

Rural People's Attitudes Towards Voting Rights in Bangladesh: A Study on Savar and Sataria Upazila

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Abstract: *This research investigates how rural people in Bangladesh are aware of voting rights, an essential aspect of sustaining democracy, especially in Savar and Sataria Upazilas. The significance of this study relies on understanding how rural people are involved in democratic processes, specifically their awareness of voting rights and constitutional guarantees of these rights to vote. The main aim is to measure the awareness of rural people in Bangladesh regarding their voting rights and understanding of the constitutional and legal guarantees associated with voting rights. This research was conducted using quantitative methods; the researcher sampled 200 respondents using a two-stage sampling technique. Both structured and unstructured surveys focused on the demographic aspects covering age, gender, education, income, and media usage. The results indicate that most respondents know their right to vote but have significant gaps in knowledge of constitutional and legal guarantees. Knowledge levels also vary widely, with younger, more educated, and higher incomes having higher awareness. Awareness is shown to be significantly influenced by media usage. Socioeconomic barriers limit the understanding of rural women, laborers, and low-income groups. Moreover, misconceptions about the candidacy process and systemic influences, such as constraints from a lack of financial means, limit broader political participation. This study highlights the importance of targeted awareness campaigns to fill these gaps as education and media help to foster educated electoral involvement. These findings imply that the strengthening of democratic practice calls for additional new challenges and opportunities in emerging democracies such as rural Bangladesh. This research recommends targeted awareness programs, especially among women, the low-income group, and elderly populations, to improve democratic practices in rural Bangladesh.*

Keywords: Voting Rights, self-awareness, self-esteem, self-respect, electoral system, constituencies, elections, Constitutional Rights, Legal rights, political rights

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Introduction

Elections are the most important formal means of citizen participation in the political process. Voting rights forms the core of the democratic participation of any democratic country, and getting the right to vote is one of the most important in any democratic country. In Bangladesh (where more people are living in rural settings i.e. more than 60 percent of the citizens) the cognizance of the knowledge of the rural inhabitants regarding their voting rights is vital to reinforce and guarantee the democracy processes and political inclusivity. Although the Constitution of Bangladesh offers the right to universal adult suffrage it is still an unexplored field of study as to how much the educated and uneducated in the country, especially in the rural areas understand and exercise this right (Abdur Rasheed, 1995). The study will examine the level of awareness of the citizens in Rural Areas in regards to the right to vote in two of the Upazilas in the country, Savar and Sattura, not only on mere knowledge of the right to vote but the constitutional and legal provisions that ensure the existence of that right. It is also very true that in most of the occasions the rural population actively involves themselves in elections, but does not have a complete knowledge about the rights they have such as whether they can be contesting as candidates also. Factors such as education, income, occupation, gender, and access to media play pivotal roles in shaping this awareness. By examining the demographic, social, and economic factors influencing voter awareness, this study aims to determine the extent of awareness of rural people in Bangladesh regarding their right to vote in an election, and to evaluate their understanding of the constitutional and legal guarantees associated with voting rights, to identify key factors that influence their participation in democratic elections. It highlights how critical it is that the necessary interventions and awareness campaigns are provided to close in on the knowledge gap, especially in women, low-income populations, and the aged. The given research study can be included into the range of democratic development issues as it shows the importance of being not only aware of the laws but also responsible in making decisions connected with the political system which is going to be more inclusive and accountable.

Literature Review

While specific research on the awareness of rural people in Bangladesh regarding the right to vote remains limited, numerous scholarly works have examined political participation, electoral behavior, and political awareness across various contexts. In this literature review, previous studies which either directly or do not directly pertain

to the research topic of voting awareness and political participation with specific respect to the rural people and democratic developing countries are synthesized.

A research conducted by the International Republican Institute across the country offers vital information regarding the modern-day turnout in Bangladesh elections. The survey found out that 92 percent of the participants said that they had an intention of voting in the nearest national election and that the majority would vote in favor of opposing parties (International Republican Institute, 2023). The study is specifically applicable to illustrate the high voting intention amongst the general population since people in the rural areas are mostly conscious of their voting rights. Nevertheless, the IRI study also points at lack of satisfaction in the direction of the country leading to a possibility that, despite the awareness, there might be some concerns about the effectiveness of elections and representation. A notable research work, posted in *The Economic Journal*, in the year 2023, is analysis of the efficiency of information campaigns in the Bangladesh electoral scenario. The study has shown that the opposition supporters are challenged with both instrumental and expressive voting motives at the same time experiencing costs of voting (Oxford Academic, 2023). The research would find this study especially applicable as a means to bridge the voting awareness and actual exercise of voting as carried out by the various political entities toward electoral processes. The 2021 study by Nipu scrutinized the status of power distance as well as women political participation at Union Parishad level and this paper helped generate vital information of the political participation of rural women in Bangladesh. The researchers reviewed the impacts of conventional power systems on the involvement of women in local governance, which is still prevailing in rural communities because of cultural division (Nipu, 2021). The overall conclusion of denial of opportunity to women to participate in politics with the background of Ara and Northcote led to the findings unfavorable to political participation of the womenfolk in Bangladesh. The study published in *Politics & Gender* looked at national parliamentarians as well as local government councillors, and found that strong gender barriers existed, which inhibit effective political participation of women (Ara & Northcote, 2020). The observations made by the London School of Economics on the participation of rural women in Union Parishad thought countries gave clues on how effective the women reservation seat in local government conducted. This study looked into the possibility that direct women election to reserved seats has indeed opened up the opportunity of women to both power and decision-making processes (LSE, 2020).

Political Behavior of the American Election" highlights various aspects of the political behavior of the American electorate. The book presents the historical context of American suffrage. (William H. Flanigan and Nancy H. Zingale, 1989). A survey was conducted on five developed countries of the world: The United States, Great Britain, Germany, Italy, and Mexico, and it showed how political socialization occurs in these societies. This book also provides a comparative review of various means of political socialization in these countries. It is through political socialization that an individual's political beliefs, values, and ideals are formed. (Almond and Verba, 1972). The nature of political participation by observing the political conditions of various countries in Asia and Africa showed that age, occupation, gender, religion, education, income, marital status, place of birth, association with organizations, etc., act as essential variables in political participation. (Milbrath and Joel, 1976). In the book "Voters Parties and Leaders," British voters' voting behavior reviewed what voters prioritized before voting and explored why workers vote for labor and the rich vote for conservative. (Blondel, 1967). David Easton mentions three stages of political socialization in his book "A Framework for Political Analysis." In the first stage, political values are created in the individual through family, relatives, and the neighborhood. The second stage is through schools, colleges, universities, and religious institutions. Political ideology is born, and the individual expresses political opinion through it. It is noted that this opinion is reflected in the voting decision. (David Easton, 1965). The results of a survey on the political participation of the American people in their book "Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality showed that 11 percent of US citizens actively participate in political activities, 22 percent do not, and half of the total population (50%) votes in presidential elections. (Sidney Verba and Norman, 1972). Political culture, socialization, participation, elections, electoral voter behavior, and citizen opinion in her book "Political Science and Political Behavior." (Janice Kavanagh, 1984). "Political Participation and Political Equality" compared the political activities of citizens of seven countries in their book, showing that age, education, gender, income, experience, regionalism, etc., can influence politics. (Sidney Verba et al., 1978). A person's political views can be shaped by his personality, political socialization, political experience, and, in particular, his beliefs. A person's political awareness can be developed in the same way. (Robert A. Dall, 1992).

"Local Level Political Affiliation in Bangladesh" shows how and through whom the rural people of Bangladesh get involved in politics. He opined that rural people are

involved in political participation through the influential village. (M. Abdul Wahab, 1986). "Political Beliefs and Political Participation in Bangladesh Villages: Effects of Demographic Variables" analyzed the nature of political beliefs and political participation among rural people based on their socio-economic status. elite, upper caste farmers, educated families, and village elders. (Salimullah Khan, 1991). "Role of Opposition in Bangladesh Politics" states the role of the opposition in a democratic system and details how the opposition played its role in Bangladesh. It presents the results of opposition parties in various elections held between 1972 and 1990. (Al Masud Hasanuzzaman, 1998). "The February 1996 Election: A Quest for Constitutional Democracy" states that the Election will be held based on universal suffrage, where voters can vote freely and choose candidates or parties commented on the parliamentary elections held in February 1996, which were illegal, non-participatory and uncontested. (Md. Abdul Mannan, 1996). "Electoral Philosophy and Electoral Behavior: A Theoretical Perspective" states that an essay on elections attempts to construct a theoretical analysis of political behavior with the concept of Election. In this article, he discusses electoral philosophy, electoral behavior, sources of encouragement or disincentives to voting, examining the importance of various variables, elections, candidatures, election campaigns, etc. (Mohammad Abdur Rasheed, 1995). "Awareness of Political Rights of Rural People of Bangladesh: A Village Study," says, "The state is giving the people the right to vote, but it is not able to make all the people, especially the uneducated, simple villagers, fully aware of this right." (Khanam, 1999).

Research Methodology

A quantitative research design with two-stage sampling is the methodology used in this research, which presents data collected through the sample population of 200 respondents in Savar and Saturia Upazilas. In terms of sample size, it can be called the optimum sample size. Therefore, the unit of analysis in this study is every individual in the selected village who is at least 18 years of age, regardless of whether they are male or female. The minimum age for getting voting rights and voting rights consciousness in Bangladesh is 18 years. However, the unit of analysis for the data collected from secondary sources is some social element. The data were collected primarily using structured and unstructured survey questionnaires, focusing on respondents' awareness of their voting rights and constitutional and legal guarantees. The questionnaire pre-test was conducted before the final data collection, which was

done through direct interviews. Table exhibition, Table presentation, and Descriptive statistics were used to process and analyze the data that would be conducted by looking at the correlation between the demographic factors (including age, gender, education, occupation, and media usage) and the awareness levels. The data collected from the study area is presented through various figures. These data are presented in the Computer Statistical Programme for Social Science (SPSS) and MS Excel and analyzed through the MS Word program. All the ethical aspects, such as informed consent and confidentiality, were adhered to. The investigation reflects the causes that influence the rural people taking part in the elections and the people's familiarity with the right to vote in Bangladesh.

Rural People's Attitudes Towards Voting Rights

The attitudes of the rural people about the voting rights in Bangladesh is affected by a combination of both civic pride and practical constraints. Although the majority of the rural citizens perceive voting as a primary democratic responsibility and they show passion in voting, they have little knowledge on the wider political rights of the citizens-candidacy or constitutional guarantees. Voting is more of a gesture than a powerful decision to many people as most tend to do what the local political leaders want them to do or what party of an individual supports. Low-income groups and women also have a sense of detachment indicating that elections are controlled by the elites and their voices do not count much in the real political decisions. On the whole, although rural people value their right to vote, their attitudes demonstrate the incongruence between the participation and effective political empowerment (Hossain, 2017).

The Right to Vote

Voting is the process of expressing or giving an opinion on something. This process involves expressing an opinion according to approved or established rules. Opinions may be for or against someone or something. A vote may be cast in favor of any proposal or resolution or expressions of opinion may be for the appointment of public representatives. In this case, voters cast their votes through constitutional and legal means. However, going to the polling station for vote is a common method. The Constitution of Bangladesh recognizes universal suffrage and according to this recognition, rural people have exercised their right to vote in national and local-level elections at various times. However, it is important to access how much they know about the constitutional guarantee of their right to vote. All respondents were asked a

simple question: Are they aware of their right to vote? All 200 respondents in Savar and Saturia Upazilas stated that they knew they had the right to vote. In response, everyone mentioned that a person can become a voter at 18 years of age. Further discussions with village residents revealed that those who prepare the voter list are particularly active in ensuring that individuals are registered once they reach 18. Additionally, influential political figures in the village play an active role in creating new voters. As a result, it can be observed that many people become voters after increasing their age. Determining the correct age, however, can be difficult, and the negligence or haste of those preparing the voter list is mainly to blame. Since no separate significance of particular variables can be observed, only one table is presented here as a sample:

Table 1: Distribution of awareness about voting by age

Age	Conscious	Total
18-25	42	42
26-35	65	65
36-45	30	30
46-55	19	19
56-65	20	20
65+	24	24
Total	200	200

Table-1 shows that all 200 respondents (100%) know they have the right to vote. That is, respondents of all age groups are aware of the right to vote. In this regard, people's interest and enthusiasm play an instrumental role in raising awareness.

Right Entitled to Vote

“Every voter not only has the right to vote but also the right to receive votes; it means every person can be a candidate in an election. But how aware are they of this right? Having the right to vote in an election or be a candidate is limited to political participation that does not reach the vast majority of the public. In most cases, candidates need certain qualities such as education, familiarity in the area, financial compatibility, party loyalty, an appealing personality to attract voters, family background or pedigree, experience, integrity, competence, sincerity,

conscientiousness, etc. However, these qualities are not the only criteria. Many times, relationships and campaigns with political parties hold significant influence. Through election campaigns, voters have an opportunity to learn about election issues and various contesting candidates. Nevertheless, every voter has the right to be a candidate in the election and receive votes from others. The state recognizes this right. The question, however, is how aware the rural people are of this right, which requires investigation.”

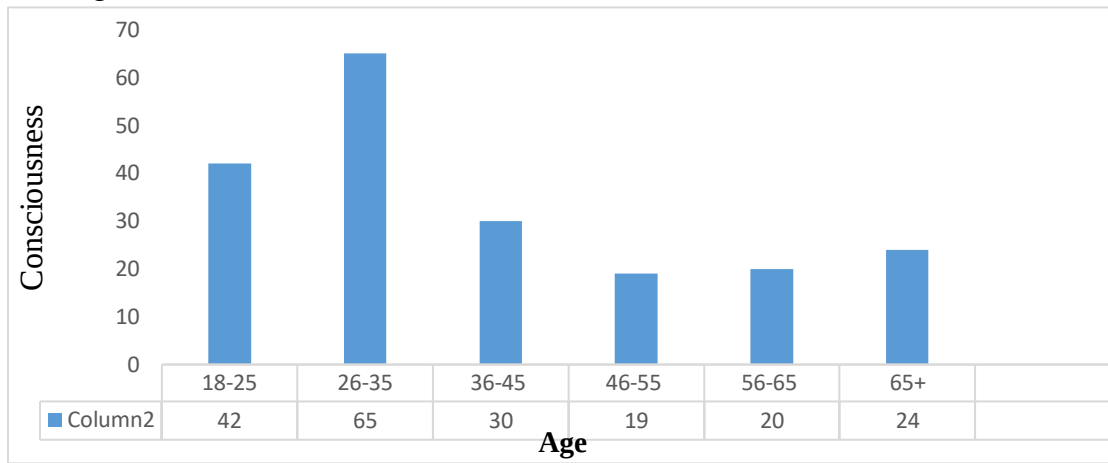


Figure No-1: Distribution of Awareness about the Right to Vote by Age (in %)

Figure 1 shows that out of 200 respondents, young and middle-aged individuals are more aware of their right to vote than others. They are also aware that every person can be a candidate in the election. However, Older individuals are less aware of their voting rights. Among the respondents, 37 people between 26-35 years old (56.9%), 20 people between 18-25 years (47.6%), and 13 people between 36-45 years (43.3%) know they have them to vote. Additionally, 4 people between 46-55 years (21.01%), 4 people between 46-55 years old (20%), and 7 above over 65 years old (29.2%) are aware of their voting rights. These groups are relatively more aware than other respondents. The remaining 115 people (57.5%) do not know they have the right to vote. Therefore, the majority of people are unaware of the eligibility for election candidature. Descriptive statistics show a slight correlation with age.

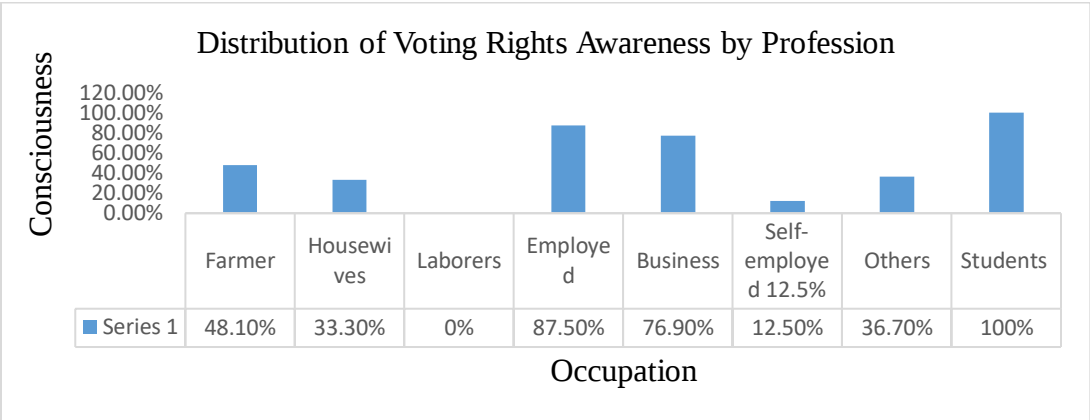


Figure No-2: Distribution of Voting Rights Awareness by Profession (in %)

In terms of occupation, almost half (48.1%) of the respondents are engaged in agriculture, one-third (33.3%) of the housewives, none (0%) of the laborers, (87.5%) of the employed, two-thirds (76.9%) in business, very few (12.5%) are self-employed, almost a third (36.7%) of the employed are aware of their right to vote. All (100%) of the students are aware of voting rights. It can show that those involved in professions such as students, employees, and business are more aware of voting rights. Because people in this profession are exposed to various news sources and have more opportunities to discuss various political issues with other people in different places. They are generally more educated than those in other professions, contributing to their higher awareness of their voting rights. On the other hand, farmers, housewives, laborers, the self-employed, and many others are less likely to know they have the voting rights. People in these professions are often busy with their daily work and do not stay updated on external news and information, which results in a lower level of awareness. This figure showed a strong relationship between occupation and voter awareness.

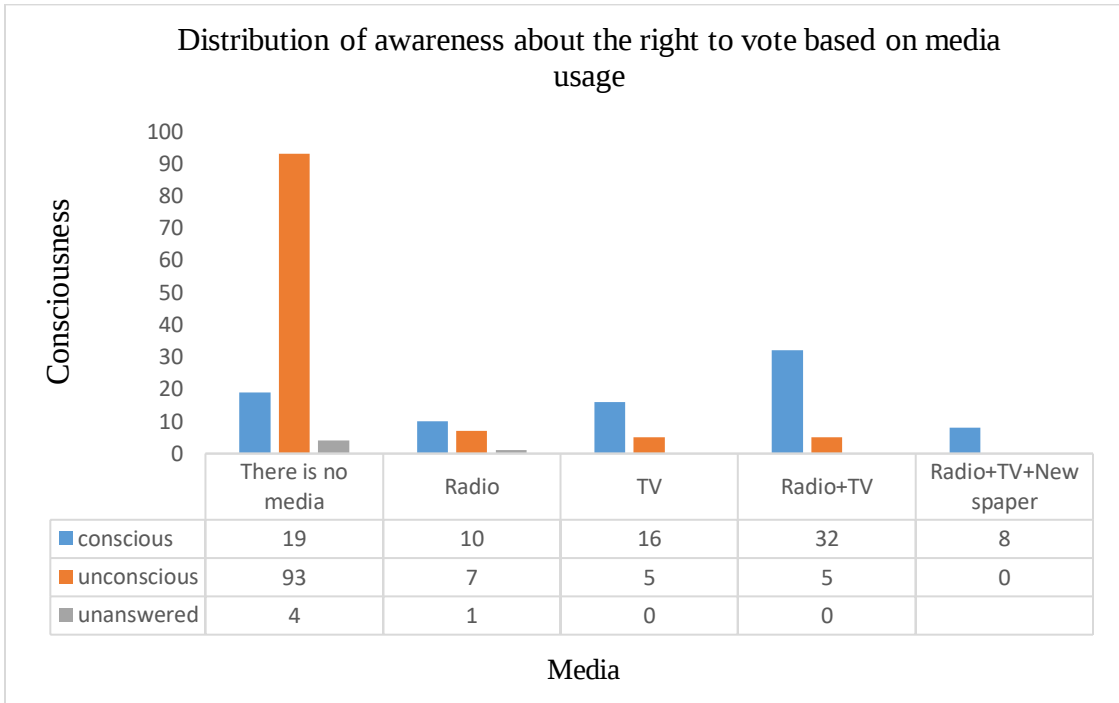


Figure No-3: Distribution of Awareness about the Right to Vote Based on Media Usage (in %)

As seen in Figure-3, among the respondents who do not have access to a radio, television, or newspapers in their household, their level of awareness is very low level (16.4%). On the other hand, all (100%) of those who listen the radio, watch television and read newspapers are aware of their right to vote. Among those who listen to the radio, more than half (55.6%) are aware, while most (86.5%) of those who both listen to the radio and watch TV, and two-thirds (76.2%) of those who only watch TV, know they have the right to vote. Generally, people who engaged with media such as watch TV, listen to the radio, and read newspapers are more aware, as they more interested in staying informed about various topics and news. Additionally, their income is very high, so they are pioneers in education. As a result, they tend to be more aware of their rights. These descriptive statistics figure indicate a causal relationship between media use and awareness of the right to vote.

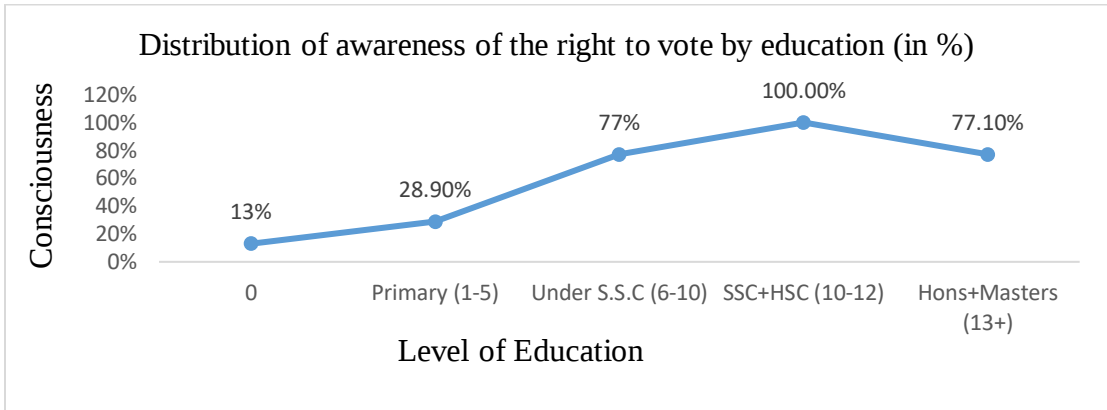


Figure No-4: Distribution of Awareness of the Right to Vote by Education (in %)

Education is an essential factor in raising awareness of voting rights. As shown in Figure 4, (13%) of illiterate individuals are aware of their right to vote, while (28.9%) of those with a primary education are aware. The majority (77.1%) of those who have studied up to 10th standards are aware, and all (100%) of those who have completed SSC to HSC education, as well as all (100%) of graduates or higher, know they have the right to vote and be candidates. The level of awareness increases with higher education. Educated individuals are more aware of different types of news than others. This figure demonstrates a causal relationship between education and voter awareness.

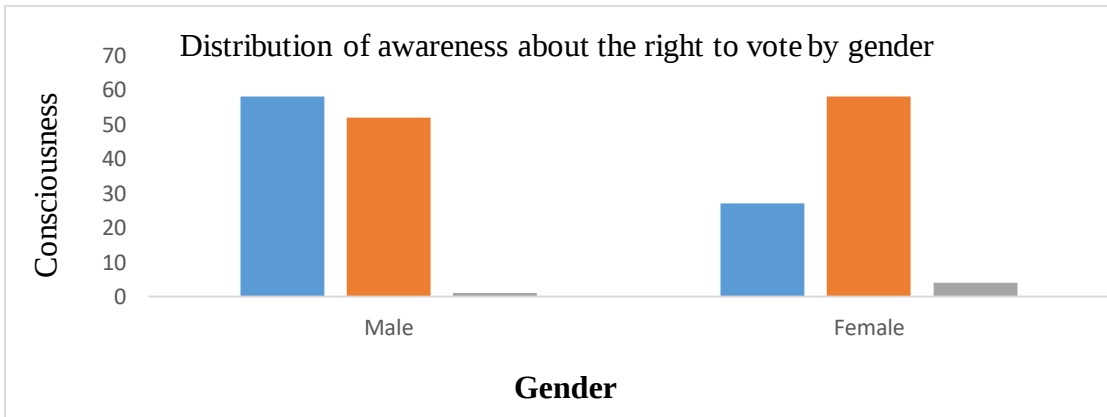


Figure No-5: Distribution of Awareness about the Right to Vote by Gender (%)

Figure-5 shows that males are more aware than females of their voting rights. More than half of the male respondents (52.3%) and nearly one-third (30.3%) of the female respondents are aware that they have the right to vote. In this case, most women remain

unaware, as rural women spend most of their time on household duties and have limited opportunities to discuss political discussions. Furthermore, the mentality of women to contest elections has not yet been created in our society. The traditional village system also plays a significant role in this disparity. Overall, there is a clear relationship between gender and awareness of the right to vote.

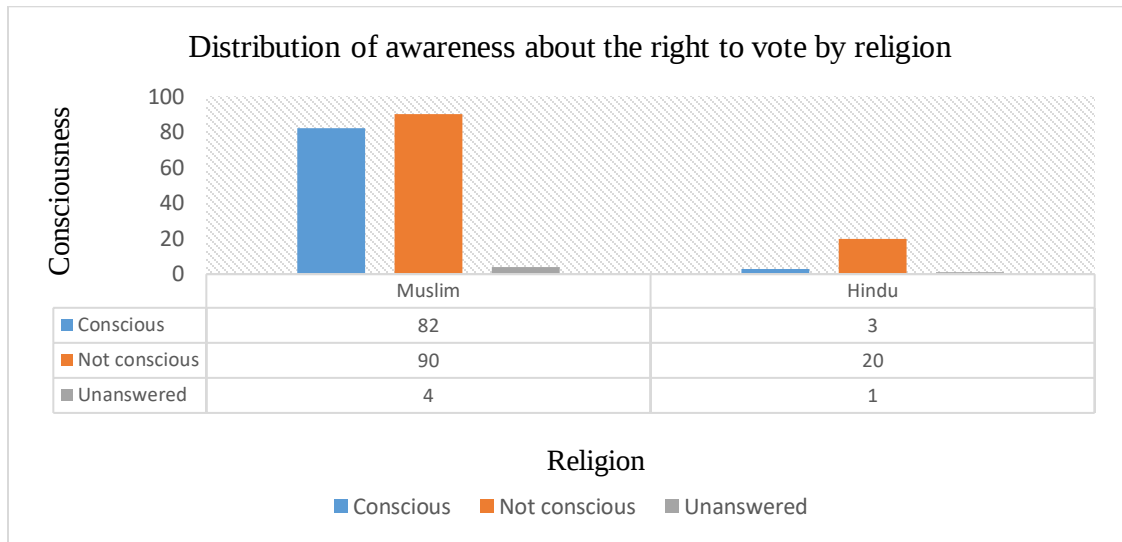


Figure No-6: Distribution of Awareness about the Right to Vote by Religion (%)

According to Figure 6, Muslims in Bangladesh appear to have a higher awareness of their right to vote compared to Hindus. Political analysts often use terms like block vote, vote bank, and minority vote when discussing elections in Bangladesh. Due to varying political interests and goals among different social groups, candidates often lean toward the interests of a particular group. Additionally, historical precedents may lead some parties to be seen as protectors of specific groups, which results in these group's support. However, Hindus in Bangladesh are often labeled as the vote bank for a particular political party, and this has sometimes led to them being excluded from voting by other parties during elections. This exclusion has understandably fostered a sense of fear, reducing their interest in running for election. In this context, silence plays a more significant role than their awareness. This figure indicates that religion has a causal relationship with voter awareness.

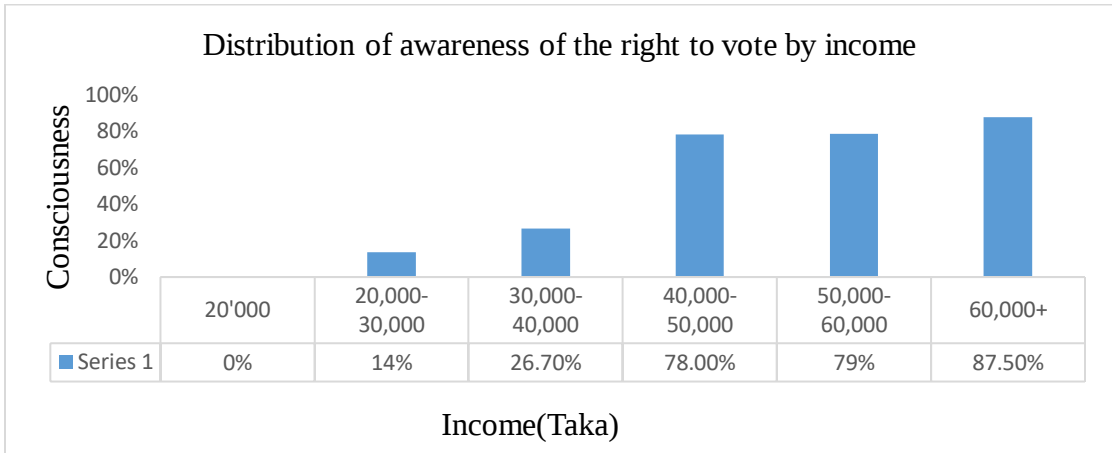


Figure 7: Distribution of Awareness of the Right to Vote by Income (in %)

“As shown in Figure 7, low-income respondents are less aware of their voting rights compared to high-income respondents. None (0%) of those with an income below 20,000 taka aware of their right to vote. Among those with an income between 20,000 and 30,000 takas, 13.6% are aware, (26.7%) of those with an income between 30,000 and 40,000 takas, (78%) of those between 40,000 and 50,000 takas (78.6%) respondents with an income between 50,000 and 60,000 takas, and (87.5%) respondents earning above 60,000 takas are aware of their right to vote. This shows that awareness increases with income. The upper classes tend to be more inquisitive about political activities, and they are often the influential numbers of the village. Some of their family members also stand as election candidates, making them more informed of their voting rights. These figures indicate a strong correlation between income and voter awareness.”

Election Candidacy

The woman was a candidate for the member post in the current local government elections. Generally, men are candidates, and women tend not to run due to the strong influence of the veil system in rural areas. However, this situation is slowly changing, with women increasingly participating in various activities with men. One candidate is unfamiliar with the media, while the other two candidates have a TV and radio in their rooms, and one also reads newspapers. Media usage correlates with greater awareness; those who engage with the radio, watch TV and read newspapers about election candidates. Among the election candidates, one has an annual family income between

30 and 40 thousand takas, another has 50 to 60 thousand, and the remaining one has an income above 60 thousand takas. This indicates that middle- and upper-class individual members are more likely to contest elections and are generally more aware. Two candidates are engaged in agriculture, and the other is a housewife. Those with jobs or businesses typically do not wish to run for local elections, while those in lower professions do not consider candidacy. All three of the candidates are Muslims, as minority Hindus in the area generally show little interest in running for elections.

Constitutional and Legal Guarantees

The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh recognizes the right to vote and the right to stand for election through its constitutional provisions. The Constitution also upholds the principle of universal adult suffrage, where each voter's vote holds equal value. The Constitution strictly prohibits discrimination based on religion, caste, group, gender, or place of birth. Any citizen who is 18 years of age and meets the necessary qualifications can become a voter. Furthermore, every citizen has the right to vote in elections and to be a candidate. However, a minimum age of 25 is required for candidacy in National Assembly elections. The constitutional articles that protect the right to vote and candidacy include Article 11, Article 29(1), Article 29(2), Article 29(3a), Article 29(3b), Article 29(3c), Article 59(1), Article 66(1), Article 66(2a), Article 66(2b), Article 66(2), Article 66(2d), Article 121, Article 122(1), Article 122(2a), Article 122(2b), Article 122(2c), and Article 122(2d). (Bangladesh Constitution, 1972)

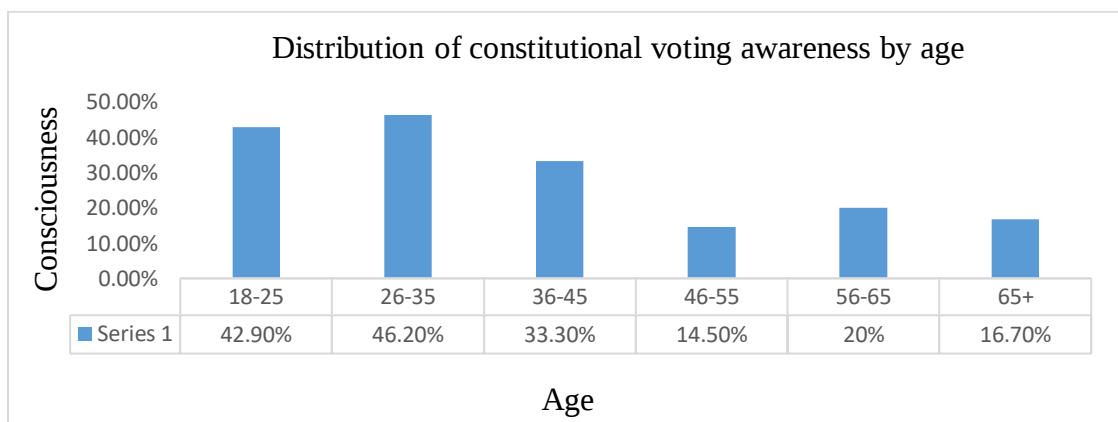


Figure No-8: Distribution of Constitutional Voting Awareness by Age (in %)

“As shown in Figure 8, about one-third (34.5%) of the respondents were aware that the state constitution and laws recognize the right to vote. Among the respondents, (42.9%) of those aged 18-25, (46.2%) of those aged 26-35, (33.3%) of those aged 36-45, (14.8%) of those aged 46-55, (20%) of those aged 56-65 and 16.7% of those aged above 65 are aware that the Constitution recognizes their rights. The awareness rate of young and middle-aged respondents is higher in this regard. On the other hand, elderly people are less aware. Younger people tend to be more involved in external political activities, contributing to greater awareness. It has been observed that there is a correlation between age and awareness of voting rights recognized in the Constitution.”

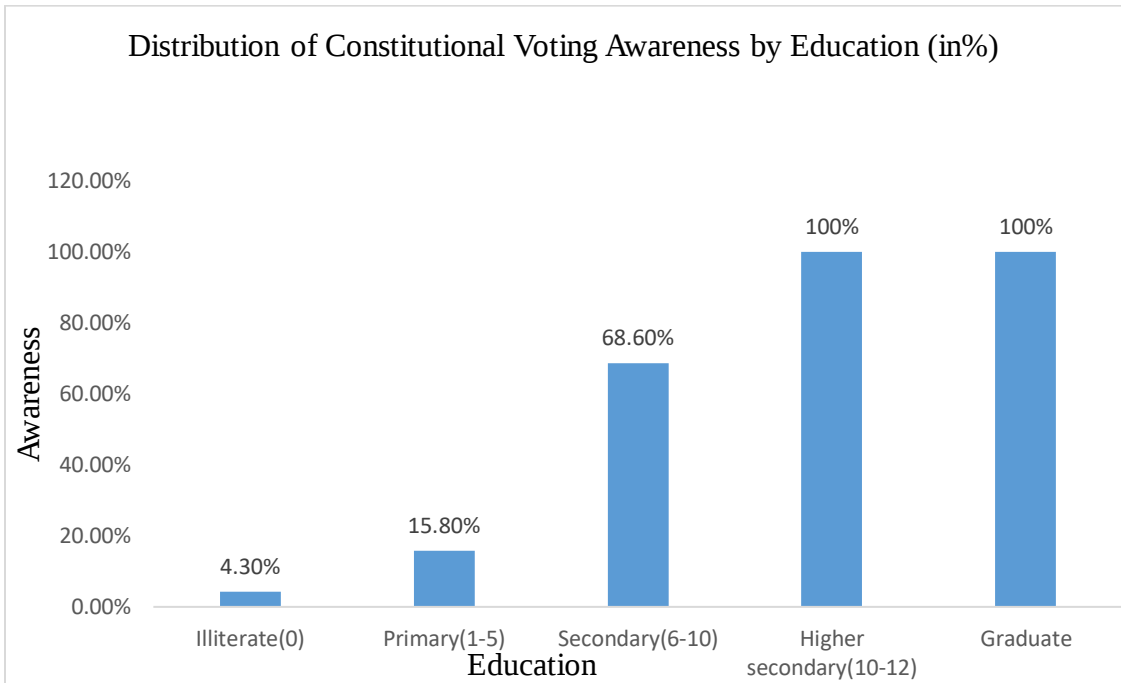


Figure No-9: Distribution of Constitutional Voting Awareness by Education (in%)

“From Figure 9, it can be seen that 4.3% of the respondents are illiterate, (15.8%) have studied up to primary school, (68.6%) have studied up to 10th standard. All respondents who have completed secondary school and higher secondary education (100%) and those who are graduates or have studied beyond (100%) are aware that their right to vote is recognized by the constitution and lawmakers. This indicates that as the level of education increases, the level of awareness increases. Educated individuals are

generally more inquisitive about the rights protected by the Constitution. According to figures, there is a strong relationship between education and awareness of constitutional and legal recognition.”

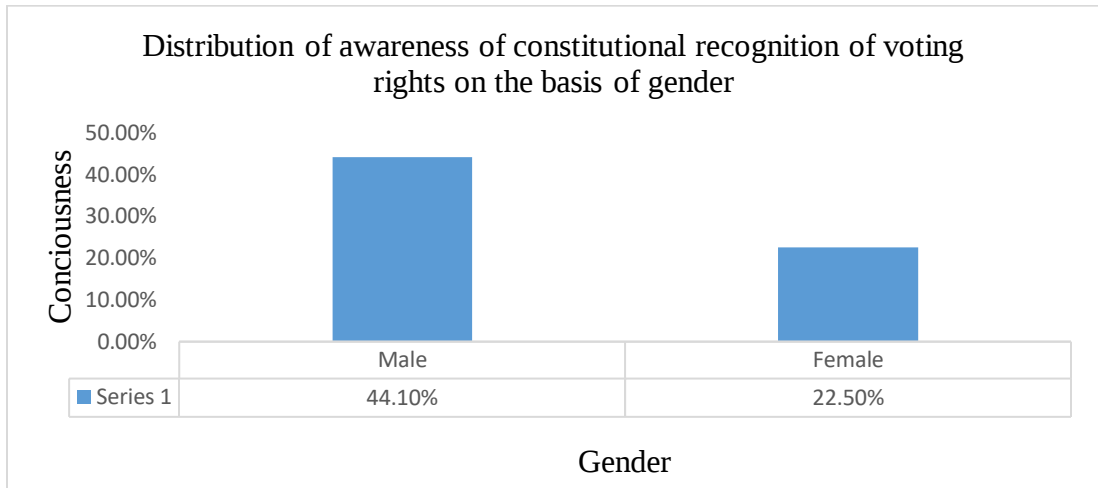


Figure No-10: Distribution of Awareness of Constitutional Recognition of Voting Rights Based on Gender (%)

"Figure 10 shows that nearly half (44.1%) of the male respondents and almost a quarter (22.5%) of the female respondents are aware that their rights are recognized in the Constitution. It can be seen that rural women are less aware than men. Because women always have to spend busy time with their home, family, and children's various problems. Moreover, rural women tend to marry at a young age, limiting their opportunities for further education. Due to these reasons, women are more unaware of various issues. This disparity is reflected in the discussion table. Descriptive statistics indicate that gender was associated with awareness of constitutional and legal recognition of voting rights."

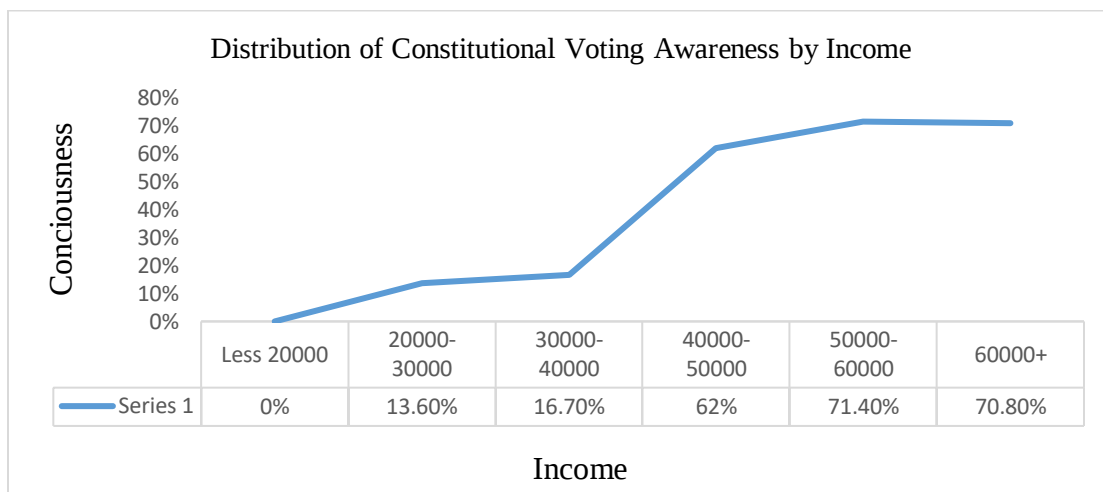


Figure no-11: Distribution of Constitutional Voting Awareness by Income (in %)

“As shown in Figure 11, among the respondents whose income is below 20 thousand taka, none (0%) are aware that their right to vote is constitutionally recognized. Among those with an income of 20–30 thousand taka (13.6%) are aware; (16.7%) of those with an income between 30 and 40 thousand takas; (62%) of those with an income between 40 and 50 thousand taka; (71.4%) of those with an income between 50 and 60 thousand taka; and (70.8%) of those earning above 60 thousand taka are aware that the Constitution recognizes their voting rights. This indicates that with the increase in family income, the level of awareness is gradually increasing. Because the middle class and upper class are more conscious about protecting their rights. The figure showed a strong correlation between income and awareness of constitutional recognition of voting rights.”

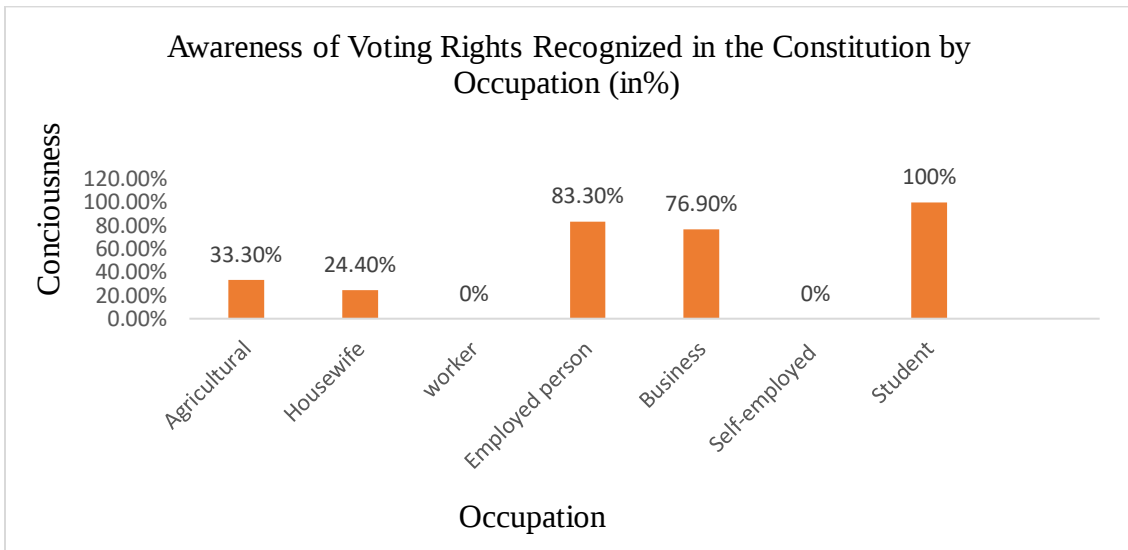


Figure No-12: Distribution of Awareness of Voting Rights Recognized in the Constitution by Occupation (in%)

“Figure 12 shows that one-third (33.3%) of the respondents are engaged in agricultural occupations, nearly one-fourth (24.4%) are housewives, the majority (83.3%) are employed, and (76.9%) work in the business sector. All (100%) of students are aware that their right to vote is constitutionally recognized. However, workers and self-employed individuals are unaware that their right to vote is constitutionally recognized. This indicates that the level of awareness is lower among those in low-quality occupations, while those in modern occupations tend to be more aware. This figure illustrates a strong relationship between profession and awareness of constitutional recognition of suffrage.”

Discussion

Rural people are generally aware of their voting rights. All the rural people's campaigns by the government, campaigns by the Election Commission, or the efforts of local political activists and leaders especially encourage the people to register as voters. However, the opposite picture is observed when it comes to awareness about election candidacy or the right to run for elections. Most people in rural areas are unaware of getting votes except for the influential, upper-class, and educated individuals in rural areas. Moreover, there is a prevalent perception among the people that running for elections requires a lot of money. The electoral system of Bangladesh often reflects this

reality, as candidates in both local and national level elections spend a significant amount of money to secure favorable electoral results. The idea that elections can be won by spending money has become entrenched in the country's electoral culture, leading to chaos, riots, and violence driven by candidates' money and manpower. Most of the people in rural areas are innocent and peace-loving people who prefer to stay away from such trouble. As a result, even though they vote in the election, they don't think that way about getting votes. Candidacy is primarily limited to influential individuals in the rural areas. Several studies have shown that dominant figures hold central positions in rural power structures, and this research finds no exception. Most rural people are unaware of the state constitution and its rights, except for the educated and influential members of the rural areas. The ordinary people of the rural areas are unaware of their rights enshrined in the constitution. Even when constitutional rights are mentioned, most local people perceive the issue as new. Education, income, occupation, and media are key factors influencing the level of awareness in the community.

Conclusion

This research paper has explored the awareness of rural individuals in Bangladesh on their right to vote, including the constitutional and legal guarantees lending to support it. The results suggest that most of the rural people are simply aware of their right to vote but there is a significant gap in their acknowledgement of the right to candidacy and the constitutional protection of suffrage. The type of education, occupation, income, and exposure to media makes an important contribution to the extent of awareness in the rural population. The data show that people with the higher education, higher income, and who have more exposure to media have better chances to know about their voting right and the constitutional recognized of these rights. Nevertheless, the awareness levels are lower among the rural people especially in the low-income jobs like the rural farmers, housewives, and laborers. These groups are not always provided with the relevant resources or information to keep them apprised of their rights such as the right to run for elections. Local political figures with a high level of influence and the abundance of money in political processes set obstacles to becoming a participant in the candidacy process, which also restricts the political activities of many people in the countryside. The paper also highlights the government and political leaders in the increasing of awareness through campaigns and education. Nevertheless, it requires more specific measures to be taken in lowering these awareness gaps,

especially by women, elderly and having low socio-economic status. Ensuring equal awareness of both voting and candidacy rights can lead to a more participatory and inclusive democratic process in rural Bangladesh. Finally, the research results support the necessity of thorough activities aimed at sensitizing the whole society on their constitutional rights, which will enhance practices of democracy and motive the society to participate more in politics.

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