Dhaka and Dhaka Cantonment.

At the cantonment residence of BNP Leader Khaleda Zia 83 voters were supposed to have registered but the authenticity of the names listed was challenged by the Awami League. It was alleged that at least 21 names were fictitious, while another 28 persons were not resident at that location. On the other hand, BNP raised allegation about falsification in the voter list in Bangabandhu Slum in ward no. 85 of the capital city.

BNP also challenged the 'huge increase' in the number of voters and said the new voter list was faulty.¹²

Shantu Larma, President of Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity, complained against the voter list and demanded its cancellation. Further he warned that he would prevent the election in hill districts unless the list was rectified. The Election Commission rejected the demand and argued that the list was prepared according to the constitutional provisions. However, the Election Commission constituted high-powered investigation committees to probe into allegations of falsification and fraud in the voters' roll. The investigators faced difficulties to find out the 'floating voters' enrolled at slums in city's Uttara area.¹³

1.3 Declaration of Election Schedule

The Chief Election Commissioner announced the election schedule on August 19, 2001 through radio and television. He declared that the eight parliamentary election would be held on October 1, 2001. According to the schedule, the last date for submitting nomination papers to the Returning officer was August 29, 2001. The nomination papers were to be scrutinized on August 30 and 31. The last date for withdrawal of candidature was September 6, 2001.

The EC announced the reschedule of Barguna - 3 on August 31, 2001 due to the death of the AL candidate, Mujibur Rahman Talukder. According to the new schedule for that constituency the dates of submission, scrutiny and withdrawal of nomination papers were September and September 4, 2001 respectively.¹⁴ Finally, a total of 1993 candidates including 1449 from 52 political parties contested the 8th parliamentary election from 299 constituencies.¹⁵

1.4 Code of Conduct and Its Violation

The Election Commission formulated the Code of Conduct under Art 92B of the *Representations of the People Order* 1972 to avoid malpractices and manipulation in the election process and to ensure free and fair election. The Code of Conduct is to be observed by the political parties and contesting candidates. Its main features are as follows:¹⁶

1. From the date of announcement of the election schedule till the day of polling, no candidate or any person on his behalf shall, openly or in secret, give any donations or make promise for giving such subscription or donation to any institution of their concerned constituency nor shall promise to undertake any development project within the concerned constituency.
2. All parties and candidates shall be given equal rights for using government's accommodation like circuit house, rest house etc. However, the public servants

responsible for conducting the election shall get preference in using the government's accommodation opportunities.

3. All political parties and candidates shall be given equal rights with respect to election campaign. Meetings, processions and election campaigns shall not be disrupted.

4. Other activities include ban on use of any thoroughfare creating hindrances to the movement of the public, use of government media, government officers, employees, vehicles, or other state facilities, pasting of posters, leaflets or handbills over those of rival candidates, setting up camps on any road or places meant for use of the public, use of government accommodations as election campaign, use of printed paper imported from outside the country and use of multi-coloured posters, use of number of microphones at a time; damage of land, building movable properties of any citizen, wall writings, use of motor cycle or any other mechanical transport; carrying of fire arms or explosives within the premises of a polling station; illegal interference of government officers or local influential persons in the election process, procession of buses, trucks or any other vehicles or torch processions, any bitter and provocative statement and any such statement that may hurt the sentiments of the followers of any religion, crossing of limits of election expenses, influences of money, arms, muscle power or local influence.

5. Any violation of the above provisions shall be considered as pre poll irregularities.

Violation of Code of Conduct

The report of the Long Term Observers of FEMA revealed that there had been violations of electoral Code of Conduct by the parties and candidates in about 42% of all constituencies. Almost in 21% percent of all constituencies candidates and/or parties distributed money or gifts. As polling day approached, the percentage of violations increased. Some common forms of violation include use of motorised vehicles, blocking of roads for meetings, using microphones beyond stipulated hours and in numbers not allowed by the Code, writing graffiti in walls, distribution of coloured leaflets, handing out money in the form of subscription and donation, distribution of T-shirts, donating TV sets to the local clubs and organizations and use of state facilities.

For examples, in constituency 22, Kawania Upazila of Rangpur 4 JP candidate Alhaji Karim Uddin Bharasha Donated 13 black and white and one coloured TV to the villagers. BNP candidate Harun Ur Rashid Khan Munnu in constituency 173, Manikgonj-2, donated money to different schools, madrasas, mosques and local clubs. AL candidate Abdullah Al Islam Jacob in Bhola-4 of constituency 120 violated the

electoral Code of Conduct by distributing TV to different local clubs in Charfashion. According to the Code of Conduct a candidate can't spend more than 5 lac taka for election expenses. But there is a wide spread public perception that none of the candidates maintain the limitation of election expenses showing the excuse that their election expenses were borne by supporters. Thus, frequent violations of the Code of Conduct by the political parties and/or candidates suggest the existence of loopholes in the laws which allow the miscreants to violate electoral laws and Code of Conduct with impunity.

0.0 Voting

For the purpose of the 8th parliamentary election on October 1, 2001, 29978 polling stations and 149288 polling booths were set up. 68 Returning Officers 525 Assistant Returning Officers, 29478 Presiding Officers, 149288 Assistant Presiding Officer and 298578 Polling Officers were appointed. A total of 55000 Army 10000 BDR and 53000 police personnel were used for the election purpose.

There was eight hours poll from 8 am to 4 pm without any break throughout the country. The participation of the people in the 8th parliamentary election of 2001 was quite enthusiastic. A huge number of people were able to cast their votes which in average was 74.87% in the whole country.

Mass-line Media Centre (MMC) observed the 8th parliamentary election of 2001 at nine coastal districts of the country. According to its report, of the polling stations observed, voting started at scheduled time in 2822 polling stations. Secrecy of polling booths was ensured in 2799 centres, which was 97.86% while it was not ensured in 61 polling stations observed. There was no complaint about the voter lists in 2613 polling stations, which was 91.37%, but there was anomaly regarding the voter list in 247 polling stations. The polling stations were free from false voting in 2588 centres while 272 centres were not free which was 9.52%. Casting of votes continued without any violence or gross irregularities in 2768 polling stations while terrorism or violence happened in 92 polling stations.

However, the election was not truly free and fair because in numerous polling stations, the voting process was prevented by many irregular or illegal activities on the part of political parties and of the election authorities. The main irregular or illegal activities may be classified into three categories:

First, irregularities in voting, such false voting, snatching of ballot papers, errors in the voter list and illegal control of polling stations.

Second, violent activities, such as clash between political parties, unfair treatment of minorities, disgraceful behaviour towards political leaders and illegal removal of polling agents and election observers.

Third, the inactivity or the faults of the election authorities and the police, inactivity of polling agents and the lack of clarity in the election results.²²

False voting took place in Dhaka-5 Narayanganj High School centres, Gazipur 2, Jamalpur-5, Sherpur-2, Madaripur-1, Shariatpur-2 & 3, Chittagong 14, Rajshahi 2, Rangpur – 5, Pirojpur 1 & 4, Jhalakathi 1, Satkhira 2, 3 & 4, Bagerhat 1, 2 & 3 and Chadabil centre at Mehepur.

Ballot papers were snatched from Talaram University College centre at Narayanganj, Jamalpur 2 & 3, Kishorganj 1, Madaripur 1, Shariatpur 1, Noakhali 1 & 5, Atmitra High School centre and Madhuam Kanchana Primary School Centre in Chittagong, Chittagong 13, Cox's Bazar 1 & 2. Prizpur 3, Bhoal 1 and Bagerhat 1 & 4, Errors were found in the voters lists of Naogaon 5 Satkhira 3 and Bagerhat 2.

In addition, the polling centres of Brahmanbaria 4 & 6 were illegally captured by workers of different political parties. All these illegal activities either deprived numerous people of their right to vote or postponed voting at many centres.²³

Clash between political parties occurred in Tolaram University College at Narayanganj, Manikganj Sadar Upazila, Jamalpur 3 & 4, Kishorganj 5, Digharpara centres at Sherpur, Bahertala union under Madaripur, Shariatpur 1 & 3, Brahmanbaria 3, Noakhali 1, Atmitra High School centre in Chittagon, Chittagong 13, Natore 4, Rangpur 5, Barisal 2, Bhola 1 & 2, Khulna 3, Satkhira 1 & 2 Bagerhat 3, Jessore 1, Kalajura Primary School centre at Moulovibazar and Sunamgonj 4 & 5. Minorities were very badly treated by the workers of different political parties and were prevented from casting their votes. In Feni 4, Hindu people were shut up in their homes and in Feni 3 they were ousted from their homes. In Barisal 2 their homes were damaged. Even in Barisal 2, women of the Hindu community were physically humiliated. In Fulbagcha Primary School centre in Chittagong and in Khulna 4 minorities were debarred from voting. Political leaders were badly treated too. In Khulna some AL leaders were humiliated by the members of law enforcing agencies. Furthermore, polling agents were illegally ousted from Alinagar government Primary School centre at Vola and election observers were ousted from Barisal 3. In addition, Liakat Ali Khan, the Noakhali district correspondent of Matribhumi was debarred from taking a photograph of an independent candidate Ekram Chowdhury who was snatching ballot boxes from Noakhali 5. All these illegal activities made a chaotic environment and thus made the election unfair to a large extent.²⁴

There were allegations that in most centres of Chittagong 4 and in five constituencies of southern Chittagong, the law enforcing agencies and the police were inactive in performing their duties. Moreover, in several centres at Gaibandha and in Thakurgaon 1, the number of the police, BDR and magistrate was too insufficient to prevent

violations of election laws. Furthermore, in Muslim para centre at Matiranga in Khagrachari and in Khulna-5, polling officers were found biased towards their favourite political parties and so that were ousted from those centres.

Moreover, lack of clarity was found in the election results of Bandarban district and Prizpur Government Primary School centre at Naogaon 5. All these facts revealed the failure of the election authorities to perform their duties properly.²⁵

As the above illegal activities were very common happenings in most of the districts of Bangladesh, their effects on the election were immense. They were enough to debar the election from reaching a satisfactory level of excellence.

0.0 Counting

The Presiding Officers proceeded with the counting of votes as soon as the last person who was present and waiting for casting his vote in the polling station cast his vote. The Coordinating Council for Human Rights in Bangladesh (CCHRB) fielded election observers in 75 constituencies to assess the election day situation and the fairness of the voting procedure. 97.76% observers said that the ballots were counted in front of the polling agents and election observers. The 2.24% observers had complaints related to counting of ballots. Their complaints were:

- (0) the Presiding Officers did not allow the local observers inside the centre because they said they did not have instruction from their higher authority to allow the observers inside during the counting of ballots;
- (0) in some cases, the security personal did not let the observers go inside during the ballot counting;
- (0) in a centre the agent for 'boat' was not present, and in another centre the agent of 'boat' was forced out of the centre.²⁶

The observers of MMC observed counting quite successfully. The observers and also the polling agent of candidates was able to observe the actual vote counting process of 93.70% of the centres observed. Besides, they were not able to observe the counting in 180 centres of different constituencies because the polling official did not give permission. A number of 220 centres of the observed area, MMC observers found the presence of unauthorized and unwanted persons during the time of vote counting. Result sheets were supplied to the polling agents of candidates at almost all centres except 65 centres of different constituencies.²⁷

0.0 Declaration of Election Result

A centre for collection of preliminary results and distribution of it was set up at the Election Commission Secretariat. Similarly, the Returning Officers also set up centres

for collection of results and distribution of it in their offices and kept it open till the last results were not reached the Election Commission Secretariat.²⁸ For the purpose of declaring the results the Returning Officers and Assistant Returning Officers invited in writing the contending candidates or their polling agents or representatives of the party and other bodies, like press club and President/General Secretary of the Bar or their representatives to the centre of collection of results and distribution of the result.²⁹

21 hotline telephone connections were given to the Election Commission Secretariat for receiving results from 68 Returning Officers of the country in the 8th parliamentary election. 3 officers of the commission were waiting on each hotline. Arrangements were taken to collect the results through both fax and telephone from the Returning Officers.³⁰

Studio was set up on September 30, 2001 in the second floor of the Election Commission Secretariat for publishing the results directly through radio and television. Results of the election were announced simultaneously through *BTV* and *Ekushay TV*. For this purpose Election Commission gave appointment to 6 persons, 3 each from *BTV* and *ETV* as announcers. *Channel I* and *ATN Bangla* also directly transmitted results news with the cooperation from Election Commission.³¹

The electronic media promptly announced the unofficial results of 284 constituencies by October 2, 2001. The results of 15 constituencies were withheld because of the postponement of elections in 90 polling stations. In addition, the election in Cox's Bazar-2 was rescheduled due to death of the BNP candidate of that constituency.³²

The results of 284 constituencies were announced through a gazette notification on October 5. The 4-party (BNP, Jamat-e-Islami, Jatyia Party (Najur) and Islami Oikka Jote) alliance led by BNP had a massive victory in the 8th parliamentary election. It turned out to be an arithmetic riddle brought about by the alliance of 4 parties led by BNP, the largest in the coalition. BNP alone secured 192 seats in the parliament. This is also a sharp contrast with the 1996 elections in which it got 38.66% of the 300 seats by getting 33.61% of the valid votes cast.³³

According to the final results, the alliance of the four parties secured 215 seats in the Parliament by getting 46.52% of the total votes cast. This is an absolute two-thirds majority in the Parliament.³⁴

Of the 52 parties, which participated in the elections 44 got no seat, a usual phenomenon in all the past national elections. 10 political parties of the 11-party alliance: Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), Workers' Party, Gono Forum, Gantantri Party, Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (Mahbub), Communist Kendra,

Sammyabadi Dal, Sramik Krishak Samajbadi Dal, Gano Ajadi League, and National Awami Party (NAP-Mozzafar) - branded as left and liberal democrats, got less than a half of one per cent (0.43%) of the total votes cast and got no seat.³⁵

Table 0.1 Result on Parliament Election 2001³⁶

Party	Total Candidates	Secured Seats	Secured Votes	Percentage
BNP	252	193	22717548	40.86
BAL	300	62	22360194	40.21
Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh	31	17	2385907	4.29
JP (A)	281	14	4037992	7.26
JP (Najjur)	11	4	621515	1.12
JP (M)	140	1	243114	0.44
Islami Oikka Jote	7	2	375980	0.68
Krisak Sramik Janak League	39	1	261469	0.47
Independent	486	6	2264282	4.06

0.0 Comments on the Election by Political Leaders, Press and Election

Observers

While commenting on the 8th parliamentary election, Sheikh Hasina, the President of Bangladesh Awami League, said that 'not subtle, gross rigging has been done, Awami League has rejected the result'. She also said that the outcome of the election has not reflected the expectations of the nation, and therefore, the nation has rejected the outcome of the election. She, strongly criticizing the Care-taker Government and the Election Commission, said that they are adherence to the BNP and Jamat. According to her, the Care-taker Government and the Election Commission are tactfully and favourably working for the BNP and 4-party alliance. Sheikh Hasin again said that some 21 Election Commission officials received results from different districts over telephone and fax sitting in nine booths of the EC secretariat and many of those faxes and phones came from fictitious people. Hasina also alleged a media coup after the midnight of October 1, 2001. She disclosed that in some cases the AL candidates were declared elected first and the after several hours they were declared to have been defeated. 'For example, at one stage AL candidate Akhtaruzzaman (in Gazipur) was unofficially declared elected, but two hours later he was declared closer' to the winning candidate.³⁷

The 11-party alliance said about the election that the outcome of the election is against the terrorism and corruption and the public's verdict reflected on behalf of the reform. In this just ended election public's verdict has reflected.³⁸

The election observing organization BROTI's Chief Executive Sharmin Murshid informed about this election that on the election day there were eighteen thousand observers of this organisation to observe the election in 65 polling stations in 19 districts. On the basis of their observation she said that although there were some irregularities and in some areas the minorities were forced to abstain from voting, the election was widely participated by the public. Especially, including the widespread participation of the woman voters the public voted in a festive environment throughout the country.³⁹

According to the ASA's central and mobile observers' report the 8th parliamentary election was performed in a fair, free and peaceful manner. The most of the people of the country were able to participate in a safe and fare election. In the polling stations the voters' widespread attendance in the democratic process reflected their complete confidence and support. Minorities, male and female voters' widespread attendance worked as a self-protection against the terrorism and deception.⁴⁰

FEMA's Chairman Abul Ahsan Chowdhury said about the 8th parliamentary election that on the day of the election there were seventy observers of FEMA who observed the election. On the basis of their information he said that this election is a milestone of democracy. This is because, compare to the last two elections under the caretaker government this election was the most fair, free and neutral. On the day and the day before of the election there was no occurrence of any remarkable incidents.⁴¹

The Chairman of the Freedom Fighters Welfare Trust, Jahangir Alam, along with some other organizations' observers opined after observing many different polling stations in Gazipur, Tangail, Mymensingh, Munshiganj, Comilla and Dhaka that the 8th parliamentary election was free and fair. They did not see any fraud and forgery or any remarkable disorder in any polling station. The voters' participation was unprecedented.⁴²

The Convenor of the Vote Observation for Transparency and Empowerment (VOTE) Ms. Rokeya Kabir remarked about the 8th parliamentary election that the voters, including women and minority voters, cast their votes without any risk and in a peaceful manner, except a few isolated incidents. She remarked that the election was free, fair and peaceful and appealed to all to accept the result of this election.⁴³

Bangladesh Human Rights Commission has termed this election as the most peaceful, free and fairest in the history. In the polling stations the voters participation was outnumbered and the election was peaceful and remarkable. Nasrin Ahmed, the Director of the Commission, claimed that in this election 70% voters cast their votes and she thanked the President, Chief Advisor, Chief Election Commissioner, law-enforcement agencies along with the concerned election officials.⁴⁴

The observers of the European Union (EU), who stayed for about six weeks and observed the election booths and the vote counting and its result, remarked that the 8th parliamentary election was free, fair and neutral. The Chief Observer of the European Union also added that people cast their votes freely and the counting was also fair. According to the European Union, this election ensured the environment of freedom and impartiality and it would be considered as an important step for the solidarity of democracy.⁴⁵

The election observation committee JANIPOP deployed 3000 mobile observers for the observation of this election all over the country. On the basis of the direct & indirect information received from these observers JANIPOP reported that despite 'the possibility of massive disorder the election was conducted peacefully all over the country with the exception of some isolated incidents of violence'. JANIPOP considered the 8th parliamentary election as an exceptional incident in the history of Bangladesh election, in the overall consideration, although many women and the minority voters were held back from casting their votes.⁴⁶

The United Nations Election Aid Secretariat expressed its satisfaction for conducting the 8th parliamentary election in a peaceful and free manner. This organization further added that the counting and the result of the election were fair and peaceful. The Co-ordinator of the United Nations Election Aid Secretariat Mr. Tony Reys appeals to all the political leaders and workers to accept the result of this election and to join Parliament for making the democratic process successful. He also remarked that although there were some reports of violence and irregularities the maximum turn out of the voters, especially the women voters made this election a success.⁴⁷

The Japanese Election Observatory Team, headed by Mr. Sean Sakura of the Japan-Bangladesh Parliamentarian Association of Election Observer termed the October, 1 parliamentary election as free, fair and peaceful. The Japanese Observatory Team visited 19 polling booths of 10 constituencies at Dhaka, Gazipur, Narayanganj and Narshingdi. Mr. Sean Sakura said that they observed enthusiasm and support among the polling agents from the main political parties at the polling stations. He further remarked that for this free, fair and peaceful election the future of democracy in Bangladesh would be bright. He continued to say that this election was more free and fair than the June 12, 1996 election.⁴⁸

Canadian High Commissioner Mr. David Preston in his remark said that they were happy at the encouragement and faith of the people of Bangladesh on Democracy. He praised the efforts of the Caretaker Government, the security forces, Election Commission and the domestic and foreign observers. The Canadian High Commissioner earnestly believed that the winning and the defeated political parties

would respect the result of the election in the selfsame manner and work together to serve the people who have bestowed their faith on them.⁴⁹

The Executive Director of Bangladesh Labour Research Foundation (BLRF)'s Mr A A M Foyez said that on the election day there were 350 BLRF's election observers who observed the election. On the basis of their information, Mr Foyez remarked that although in some areas there was irregularities and in many areas the minorities had been staying away from the polling station, the 8th parliamentary election was almost free and neutral.⁵⁰

The Director of 'Odhikar', Mr. Alam Raghieb Hasan, termed the 8th Parliamentary election neutral, fair and peaceful. Expressing their experience on their observation of the election he remarked that despite some isolated incidents of violence, obstacles in casting votes, and the incidents of snatching the ballot boxes and ballot papers the voters did not stay away from casting their votes. The voters used their voting rights. The 'Odhikar' appeals to all the political parties to accept the result of this election for the greater interest of democracy and make the parliament the centre point of all actions.⁵¹

0.0 Conclusion

From the foregoing discussion, it can be said that apart from a few isolated incidents, the Election Commission was successful in conducting the 8th parliamentary election in a free, fair and peaceful manner. The isolated incidents were mainly the spelling errors in voters name, misprint of voters' father's or husband's name and at some polling centres fake vote were cast with the help of the Presiding Officers. However to be more free fair and impartial election some recommendations are given below:

- The reform process of the electoral law should continue with emphasis on ensuring transparency of the functioning of political parties particularly in respect of appointment of different key posts, raising and disbursement of funds, and nomination of candidates for elections.
- The Election Commission should review its own working methods to include provision for open sessions, public hearings, and inviting concerned and knowledgeable individuals and representatives of political parties for views and suggestions.
- The Code of Conduct should be reviewed and updated and it should be incorporated in the Representation of the People Order 1972.
- Collection of illegal arms and dealing with armed party cadres and known terrorists are essential to maintain congenial atmosphere during the election period.

- The role and function of the election disputes resolution mechanism including those of the electoral enquiry committees should be reviewed with a view to making them more effective and capable of speedy action.
- Existing limit of election expenditure should be increased to a reasonable level considering the practical cost involve in campaign.
- In view of the importance of the electoral roll and the controversy that has surrounded the matter in most of the recent elections it is necessary to take all measures including arrangements for checks and counter checks in its preparation so as to ensure credibility.

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