

Women and Election: Issues in Bangladesh

Farah Deeba Chowdhury

Women in Bangladesh are in a subordinate position in all spheres of life, but politically speaking they are placed in a marginal state. They only come into the political scene during the elections since they constitute half of the voters.¹ Free and independent exercise of voting right is a first step towards women's entry into the political arena and it depends on their interest, knowledge and perception of political developments. The present study is based on two elections (fifth and seventh national parliamentary elections) in Bangladesh.² These elections generated unprecedented enthusiasm as these elections took place under a Caretaker Government. For the convenience of analysis this article has been organized into four sections:

- 1) Methodology;
- 2) Women and Politics in Bangladesh;
- 3) Women and Election Issues (5th Parliament); and
- 4) Women and Election Issues (7th Parliament).

Methodology

Seventy women voters of Dhaka City were interviewed before the 5th parliamentary election. Interview was conducted through questionnaire and open discussion. For this purpose, Random sampling method was

Ms. Farah Deeba Chowdhury, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Rajshahi, Bangladesh.

1. Sayeda Rowshan Qadir, "Participation of Women at the Local Level Politics: Problems and Prospects" in Najma Chowdhury *et al.* (Ed.), *Women & Politics* (Dhaka: Women for Women, 1994), 1-2.
2. The reason why six Parliamentary election is not included in this paper is that in this election opposition political parties did not take part? Moreover, it was not accepted for low voters turn out and fake voting.

