

Electoral Violence in Bangladesh: A Comparative Analysis of 2001 and 2008 Parliamentary Elections

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DEDICATION
TO MY BELOVED PARENTS

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CERTIFICATION

The thesis on '*Electoral Violence in Bangladesh: A Comparative Analysis of 2001 and 2008 Parliamentary elections*' has been written by Noorana. She has conducted the research under my supervision. I find it satisfactory for submission to the Department of Political Science under the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Dhaka for the award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy.

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DECLARATION

I submit the thesis on ‘*Electoral Violence in Bangladesh: A Comparative Analysis of 2001 and 2008 Parliamentary Elections*’ to the Department of Political Science under the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Dhaka for the award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy. I hereby declare that it has not been submitted for any other degree.

Noorana

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GLOSARY

Campaign	A series of political actions (like advertisements, public appearances, and debates) that are used to help a political party get supported by the masses to their activities and ideologies.
Caretaker Government	One of the provisions of Bangladesh Constitution is that once an election is called, the government goes into 'caretaker' mode. The caretaker period continues after polling day until it is clear who will form the new government.
Candidate	A person who is running or contesting in election for an office.
Constituency	The geographical unit which elects a single MP. There will be 300 in the Bangladesh after the election.
Code of Conduct	A set of general rules of behavior, for example for members and/or staff of an EMB, or for political parties, with respect to participation in an electoral process.
Democracy	A form of government in which people hold the power, either by voting for measures directly or by voting for representatives who vote for them.
Election	A process in which people vote to choose a leader or to decide an issue.
Electoral Management	Electoral management is a process. This process is managed by a body or bodies with specific electoral management responsibilities. Thus electoral management means bringing together the knowledge and expertise relating to electoral activities of EMB, their roles and functions, their organization, financing and management of election administration. It also focuses on the

institutional structure of EMB, their administrative infrastructure and their external environment.

Electoral Campaign

The period of weeks immediately before an election when politicians try to persuade people to vote for them. In this sense, electoral campaign means such political activity, which includes meetings, rallies, speeches, parades, broadcasts, debates and other media events designed to inform the voters.

Electoral System

Bangladesh uses a *first past the post* system. In this system, the candidate who gets more votes than any other candidate in the constituency wins.

Election Commission

A non-partisan body which determines election procedures and oversees the conduct of elections. The Constitution of Bangladesh (Article 118) gives the provision for setting up an Election Commission (EC) for the superintendence, direction and control of the preparation of electoral rolls for election.

Electoral Fraud

Electoral fraud is illegal interference on the process of an election. Acts of fraud affect vote counts to bring about an election result, whether by increasing the vote share of the favored candidate, depressing the vote share of the rival candidates or both. It is also called voter fraud; the mechanisms included illegal voter registration, intimidation at polls and improper vote counting. Electoral fraud varies from country to country.

General election

Election at which all seats in the parliament are contested. General elections must take place in Bangladesh at least every five years.

Landslide

The name given to an election that one party wins by a very large margin. The Awami League won landslide victory in the election 2008.

Manifesto	A public declaration of a party's ideas and policies usually printed during the campaign. Once in power, a government is often judged by how many of its manifesto promises it manages to deliver.
Opposition	The largest party not in government is known as the official opposition.
Presiding Officer	The person responsible for ensuring the conduct of the ballot in polling stations. They have to ensure that ballot boxes are kept secure and are responsible for transferring them safely to the count.
Political Party	An organized group of people with common values and goals, who try to get their candidates elected to office. The Awami League (AL) and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) are the two major political parties in Bangladesh today.
Representative Democracy	A government in which the adult citizens of the country vote to elect the country's leaders. These elected leaders make the governmental decisions.
Returning Officer	The official in charge of elections in each of the constituencies.
Vote	A way to show your preference and choose elected leaders or decide on initiatives. People can vote by marking a piece of paper, raising their hand, or filling out a form on a computer.

ABBREVIATIONS

AL	Awami League
BNP	Bangladesh Nationalist Party
BD	Basic Democracy
BEMB	Bangladesh Election Management Body
BNP	Bangladesh Nationalist Party
BEC	Bangladesh Election Commission
CEC	Chief Election Commissioner
CMLA	Chief Martial Law Administrator
CML	Council Muslim League
CTG	Caretaker Government
SOE	State of Emergency
RPO	Representation of the People Order
EC	Election Commission
RPO	Representation of the People Order

ABSTRACT

This research deals with electoral violence in Bangladesh particularly its causes, nature and effects which is detrimental to the process of democratization of the country. Electoral violence attenuates participation in the process of democratization. In addition, electoral violence causes human insecurity, deepen confrontational politics. Since 1973, parliamentary elections have suffered from electoral violence of varying degrees. This study has specifically focused on comparisons of electoral violence between 2001 and 2008 elections. The data, for this purpose, have been collected from primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected from a total of 50 interviewees. Secondary data have been collected from newspapers. Content analysis has been done to analyse secondary data. Thus the finds of the study suggest that, although electoral violence fall place due to the reason of winning in the election, but certain grey areas remain in the process of occurring electoral violence. The difference in the scale of violence between 2001 and 2008 elections lies in the overall performance of the election management bodies. The better management in 2008 elections led to the low scale of violence. However, the findings of Bangladesh case may be evident in other contexts of transitional democracies.