

Policy Recommendations *for* Electoral Reformation in Bangladesh

Context

The anti-discrimination protests of July 2024 marked a transformative moment in Bangladesh's history, leading to a regime change and a focus on systemic reforms. The country is now in a transitional phase, with key stakeholders prioritizing equitable and sustainable development to address long-standing challenges.

In the past, the **Institute of Informatics and Development (IID)** and **Youth for Policy (YfP)** have pushed for electoral reform, including fair elections and proportional representation. They advocated for a legal framework to boost youth participation in politics, including student council elections, to foster balanced growth and youth-driven political reform in Bangladesh.

Drawing on years of research, policy dialogues, and consultations with policymakers and youth, this document compiles a set of **actionable policy recommendations** aimed at driving reform. In addition to these recommendations, this document highlights **examples and good practices from other countries**, illustrating how similar challenges have been successfully addressed globally.

This compilation serves as a strategic guide and resource for policymakers, civil society, and development partners. It aims to inspire informed action and align Bangladesh's electoral framework with the nation's aspirations for sustainability and fairness.

Recommendations

The Election Reform Commission's recommendations tackle systemic challenges to enhance inclusivity, transparency, and fairness in Bangladesh's elections. **Each recommendation is paired with examples of successful global practices**, offering practical insights for impactful reform.



Policy Measures



Global Examples



Recognition for marginalized communities

Implement quotas and affirmative action for marginalized youth and minorities, with non-partisan local elections **to ensure fair representation.**

New Zealand's Māori seats ensure **Indigenous representation**, while **South Africa's grassroots nominations** promote democratic participation.



Reliability of electronic voting machines

Build consensus on EVMs, ensure audits, secure technology, and enhance transparency through public awareness.

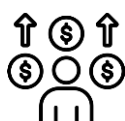
Brazil's secure electronic voting system enhances transparency, fostering public trust in elections.



Introducing 'None of the Above' Option

Introduce a 'None of the Above' option on ballots to let voters reject all candidates, triggering re-elections if negative votes surpass a set threshold.

India's 'None of the Above' option lets voters reject all candidates, promoting better candidate selection.



Independent Election Commission

Ensure financial independence for the Election Commission by allocating state funding.

The United Kingdom Electoral Commission operates independently with state support.

Policy Measures

Global Examples



Inclusive Political Participation

Introduce direct elections for reserved seats for women and marginalized groups, ensuring fair representation.

Rwanda's approach, with direct elections for women, has significantly increased female representation in its Parliament.



Voting Rights for Expatriates

Implement clear expatriate voting guidelines, including online voting and timely ballot access.

Estonia's digital system enables seamless expatriate participation.



Secularism in Elections

Ban religious influence in campaigns to ensure fairness and secularism.

France enforces strict separation of religion and state in elections.



Balanced prime minister-president power

Redistribute power between the prime minister and president, ensuring checks and balances across branches.

France's semi-presidential system ensures balanced power between the president and prime minister.



Transparency in Candidate Selection

Mandate grassroots' recommendations for candidate selection to ensure local representation.

India's Panchayati Raj elections promote local accountability.



Ensuring Proportional Representation

Adopt proportional representation and explore bicameralism for fair representation and inclusivity.

Germany's system combines representation and proportionality for equity.

About IID

IID (Institute of Informatics and Development) is a research organization that primarily works on public policy and emphasizes inclusive public participation in the policymaking process.

We are dedicated to building an 'IID Society' — informed, inclusive, and democratic — through evidence-based policy decisions and strengthened public participation.

 www.iid.dev

About YfP

The IID Youth for Policy (YfP) network was established in 2013 through a national forum to ensure active involvement of youth in public policy.

Currently, YfP works with over 12,000 youth across more than 40 districts. Through Policy Camps, Policy Hackathons, policy forums, and the Youth Manifesto initiative, YfP continues to enhance the skills and capacities of youths of Bangladesh.

 www.youthforpolicy.org