

ABSTRACT

A voter's list is the compilation of persons eligible to vote for a particular electoral area to conduct elections for elective bodies. An accurate and consistent voter's list is one of the key elements for conducting free, fair and impartial election. Voter registration is important in exercising voting rights in producing genuine democratic elections. It can act as a mechanism to ensure the equality to exercise the right to vote. Properly compiled voter's lists can discourage attempts at double voting and also makes attempts of false voting difficult. In this paper, issues related to voters registration process and existing rules regarding preparation of voter's list in Bangladesh are discussed. In Bangladesh, the accuracy of voter's list has become a major bone of contention. The ongoing controversy regarding preparation of voter's list is also touched in this paper. This paper tries to ascertain whether the registered voters exceed the voting age population only in Bangladesh or similar problem exists in other countries. The voter's lists of four selected villages are compared with the demographic data to examine the accuracy of the voter's list. This paper also tries to find out anomalies of the voter's list and possible solutions. This study also suggests measures for preparing a better voter list.

The major finding of this study is that over-enumeration of the voters is not a problem unique to Bangladesh. Similar problems exist in almost seventy one countries. The inaccuracy of voter list is not confined to developing countries. Inaccuracy of voter list is also a problem in industrial countries like Spain, Portugal and Ireland. It was also found that over-enumeration of the voters exists both in large and small countries. On the other hand, under enumeration is found to be a problem in many Muslim countries.

An analysis of the voter list at village level suggests in some cases minority voters have been excluded. There are also serious problems in recording age and names of the voters.

This study suggests that the consistency of a voter list should be checked with other available data like the census data. Further research by the social scientists in this area will be useful for making the voter list more accurate.