

DEMOCRACYWATCH Electionwatch

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Involving People Building Democracy

Monitoring Report of the 8th Union Parishad Election-2011

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Date: 25 July 2011

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Democracywatch would like to acknowledge and extend special thanks to all those who participated in and made the observation of the Union Parishad election possible. First, we are profoundly grateful to The Asia Foundation (TAF) who gave us the financial support necessary to carry out the UP Elections observation activities. We are also profoundly grateful to the Election Commission who has given permission to observe these Elections on mobile basis.

It is worth mentioning that the funding of TAF to remain was a great support for us in observing the Union Parishad Election which was held on 31 May-5 July, 2011. Without the generous funding from them, the observation exercise would not have taken place.

Second, we are grateful to our Board Members and Staff, for their continued support and guidance, and for participating in the observation exercise. We also appreciate the role played by Election Working Group Secretariat in planning and implementing the observation exercise. The Secretariat effectively participated in and managed the entire observation exercise.

Third, we acknowledge all our Observers for their dedication and commitment towards the observation exercise. We deeply appreciate our observers for their diligence, commitment, and hard work in monitoring and observing the pre-election environment; and for the identification, recruitment, and mobilization of the observers in their respective Constituencies. Their commitment and hard work of the Observers was instrumental in ensuring an efficient and reliable observation and recording of electoral data on polling day. The data and information collected and compiled by the District Coordinators has significantly supported the compilation of this report.

Finally, we wish to thank the Bangladesh Election Commission for accrediting Democracywatch to observe the UP Elections and for the support and cooperation we received during the exercise. We particularly wish to thank Democracywatch Election Team for their hard work, support and cooperation during the Union Parishad Elections.

Taleya Rehman
Executive Director

Chapter 1

Brief profile of Democracywatch

Background

Democracywatch started as an NGO to promote democracy, human rights, good governance in Bangladesh. Democracywatch envisions a sustainable change through establishing an equitable and democratic society where people live with rights and dignity. The organisation works as a watchdog to improve human rights situation, accountability and transparency of the governance system, promote rule of law and establish democracy. To achieve the national targets on democracy, human rights and good governance Democracywatch's intervention is necessary, and will encompass a variety of areas and different levels. Building in-depth understanding and long-standing support in key sectors (for example free and fair elections); improving the capacity and situation of sector-based governance; building capacity of local government in such issues (including measures aimed at combating corruption); improving access to justice and building governance management capacity in cooperation with other relevant stakeholders/agencies; these have been identified as productive and sustainable ways to achieve the national and organizational goals.

Vision

A sustainable democracy promoting social equality

Mission

Strengthening political institutions and the electoral process; building a nationwide network of civil society organisations including NGO/CBO/Media/Trade Unions/ professional groups; sensitising stakeholders about gender, discrimination and exclusion; promoting rule of law through establishing good governance to improve social justice.

Objectives

- Establish democratic culture and practices to protect human rights through training and advocacy.
- Set up strong national and local government at all levels that is pro-people, accountable, responsive and transparent.
- Develop youth and women leadership quality to become change agents
- Eradicate poverty by creating enabling environment for opportunities, quality livelihood and leadership.
- Ascertain free and fair electoral process through which people elect appropriate representatives for enacting right policies for development.
- Establish a society that respects human rights of all, especially such as children and minorities

INTRODUCTION

Union Parishad Election 2011 was 8th and the largest local government election in countries history. The election started on 31 May – 5 July 2011 consecutively in 3813 unions out of 4500 unions. The first phases of UP Elections (553) were held on 29 March-3 April, 2011.

A number of 5, 99, 30929 (Five crore ninety nine lakh thirty thousand and nine hundred twenty nine) voters have franchised their voting rights in second phases elections which are significant in contributing participatory and meaningful elections at grassroots level.

Democracywatch has been observing all national and local elections, by-elections and re-elections from its inception in 1995. In this connection Democracywatch observed UP elections 2011 in Bangladesh. We apprehend that the scope for abuse in the electoral process is high and manipulation may hinder the fairness of holding a free and neutral election under a political government. While the issues of the local government and the debates on it are the common discussion of public, eventually Union Parishad Election becomes crucial. These make Democracywatch concern about monitoring the upcoming UP election. A number of 1070 observers were deployed in 214 unions in 7 districts under Democracywatch network.

Democracywatch selected a random sample of 40% of the total Unions in 7 districts. Democracywatch Observers covered approximately 5 polling stations in each selected Union, carrying out day long observation of the polling process and vote counting procedures in the sample Unions observed. Finally Democracywatch observers also conducted pre and post election surveys in a selected number of unions. Consolidated data from pre and post election observation and election-day monitoring presents a comprehensive overview of the administration of UP elections in Bangladesh.

Objective of Democracywatch Election Monitoring Program

The Specific objective of Democracywatch election monitoring was to ensure the fairness of the electoral process including electoral laws and regulation, voter campaigning, voting process and vote counting. The goal of Democracywatch was to build public confidence in the integrity of the electoral process and to legitimize the result of a competitive election.

The organization monitored the UP election 2011 to achieve the following objectives:

- To encourage large-scale participation of voters in the election by building confidence on the electoral process.
- To detect election fraud, manipulation and irregularities.
- Deter irregularities, intimidation and undue influence in election.
- Ensure peoples' all-out participation, especially women and new voters in the electoral process.
- Ensure free, fair, meaningful and participatory election.

Chapter two

Organizational Structure for Election Monitoring

Democracywatch is a non-partisan and credible organization at all levels. The election observation network involved a young and efficient monitoring group supported by the national secretariat

located in Dhaka. The network involves 23 partner organizations and Democracywatch representatives for election monitoring. The organization recruited 7 district coordinators and 1070 observer's and 214 Team leaders were work in Election Day process.

Democracywatch Election Observation Plan

Democracywatch election observation program included, amongst other things, recruitment, training and mobilizing 1070 Mobile observers in 1070 polling stations for the Election Day. Similarly 23 other partner organizations had been directly involved as associates of Democracywatch for election monitoring. The Partner organizations are

SL	Name	Position	Name of Organization	Working Area	Mobile Number
1	Shahadat Islam Chowdhury	Executive Director	PRADIP	Mymensingh	01711159906
2	Khondaker Fareque Ahamed	Executive Director	TUS	Mymensingh	01712990173
3	Mahbub Feroj	Executive Director	Shield	Mymensingh	01718058225
4	Mohammad Ali Kasru	Executive Director	JNDP	Mymensingh	01716-185239
5	Atiar Rahman	Executive Director	DEEP	Mymensingh	01718-711747
6	AK M Bulbul Islam	Executive Director	LISA	Mymensingh	01716-856876
7	Alamgir Talukder	Executive Director	VORSA	Brahmanbaria	01711978989
8	Zakir Hossain	Executive Director	PSDS	Brahmanbaria	01710669904
9	Azizul Haque	Executive Director	SDS	Brahmanbaria	01718063631
10	Alamgir Talukder	Executive Director	VORSA	Comilla	01711978989
11	Zakir Hossain	Executive Director	PSDS	Comilla	01710669904
12	Ali Akbar Masum	Executive Director	Adhiker	Comilla	01712228784
13	Faruque Ahmed	Executive Director	SARD	Comilla	01916141617
14	Fazle Rabbi	Executive Director	Rabbi Foundation	Comilla	01611404040
15	Md. Sarwar Hossain	Executive Director	Mosjid Council	Comilla	01199-708148
16	Ebadur Rahman Badal	Executive Director	RAC- BD	Kishoregonj	01713013244
17	Motiur Rahman Sagor	Executive Director	SAD-BD	Kishoreganj	01714090232
18	Sanjida Khatun	Executive Director	Bandhon	Kishoreganj	01712143916
19	Poritush Deb Neru	Executive Director	Sristi	Moullovibazar	01712796020
20	Samsuzzaman Ahmed	Executive Director	SEDA	Moullovibazar	01552419367
21	Feroj Khan	Executive Director	YEES	Gazipur	01676349443
22	Kabir Hossain	Executive Director	STAP	Gazipur	01716528439
23	K Z Naim	Executive Director	SUS	Gazipur	01711-645550

Relations with EWG

With the objective of monitoring the UP elections 2011, 31 organizations formed an association entitled Election Working Group (EWG) . The Executive Director of Democracywatch Taleya Rehman was selected as Co-Chairman by the other organizations. From EWG a working committee also has been formed. With the guidance of the leaders the working committee chalked out and designed the observation methodology, observation forms and observation manual. Democracywatch, a partner of this coalition co-operated with them satisfactorily including organizing press conferences and sometimes coordinating the media.



Democracywatch Activities on Election Monitoring

Voter Guide line Distributions

The Democracywatch activities plan included a public awareness strategy that had been implemented throughout the project period. This included voters meet, motivational meetings to highlight the non-partisan role of election observer discouraging electoral fraud and promoting a friendly environment in all the polling stations. The organization produced and distributed one voter guide line in 214 Union Parishad in 7 districts. A total number of 1,07,000 voter's guideline was distributed among the voters in 7 districts.

Training on Election Monitoring

Democracywatch took comprehensive election monitoring training program all over the country. The organization conducted 36 Training Sessions conducting in 7 districts. In this training a number of 1070 observer, 214 team leaders and local Partners are participated. Training Sessions were conducted by Taleya Rehman, Executive Director, Mostafa Sohel, Director of Democracywatch, Feroze Nurun-Nabi Jugal, Coordinator of Democracywatch, Tawfik Alahi, Mohiuddin Moin, Program Officer of Democracywatch and District Coordinators deployed by Democracywatch.



In this training session some important things were included which are as follows:

- An introduction, which briefly describes the formation of the organization and its principal goals.
- A concise historical perspective, which explains the significance of the election.

- An overview on the evolution of nonpartisan election monitoring efforts.
- A description of the responsibilities of various election officials.
- A code of conduct for observers and Sharing Observers Guide line.
- A description of the activities undertaken by observers before and during the Election Day and the details involved in election manuals.
- Election data and information collection system of Democracywatch.

Observer Training Schedule of Union Parishad Election- 2011

District	Date	Upazilla	Name of Partners	Venue
Dhaka	25 May 2011	Dhaka + Laksham	DW, MC	Dhaka-DW
Gazipur	26 May 2011		YES, STAP	Dhaka-DW
	26 May 2011	Gazipur	SUS	Dhaka-DW
Mymensing	27 May 2011	Fulpur	Shield	Tarakanda High School, Mymensing
	27 May 2011	Gouripur + Ishwarganj	TUS	TUS Meeting Room, Mymensing
	28 May 2011	Nandail + Fulbaria	TUS, DEEP	TUS Meeting Room, DEPP Meeting Room, Mymensing
	28 May 2011	Sadar + Muktagacha	TUS, JNDP	TUS Meeting Room, JNDP Training Center.Mymensing
	23 June 2011	Haluaghat + Dhopaura	TUS	ASUS Meeting Room., Mymensing
	23 June 2011	Trishal + Gafarganj + Bhaluka	PRADIP, LISA	Mintoo College, Samala-Taher High School.(Seed Store)
Kishoreganj	29 May 2011	Sadar + Bajitpur+ Nikli	RAC-BD	Kishoregonj Mohila Collage, RAC-Bangladesh, Bajitpur
	30 May 2011	Bhairab + Kuliarchar	RAC-BD, SAD-BD	SAD-BD Office, Bhairab.
	2 June 2011	Ashtagram + Itna	SAD-BD	SAD-BD office, Austagram Sadar.Kishoreganj
	4 June 2011	Mithamohon + Karimganj	Bandhan, RAC-BD	Upzila Holl Room, ORA Office, Kishoreganj
	30 June 2011	Pakundia + Hossainpur + Tarail	RAC-BD	Pakundia High School
Comilla	30 May 2011	Debidwar	PSDS	Akhaura, Janata Bank Building.
	30 June 2011	Daudkandi	SARD	Palli Renessa, Daudkandi, Comilla.
	3 June 2011	Sadar Dokkhin + Sadar Kotwali	RF,AF	Town Hall Meeting Room, Comilla
	3 June 2011	Barura+ Burichang	AF, SARD	Town Hall Meeting Room, Comilla
	17 June 2011	Nangalkot	SARD	Manob Kollan Shongstha, Nangolkot, Comilla.
Comilla	10 June 2011	Brahmanpara+ Monoharganj+ Chauddogram	SARD, AF	SARD Office, Housing Estate, Monohorganj College.
	18 June 2011	Homna+ Titash	VORSA	Homna Sadar UP Office
	25 June 2011	Muradnagar + Chandina	AF	Nurunnahar Girls School, Muradnagar, Comilla
Moulavibazar	1 June 2011	Baralekha+ Juri	SEDA	Delta Life Insurance Office, Baralekha, Moulavibazar
	8 June 2011	Kulaura+Kamalganj+Sadar	SEDA, SRISTI	Bhanugach Bazaar Kollan Somiti Office, Kamalganj
	8 June 2011	Sreemangal+ Rajnagar	SRISTI	SEDA office, Moulvibazar
Brahmanbaria	3 June 2011	Nabinagar+B-Baria Sadar	VORSA, SDS, PSDS	Sadar Upzilla Hall , B.Baria
	30 May 2011	Bancharampur	VORSA,	Bancharampur high School,B.Baria
	6 June 2011	Kashba+ Akhaura	VORSA,PSDS	Soltanpur U. P Hall, B.Baria
	7 June 2011	Nasirnagar+Sarail+ Ashuganj	VORSA, SDS	ShahBazpur Union , B.Baria

Oath for Neutrality

Democracywatch has conducted training on UP observation, but at the same time the observer's took oath for ensure their neutrality and determination to complete this job successfully.

Monitoring Process:

Area of Observation

Democracywatch observed UP elections in 7 districts on mobile basis. A number of 4 Unions of Dhaka District. Kaliakor, Kapasia, Sreepur, Sadar and Kaligonj Upazila (15 Unions) of Gazipur District. Sadar, Trishal, Bhaluka , Fulpur, Haluaghat, Dhopaura, Muktagacha, Isshorgonj, Nandail, Gaforgao Upazila (48 Unions) of Maymensing District. Sadar, Hossinpur, Karimgonj, Pakundia, Astogram, Itna, Bajitpur, Nikli, Kuliarchar and Bhairab Upazila (39 Unions) of Kishorgonj District. Comilla Dhakkin, Homna, Titas, Muradnagar, Debiddar, Brahmanpara, Burichang, Kotowali, Daudkandi, Nangolkot, Laksham, Monohargonj, Chouddagram, Chandina and Borura Upazila (65 Unions) of Comilla District. Nasirnagar, Sadar, Asugonj, Sorail, Kashba, Nabinagar and Bancharampur Upazila (20 Unions) of Brahmanbaria District. Baralekha, Juri, Kulaura, Sadar, Ranigonj and Sreemongal Upazila (23 Unions) of Moulovibazar District.

Observation Methodology

This report based on the observation of Democracywatch Mobile observers (1070) supported by partner organizations, 7 district coordinators, and many staff of National office. In addition Executive Director, Director, Coordinator, Programme Officer, Assistant Program officers, Internees and Volunteers of Democracywatch were deployed to supervise and coordinate the whole process. The District Coordinators supervised all the mobile observers at each center. In every places, staff of Democracywatch head offices were deployed for check back to confirm the presence of our observers in different unions.



All the observers went to their designated centers with EWG observation forms. The mobile observers were on duty from 8 am till 4 pm. During this time the team leaders of each group performed the following duties

- Filled up the quick impression survey form and sent to EWG secretariat by 12 pm on Election Day. Democracywatch produced 207 quick impression survey reports during the polling day
- Monitored at least 5 pooling centers and filled up the check list and sent to District Coordinators by 4 pm. Democracywatch observers filled up the 1035 checklists with special care.
- Democracywatch observers observed counting process in 200 unions to oversee the accountability and transparency in counting system.

An overall election monitoring report was received from the field, and also by fax, mobile, and telephone. Some incidents were reported from the mobile observers directly and most of the

reports came as a completed checklist comprising 21 questions. The staff of Democracywatch collated the data, checked with the observers and then made data entry for writing the report.

Mobile Observation Form

The Democracywatch observers used checklist, which called mobile observation form. This form comprising of 21 questionnaires that duly filled up by the observers. The observers oversee the basic information of union, Security arrangements, election materials, election environment, electoral process, election code of conduct and counting process.

Democracywatch used form for pre-election survey, post election survey, mobile observation checklist and compilation form to observe this elections on mobile basis.

Data entry and analysis

The Democracywatch observers filled up the mobile forms and send it to the team leaders. Team leaders used another forms (C1) and consolidated it properly. Then they send it to District Coordinator. District Coordinator sends this form to the Secretariat of Election Working Group. The staff of the national office put entry in computer in every incident. After this process a group of workers report the incidents and facts of the UP elections.

Accreditation of Democracywatch observers

Permitted by the Election Commission, Democracywatch received accreditation cards for mobile observers in each polling station of the country. Democracywatch observers received 1070 cards across the country. They observed the opening of the poll and the complete voting process. Some of them observed counting process.

Chapter Three

Pre-election phases

Although the project was only for the Election Day observation, our local network NGOs did pre-election observation in some areas, which was a part of the comprehensive election-monitoring plan for these Union Parishad Elections 2011. Democracywatch started observation 7 days before the election. Following are the major focus issues of Democracywatch monitoring during the pre-election phase:

1. Violation of electoral code of conduct
2. Election related violence

1. Violation of electoral code of conduct

Observers reported that most candidates in almost all unions violated the rules and regulations imposed by the Election Commission. The incidents of violations included improper use of motor vehicles, blocking of roads for meeting, positioning of elaborate gates, holding big marches and

using many microphones at a time. Some Chairman candidates spent huge amounts of money on their campaigns.

2. Election related violence

The organization also tracked the election related violence from the print media. A group of skilled personnel scanned the news on a daily basis and made their reports. A total of 27 people were killed and 3136 injured in Union Parishad Election related violence noted from May 6 to June 20. The report based on the organization own monitoring network and reports in five leading national newspapers also said that a total of 436 people were arrested, 15 were bullet hit and 2754 cases were loaded in this connection during the time.

The 27 person were killed in Gopalganj, Sirajganj, Joyhpurhat, Noakhali, Kurigram, Cox's Bazar, Gaibandha, Chandpur, Bramanbaria, Narshingdi, Tangail, Shariatpur, Madaripur, Bagerhat, Pabna, Narail, Comilla, Rangpur, Jhinadah, Bogara, Faridpur, and Rajbari district said the report.

The report mentioned defeated candidates intolerant mentality, altercation between supporters of the rival candidates, bid the capture vote centers, previous political conflicts, stopping the election at the eleven hour, uncontrolled attitude of the winning candidates, supporters and establishing supremacy in the areas as the reasons behind the violence.

The report mentioned that violence took place between supporters of two rival candidates and between the supporters of winning and defeated candidates, for attack to snatch ballot box, police men's baton charging and opening fire to stop violence, violence centering election campaign and attacks on winning candidates family members.

Election Day observation

Voter Turnout



Democracywatch observers reported that there were large numbers of voters present in front of all polling centers. Many female voters were seen with their children, implying a safe environment. Minority voters belonging to religious minorities were seen in all polling stations such as Gazipur, Kishorganj, Comilla, Bramanbaria, Dhaka, Mymensing and other places, exercising their franchise without fear or intimidation.

Observers were the witnesses of a record turnout of over 70% of voters. Long queues were seen in most polling stations ally over the country even before the polling began at 8 am. The voters maintained discipline despite having a long wait.

Election environment



Almost all the centers we observed had a festive environment the voters were enthusiastic wherever we went. Many voters came a long distance to vote. Outside the polling stations the environments in most places were extremely peaceful. There were not seen any tension despite the presence of large number of voters, particularly female voters with their children. But a very few incidents marred the polling process for a while in a few centers.

Security Environment at the Polling Station

SL No	Questions	Yes (%)	No (%)
	Are there individuals inside or near the polling center trying to influence the way people vote?	99.00	1.00
	Is anyone near the center recording the names of voters?	100.00	-
	Were unauthorized people inside the polling place?	99.42	0.58
	Have there been any incidents of violence or threats at polling centers?	100.00	-
	Was there any incident that caused the polling process stopped at any polling center?	98.26	1.74
	Were ethnic and religious minorities able to vote freely?	94.88	5.12
	Were law enforcement officials neutral and unbiased in the performance of their duties?	99.17	0.83
	Total	98.01	1.99

This analysis based on Democracywatch reports of checklists.

Polling process

Democracywatch observers have seen the polling process in 1070 centers. They observed elections in 214 unions under 57 Upazilla's of 7 districts. The observers saw most things directly related to the polling process. The observers have checked the official seal by the election authority, secrecy of the polling booth, neutrality of election officials and many other things related to elections. Here is a chart for detail:

Security Environment between the Polling Station

SL No	Questions	Yes (%)	No (%)
	Have there been any attempts to intimidate or deny voters access to the polling centers?	88.00	12.00
	Have you witnessed or heard reports of any forced confiscation of voter ID cards outside polling centers?	1.00	99.00
	Have you witnessed or heard reports of any election day campaigning?	1.00	99.00
	Have you witnessed or heard reports of any vote-buying or gift-giving activities outside the polling center?	-	100.00
	Have you seen law enforcing agencies performance neutral?	100	00.00

4. Role of the election officials

A positive aspect reported by the mobile observers that most of the election officials performed their job properly. Democracywatch believes that they have done a great job for building public confidence in the electoral process. According to Democracywatch observers most of the polling station opened in time. In most polling stations all over the Country the presiding officers and polling officials were present and approached their tasks diligently although a lack of training was sometimes apparent while discharging their duties. In dealing with Democracywatch observers they were so cooperative and willing to help. In a few instances the Presiding Officers did not allow our observers to oversee the voting and counting process. It is also mentioned that a number of 36993 presiding officers, and 184965 assistant returning officers carried out their responsibilities properly.

Chapter Four

Democracywatch observers noticed the following irregularities:

In Maticapur Registered Primary School at Rahimganj union under Fulpur Upazila of Mymensing clashes took place between the supporters of rival candidates at 11:30. At least 7 people were injured at that time. The polling process was interrupted due to this incident at that time. In Vitibari Alim Senior Madrasha at Durla Union under Muktagacha Upazilla of Mymensing (21 June, 2011) a group of people were arrested due to create tension surrounding the voting center. While police was beating them the supporters of accused person tried to chasing them. The polling process was heavily intercepted at that time.

There was only one door for 2 booths in Dhamsena at Savar. Some of the centers were not well decorated and not looked like a voting center. Lack of adequate light was seen in satiarchar primary school at Keraniganj, Sweden Bangladesh Creative Learning Center at Savar, Korihata Primary School at Korihata union in Kapasia, Kaloni Senior Madrasha, Vaoal School at Baria UP of Gazipur. The observer didn't find any electricity line at Khotia Government Primary School. Voters faced difficulties to cast their vote peacefully.

Undue influence was seen in front of Motiur Rahman Ideal School at Savar where a group of people distributed the fruit (Pine apple) among the voters. In some places like Savar, Keranigonj-candidate allocated some rickshaw to pick up voters.



Polling Materials

The polling materials such as ballot paper, ballot box, stamp, and other materials related to elections were adequate. Most of the presiding officers expressed their satisfaction in this regard. But a few made complaints about it. In some places like Mymensing, Comilla, Keraniganj presiding officers complained about the low quality of indelible ink. Voters faced some difficulties due to this.

Polling Agents



Democracywatch observers reported the presence of a considerable number of polling agents appointed by the candidates. Some party agents appeared to be untrained and had no knowledge of what they were supposed to do. These agents often lacked reporting forms and did not understand the complaints procedure but some were certainly brilliant.

Election Camps

The election camps were seen in most of the polling stations. The camps were helpful to the election officials and voters to run the activities smoothly.

Security arrangements

The security arrangements in polling stations were generally adequate and created confidence among the voters. In every places the police, Ansar, Women Ansar, VDP and some BGB (Border Guard of Bangladesh) performed their duties honestly and dedicatedly. According to our observers the law enforcement agencies were more or less neutral.

Overall Observation

Although the election was generally peaceful, free and fair, there were few irregularities in some places, which may not be considered to affect the whole process.

Level of Fairness in Union Parishad Election

This is very significant that this election was held peacefully. The law agencies authority made very important role in this regard. In addition voter list were free from objection in most of the cases. In this election it is also very interesting that our observers were not seen any vehicles which used for taking observers except a very few. Even most of the voters cast their vote without facing any hurdle. It is also interesting that local observers made very useful role in these elections. General people trust them and due to their presence they cast vote without any fear. It is mentionable that secrecy of polling booth existed in all polling booths except a few.

Election officials, polling agents also made very useful role in this election. Even counting process was free from any untoward situation though some of our observers were not allowed to oversee the counting process. Some of our observers were present in the out side of polling station on the eve of counting. Generally our observers were not faced heavy hurdle or much obstruction from anywhere except a few. In overall analysis indicate that the election was held peacefully.



Level of Efficiency in Union Parishad Election

The level of efficiency was seen very high in this election. A significant number of law agency forces were present in this regard. Election officials were present in time. All kind of election materials such as ballot boxes, ballot paper, seal, indelible ink were seen in every polling stations except a few. Polling started in every polling station in time. Disable voter's and aged voters cast their vote peacefully. Disable observers didn't face any kind of obstruction. In some cases Democracywatch observers helped them for collecting data and information in the polling centers. Voters who were present in the boundary they cast their vote peacefully.



Chapter five

Trouble faced:

- Democracywatch deployed a number of women observers to observe the elections. As they came from a different union, they had to leave the polling station early in order to return home. Due to this consequence the women observers could not observe the counting process.
- In order to ensure comprehensive monitoring Democracywatch selected some hard to reach unions where the risk of manipulations are high. It is difficult and expensive to travel there from one to another union. Due to resource constraint we could not provide our observers adequate support to observe those places.

- Usually all the public transports remain closed on the Election Day. As the observers have to monitor a different union apart from his/her residence, they always have to travel on the day. Sometimes the observers experienced problems to return home.
- The Presiding officers, Assistant returning officers and members of law enforcing agencies receives poor honorarium to conduct the elections, which is not encouraging and indirectly affects the election process.

Chapter Six

Recommendations

Democracywatch observed all the elections since 1996. When observing the 8th Union Parishad elections our observers made some recommendations for Election Commission to improve the existing electoral process to ensure free and fair election in the country. The recommendations are as follows:

- Democracywatch thinks that a strong interaction between local administration and Election Commission should be established.
- The polling officials should get adequate training to run their activities smoothly.
- Democracywatch strongly suggest that the number of polling booths for women should be increased.
- Lack of voter education was seen in almost all polling stations. NGO's and other concerned authorities should take appropriate measures in this regard.
- The election expenses by the candidates should strictly monitor by the Election Commission.
- The observer should get inclusive training on Election Monitoring. They should be given training on observation process and report writing.
- A number of 1070 observers observed the last UP polls, of which many didn't cast their vote. The EC should arrange opportunity for observer voting.
- The Election Officials, members of the law enforcing agencies related to electoral process could not cast their votes. Election Commission should also take this matter into consideration.
- The polling agents, who have important role in the polling process, should get proper training to carry out their duties smoothly.
- The polling stations should be established in a convenient location for the voters.
- The infrastructure of polling stations should be improved.
- The voter list should be reviewed and counter checked for the betterment of next elections.

UP Election2011: Some Facts and Figure

Some Key Information on UP Election: At a Glance

- Number of unions: 38,13
- Number of polling stations: 36993
- Number of Poling booths:1,78,497
- Total number of Voters: 5,9930929
- Total number of Male Voters: 2,95, 07383
- Total number of Female voters: 3, 04, 23,546
- Number of Presiding Officers: 36993
- Number of Assistant Presiding Officers: 184,965
- Number of Divisions: 6
- Number of Districts: 57
- Number of Upazila : 414
- Number of Domestic observers: 7460 (Approx)
- Number International Observers: 109 (Approx)