

To enhance quality of spending

Thrust on power decentralisation, equal resource allocation in dists



Noted economist and former adviser to caretaker government Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman (third from right) is seen with others at the launching ceremony of the report on State of Governance in Bangladesh in the city Thursday.— FE Photo

FE Report

Speakers at a research report launching ceremony Thursday stressed the importance of power decentralisation and equal resource allocation across districts to enhance quality of spending.

They said concentration of power, which led to imbalance in ministerial allocation across certain districts, has a strong association with resource distribution decisions.

Institute of Governance Studies (IGS) of Brac University prepared the report titled 'The State of Governance in Bangladesh 2012' to take a district-wise comparative approach to evaluating government performance.

According to report findings there is significant variation in the average attendance and budget speech participation across 64 districts. More precisely, there is a negative connection between a district with opposition lawmakers and that with average parliamentary attendance and budget speech participation.

Talking about the report, IGS Executive Director Dr Sultan Hafeez Khan said in the 9th parliament,

districts with all ruling party legislators had attendance as high as 90 per cent (Munshiganj) and as low as 42 per cent (Tangail).

"In fact, there are 39 districts that have never been represented by a female parliamentarian since 1971. The highest number (19) of female lawmakers was elected in the 9th general elections," he said citing the report.

According to the report, Dhaka is the best performing division with Barisal being the worst one in the health sector while Dhaka is the best performing division and Sylhet is the worst in terms of school governance index.

The report also observed the fact that some districts are located in the remote areas making governance difficult.

Talking about political governance, former adviser to caretaker government Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman said voters are vanishing from the process as 154 candidates have already been elected as parliamentarians without elections.

"Devoted attitudes of the politicians create the problem. Proactive citizens are required to come forward in such a critical time to protect democracy that we achieved after a long struggle in 1990," he said.

President of Bangladesh Political Science Association Prof Ataur Rahman said the country lacks appropriate representation in the parliament.

"We'll be very disappointed if we look at the profiles of the parliamentarians," he said.

He said most legislators don't make laws in Bangladesh as the Prime Minister sends the draft laws to the ministry of laws and then these are sent to the cabinet before getting final approval from the House.

"Can they (members of the parliament) change anything from the budgetary speech or take anything from the opposition? This is how the lawmakers work," he said.

Former health secretary Zafar Ullah Khan termed doctors' reluctance to staying outside the major cities is one of the main reasons behind the poor performance.

He said the country has now some 60,000 physicians against the demand of 160,000. Poor ratio of hospital beds and the number of nurses and insufficient number of technologists to run various medical machineries are also seriously affecting the services.