

## **Report on**

# **Democracywatch Voter Awareness Program in Bangladesh**

(June 2007 to June 2008)



15 Eskaton Garden Road  
Ramna, Dhaka – 1000.

Tel: 880 2 9344 225-6, Fax: 880 2 9330405

E-mail: [info@dwatch-bd.org](mailto:info@dwatch-bd.org), Web: [www.dwatch-bd.org](http://www.dwatch-bd.org)

## **Introduction**

Democracywatch conducted civic voter education to make people more aware and responsive to promote free and fair election on the eve of Parliamentary Election-2008. The organization conducted this campaign through Election Working Group (EWG) - non- partisan, 32 member coalitions of civil society organizations that share a common commitment to promote free and fair elections and establish good governance in Bangladesh

## **Mission**

The mission of the Election Working Group is to contribute to peaceful, free and fair elections in Bangladesh and to help foster a genuine culture of democracy and the highest standards of integrity and accountability of governance.

## **Voter and Civic Education campaign:**

Voter and civic education focused on 2008 national election: This campaign includes election violence prevention; democratic representation and accountability; first-time voters (youth vote); women's participation in elections and political affairs; ethnic and religious minorities; and disabled persons.

Voter and civic education methodologies, and general guidelines have been designed and developed by Democracywatch and will be distributed throughout its network.

## **The main elements of the voter and civic education activities are:**

- A national poster and leaflet campaign
- National TV talk shows to make a credible and meaningful election
- Raising awareness and promoting dialogue on certain key issues, including the voter roll and election violence.
- National and local voter's guides that will compare the platforms of each political party, and potentially local guides comparing the platforms of individual candidates.
- General discussion to make voters more sensitive and responsible to choose eligible candidate
- Disseminate information on general voting process

## **Stakeholders:**

- Voter (Male and Female)
- Bangladesh Election Commission
- District Election Offices

- Government Officials including Law Enforcing Agencies
- International and National Election monitoring Organization

### **Working Area**

51 Constituencies in 24 districts ((Jhenidha, Pabna, Tangail, Jamalpur, Brahmanbaria, Moulavibazar, Chittagong, Barisal, Comilla, Dhaka, Narayangonj, Sylhet, Hobigonj, Dinajpur, Manikgonj, Gazipur, Nilphamari, Noakhali, Kishoregonj, Mymensing, Rangpur, Thakurgaon, Chapainawabgonj and Khulna) of Bangladesh

### **Major Activities:**

- Partner NGO's Training and Orientation on Voter Education
- Distributed 1 lakh Voter Guide and leaflet (Rights and responsibilities of voters, Criteria to be a voter, Importance of National ID card etc) among general voters in 51 constituencies of 24 Districts in Bangladesh
- Conducted a series of Voter Education Campaign(i.e. cultural event, rally etc) in 51 Constituencies in Bangladesh
- Conducted Special Meeting on Voter Registration
- Miking on Voter Registration
- Mobile Cultural Program on Voter Registration
- Exhibit Banner at different points on Voter Registration

## **AWARENESS PROGRAMMES ON VOTER REGISTRATION**

### **Meeting with Government Officials**

During June 2007 to June 2008, Democracywatch organized 65 meeting with Local Upazila Administration on 'The role of civil society to promote free and fair elections'. Other NGO's and civil society members were also present at the meeting.

The objective of the meeting is to enhance coordination among the stakeholders to promote accurate voter ID card at all levels.

### **Organize Rally with Upazilla Administration**

A number of 1200 rallies at local level have been organized by Democracywatch to make people more aware and responsive on voter registration process. . A large number of people attended in these rallies.

### **Miking**

Democracywatch conducted miking in 444 unions and municipalities to let people know the specific date of voter registration. In each and every union, we have conducted 20 days campaign which created immense impact in the specific areas.

### **Special Meeting on Voter Registration**

Democracywatch organized a number of 600 special meetings with general people to make them more aware and conscious regarding the voter registration process. The meeting was focused on all segments of people with special emphasis on women, ethnic and religious minority, slum dwellers, first time voters, disable people, hard to reach people and other disadvantage and vulnerable group. In every meeting a large number of people were present.

### **Mobile Cultural Program**

Democracywatch organized a number of 10 Cultural programs in Mymensing and Savar. This group organized song, drama and folk songs on election to create sensation among the voters.

### **Exhibit Banner at different points**

Democracywatch exhibited 1400 banners at different points to make people more aware and responsive on the election issue. The banner instructed general voters to participate in voter registration process with full enthusiasm.

### **Achievements**

- Democracywatch reached 65 lakh voters (50% voters in working areas) to make them more aware and responsible on voter registration process
- About 1 lakh leaflet distributed among the general voters
- District Coordinators, Upazila Coordinators and Union Coordinators were involved in voter education campaign program of Democracywatch