

# Attitudes towards National Election of 2024: A Pre-Election Study of People Living in Dinajpur Sadar, Bangladesh

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## ABSTRACT

This paper reports attitudes and behaviors regarding the 2024 national election in Bangladesh as described by Dinajpur Sadar voters, using a mixed-methods approach with quantitative and qualitative data. A representative sample of 120 respondents-including a variety of professions and relatively fair gender representation-offers insight into electoral engagement, trust in political institutions, and their principal concerns. Local economic issues in job creation and stability of income appear as critical in shaping political preferences. While 58.33% of those surveyed would still trust political parties to represent public interests, a notable percentage of 41.67% can be seen as skeptical, reflecting political polarization. Youth disengagement is a clear concern: over half show low enthusiasm for participation. Misinformation has remained an issue: up to 23.3% reported seeing misleading election-related information online. Moderate confidence in election officials contrasts with a pervasive sense of uncertainty about electoral fairness, with 55-60% suspecting potential corruption. According to the findings, the economic issue, facilitation of transparency, and particular programs for the youth and women should be implemented to inspire more civic engagements. The findings pave the way towards strategies to build trust, combat misinformation, and strengthen democratic engagement in Dinajpur Sadar.

**Keywords:** Political Attitudes, National Election, Civic Engagement, Pre- Election, Voter Perception.

## INTRODUCTION

Elections are the bedrock of every democracy, through which democratic principles and rules come into play in governing the country. The 2024 national election in Bangladesh is quite critical as it shall set the course of the nation amidst various socio-political challenges facing the country at this juncture. In this context, the attitudes and perceptions of voters are great determinants that mold the electoral dynamics, impacting voter turnout and even the results of the elections. Dinajpur Sadar is a major area in northern Bangladesh, which effectively symbolizes the diverse demographic and political tendency of the country. Observing attitudes towards the coming election in its residents gives valuable insights into broader electoral behavior. Past research on voting behavior in Bangladesh has emphasized the role of socio-economic factors, political affiliations, and media in voter decision-making. Ahmed (2020) and Hossain & Rahman (2019) have discussed these aspects in detail.

Parliamentary elections in Bangladesh determine the composition of the 350-member Jatiyo Sangshad: 300 members are directly elected by single-seat constituencies via a first-past-the-post system for five-year terms, while 50 seats are reserved for women, selected by political coalitions or the ruling party. Since its independence from Pakistan in 1971, Bangladesh has been mostly a parliamentary democracy, except for the period between 1975 and 1991 when all executive power was concentrated in the president. The Twelfth Amendment restored the parliamentary system that has prevailed to date. The whole election process of Bangladesh is under the observation of the Election Commission: voter listing, marking constituency, and election management. There existed a caretaker government which oversaw elections in earlier times; that

system was annulled in 2011. In political affairs, there exists a strong influence of two big parties: Awami League and Bangladesh Nationalist Party. Both take turns coming to power.

Dinajpur District, under Rangpur Division, consists of several upazilas, which are the administrative and electoral units, including Dinajpur Sadar, Nowabganj, and Birampur. These upazilas are further subdivided into unions and wards. The political process in this area is influenced by the socio-economic condition of the locality and the party dynamics. Since constituency boundaries may change over time, for updated information on candidates, election results, and local developments, one needs to consult the Election Commission of Bangladesh or other authentic sources.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The focus of this work is on the mobilization and attitudes of voters before the 2024 national election, especially youthful civic engagement, active citizenship, and confidence in political leadership. This will expose what motivates voters and further develop democratic practices.

- To analyze the involvement and perspectives of the youth in national election.
- To explore the views of common people about Political Participation.
- To Evaluate Civic Engagement in national election of 2024.

## METHODOLOGY

This study has adopted a mixed-methods approach to gather data in both quantitative and qualitative forms so as to represent the comprehensive attitude of the voters in Dinajpur Sadar with regard to the upcoming 2024 national election. In this research, Simple Random Sampling gives equal opportunity to every eligible voter to get selected, which yields a representative sample of 120 participants, out of which 70 are males and 50 are females. The structured questionnaire with closed- and open-ended questions is the primary tool for data collection, enabling statistical analysis besides a detailed look at opinions and concerns of each individual. Fieldwork lasted seven days and was done in person to facilitate better understanding by participants and response rates; respondents were assured of confidentiality. Additional qualitative data were collected through interviews that allowed for an in-depth exploration of voter sentiments. Quantitative tests of differences were done with SPSS, while thematic summary was performed for qualitative insights. The methodologically sound approach offers generalizable data with specific contexts, hence providing comprehensive understanding in voters' perspective in the region.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

**Mikidadi Muhanga (2017)** conducted a study that explored voter attitudes and perceptions of electoral participation in Morogoro Municipality. This constituency recorded a voter turnout of 34.6%, which was lower than the national average of 42.8% during the 2010 General Election. Data were collected using a Computer Aided Personal Interviewing (CAPI) platform through a questionnaire, targeting a proportionate number of male and female respondents from four randomly selected wards in Morogoro urban, located in the Morogoro region. The study employed a cross-sectional design and multistage sampling techniques. The findings revealed that public attitudes toward voting were diverse and influenced by various factors, ranging from socioeconomic and demographic characteristics to perceptions of the importance of voting and the likelihood of achieving desired electoral outcomes. Despite voting being a fundamental aspect of democratic participation, the study suggested that more efforts are needed to foster positive voter attitudes, particularly in countries where voting is not mandatory. Stakeholders should take proactive measures, utilizing different platforms, to raise public awareness about the significance of voting and encourage greater electoral participation.

**In 2017, Nikolay P. Medvedev** presented the findings of a preliminary study and introduced a two-year research project (2017–2018) led by students, with support from a group of professors. The project aimed to

explore the intersections between history and politics, as well as the relationship between age consciousness and political engagement. Its primary goal was to analyze young people's perceptions of two significant events: the 100th anniversary of Russia's 1917 revolution and the 2018 presidential elections. To gather insights, the project planned to use surveys (both questionnaires and interviews) targeting young respondents, primarily university students. The data collection aimed to capture facts, forms, and modes of representation related to these events. The 1917 revolution was framed within a theoretical context as a historical event, examining its nature, role, ideals, technologies, participants, achievements, and failures, all considered through a contemporary lens.

The study also sought to introduce historical perspectives into political practice by reconstructing the ideologies, values, and political views of both modern youth and their historical counterparts. The research addressed practical aspects of managing these ideas in both applied and experimental contexts, with the aim of better understanding the dynamic relationship between youth, history, and politics.

**Hasibur Rahman (2021)** examines the participation of young people in elections and politics in Bangladesh, where a significant portion of the population is under thirty years old. Despite frequent political engagement, 33% of Bangladesh's youth do not participate in voting, posing potential risks to the nation's democracy. The study analyzes the attitudes, customs, behaviors, and assumptions that influence youth voting behavior, identifying the "low degrees of dynamic political participation" among young people as being shaped by multiple factors. The research emphasizes that democracy's distinct feature is its electoral process, which ensures the participation of all social groups. It also highlights the potential for youth involvement to reshape the political landscape. Rahman's study illuminates an emerging political movement surrounding youth participation in politics, voting, and overall engagement. The active involvement of young people is viewed as crucial for promoting reforms that can strengthen Bangladesh's democracy.

Key essentials for youth participation in politics, as highlighted by the study, include:

- Free and fair elections
- Religious freedom
- Opportunities for expression
- Maintenance of the rule of law
- Fulfillment of basic needs
- Equal privileges for all
- Absence of bribery and violence against youth

**Johnson (2021)** refers in his analysis to increasing trends of partisan polarization, which are considered the crucial factor of influence of political opinion. He says that people in Western democracies are becoming more disillusioned and cynical about the political process, mainly because they distrust the government institutions. Working off of European and North American survey data, Johnson finds strong associations between low levels of trust in lawmakers, parties and parliaments with lower turnout and higher nervousness about future elections. He concludes from this that voter these days are primarily motivated to vote by their hostility towards the other party rather than support for their party's policies or candidates. This growing party identification is reflected in growing animosity towards the idea that national elections are a struggle between competing factions for power.

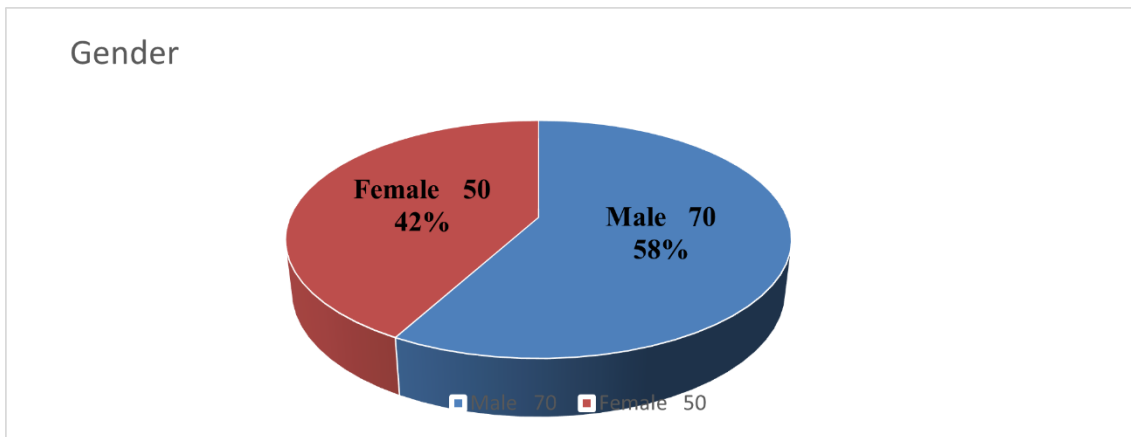
**Garcia and Patel (2020)**, by analyzing media influence, contribute to the broader body of work regarding general opinions on the emerging national elections. Their study investigates how media coverage builds public expectations and perceptions during the election period, hence providing significant clues about the

role of information dissemination in the political process. The study of Garcia and Patel greatly points out that people's views about national elections are influenced by the way stories are framed by the media; therefore, it enhances our knowledge about the role of the media in shaping the country's attitude towards politics. This is important to realize because it may change the tone of media stories related to public opinion and decisions made by voters.

Their research also assesses the differential impact that traditional and digital media have on the opinions of voters. Completely understanding how different media shapes public opinion means being able to understand exactly how people view and engage in political information across different channels. The findings from this study by Garcia and Patel therefore constitute seminal knowledge for policymakers, media professionals, and scholars alike about the nature of media coverage and the ways in which it shapes the attitudes of voters in national elections.

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Figure-1: Distribution of the respondents by gender.



Source: Survey Findings, Field Survey, 2024

The gender distribution among respondents reveals a slight majority of males at 58%, with females comprising 42%. This balanced representation suggests that the survey has effectively captured perspectives from both genders. Recognizing the gender breakdown is essential for interpreting responses and guaranteeing a comprehensive analysis that takes into account diverse viewpoints within the surveyed population. The study's findings can be considered more robust and reflective of the broader demographic, enhancing the overall validity and applicability of the results.

Table-1: Respondents are interested in the upcoming election.

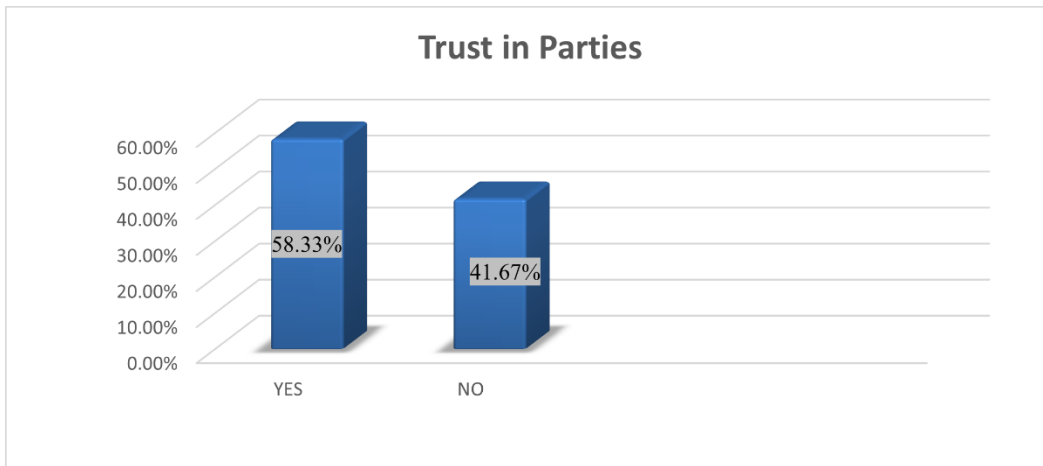
Answer	Respondents	Percentage
<b>Very Interested</b>	22	18.33%
<b>Somewhat interested</b>	33	27.5%
<b>Not interested</b>	65	54.17%
<b>Total</b>	120	100%

Source: Survey Findings, Field Survey, 2024

This table shows the level of interest in the upcoming national election from 120 stated respondents of Dinajpur Sadar. In the table, data has been grouped into three categories: Very Interested, Somewhat Interested, and Not Interested. 22 respondents, constituting 18.33%, reported being Very Interested in the upcoming election. Somewhat Interested, the response from 33 (27.5%) more, showing that moderate

engagement in the electoral process could be relatively high. 65 (54.17%) respondents were Not Interested in the election. This table represents that the majority of 54.17% of the respondents have no interest in the coming national election, whereas only a small proportion of 18.33% can be seen as highly interested.

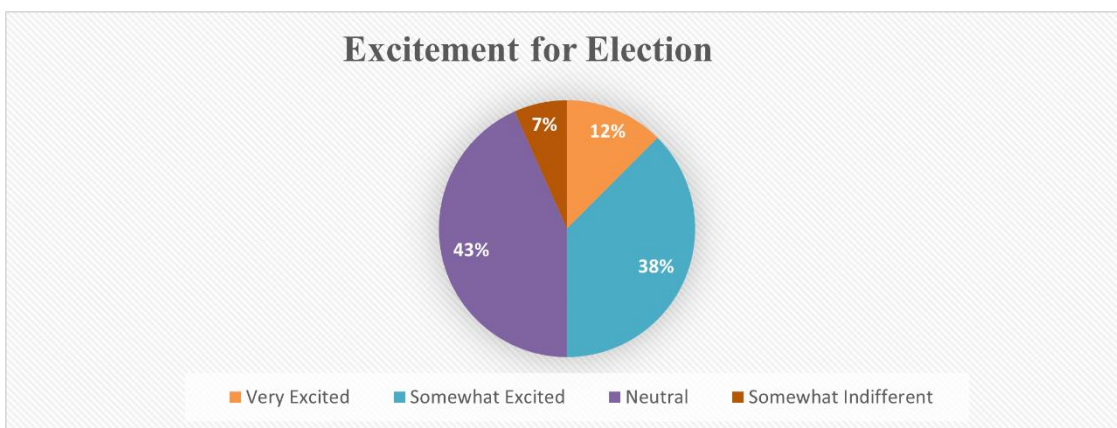
Figure 2: Trust of the political parties to honestly represent the interest of the people in Dianjpur Sadar.



Source: Survey Findings, Field Survey, 2024

The statement indicates that a majority of respondents, accounting for 58.33%, express trust in political parties to honestly represent the interests of the people in Dianjpur Sadar. This 30 suggests a significant level of confidence among the surveyed group regarding the sincerity and commitment of political parties in representing the public's concerns and well-being. Conversely, 41.67% of respondents expressed a lack of trust in political parties to honestly represent the interests of the people. This minority perspective may reflect skepticism or concerns about the transparency and authenticity of the political representation in Dianjpur Sadar. The data portrays a predominant positive sentiment, with the majority trusting political parties in the region to genuinely represent the people's interests. The existence of a minority expressing distrust indicates a diversity of opinions and perhaps a need for efforts to address concerns and build confidence in political representation.

Figure 3: Excited to participatory in the 2024 election.

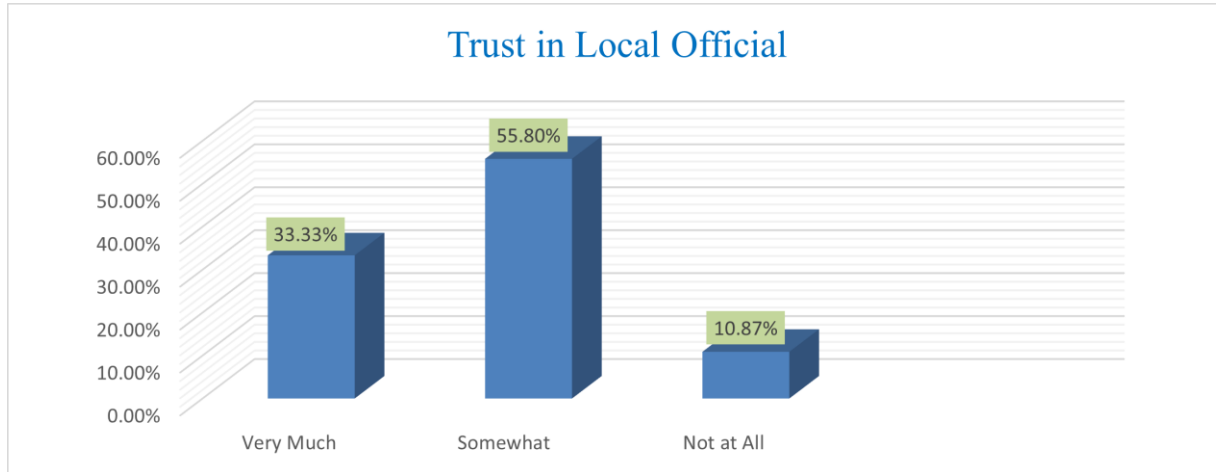


Source: Survey Survey Findings, Field Survey, 2024

The data reveals a diverse range of sentiments among respondents regarding their excitement to participate in the 2024 election. A relatively small percentage, specifically 12.5%, express being "Very Excited," suggesting a segment of the surveyed group is highly enthusiastic about engaging in the electoral process. A larger proportion, at 37.5%, indicates feeling "Somewhat Excited," reflecting a moderate level of enthusiasm among a significant portion of respondents. A substantial 43.3% chose the "Neutral" option, suggesting a

considerable number of individuals have a balanced or neutral outlook toward participating in the election. This may indicate a lack of strong excitement or indifference. A smaller percentage, 6.7%, expresses being Somewhat Indifferent, indicating a modest level of disinterest among a minority of respondents. Notably, there are no respondents who claim to be "Very Indifferent." The data reflects a range of attitudes toward participation in the 2024 election, with varying degrees of excitement, indifference, and a notable neutral stance among the surveyed group.

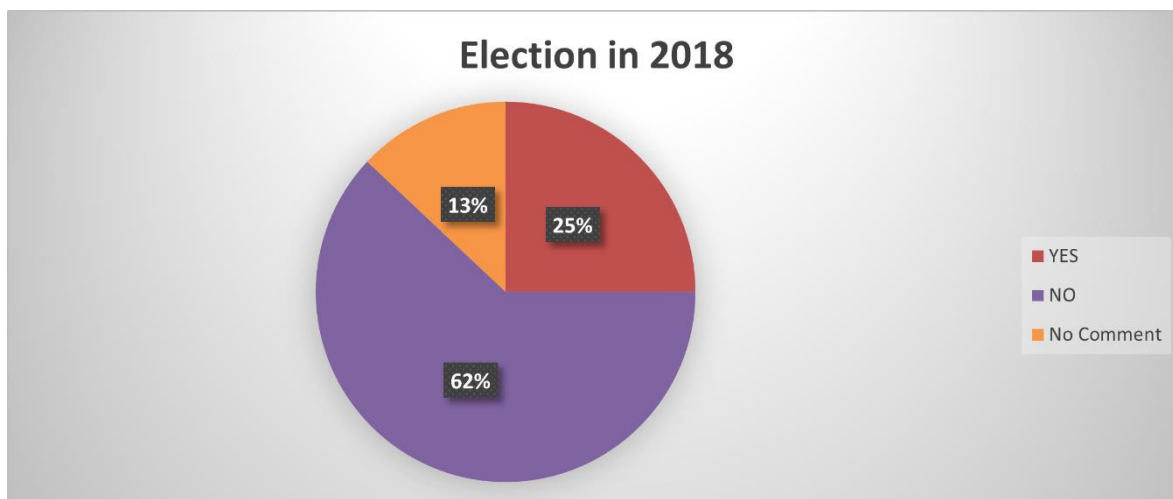
Figure 4: Trust local election official to ensure a fair and honest election.



Source: Survey Findings, Field Survey, 2024

Data ranges from fair to very good in the perception of trust among respondents as regards their belief that local election officials can ensure an honest and fair election. An impressive 33.33% of the total respondents believed highly in their integrity and fairness as they chose "Very Much." A larger share, 55.80%, showed they believe in local election officials "Somewhat," which then indicates that the majority have an average level of confidence in the fairness of the electoral process under the supervision of locals. Contrarily, 10.87% opted for "Not at All," thus showing low levels of trust in local election officials who would guarantee an honest election. Although small, this is a group that indicates several of those surveyed are highly concerned about the manner of conducting local elections. Overall, data depicts good trust in local election officials since most have expressed confidence, though there is a small portion of the segment that doubts the fairness and integrity of the election process at the local level.

Figure 5: Voted in the national election in 2018.



Source: Survey Findings, Field Survey, 2024

The data reflects the voting participation of respondents in the 2018 national election. A significant 62% of respondents confirmed that they did not vote, indicating that a large portion of the surveyed group chose not to participate in the election. In contrast, 25% of respondents stated that they did vote, representing a notable minority who engaged in the electoral process during that year. Additionally, a smaller group, 13%, selected "No Comment," suggesting that these respondents either preferred not to disclose their voting status or opted not to provide an answer. Overall, the data offers insights into the voting behavior of the surveyed population in the 2018 national election, showing a majority that abstained, a minority that participated, and a small group withholding their voting status.

Table 2: Voted in 2018 for which party did you vote.

Answer	Respondents	Percentage
No Comments	104	86.7%
Awami League	10	8.3%
BNP	6	5%
Jatiyo Party	0	0%
Muslim League	0	0%
Others	0	0%
Total	120	100%

Source: Survey Findings, Field Survey, 2024

The provided table presents the responses of survey participants regarding their political preferences or affiliations. Strikingly, the majority of respondents, comprising 86.7%, opted for "No Comment," indicating a significant portion of the surveyed group chose not to disclose their political inclination or had no specific preference among the listed political parties. Among the specified political affiliations, "Awami League" garnered support from 8.3% of participants, while "BNP" received the backing of 5%. Notably, "Jatiyo Party," "Muslim League," and "Others" did not receive any reported support from the surveyed participants. The data suggests a high level of reluctance among the respondents to disclose their political preferences, as evidenced by the substantial "No Comment" category. The limited support for specific political parties indicates a diverse or non-partisan composition within the surveyed group. The absence of responses for certain parties underscores the diversity and perhaps the lack of representation of those political affiliations within the surveyed sample.

Table 3: Youth involvement in national election 2024.

Answer	Participant	Percentage
Yes	11	27.5%
No	23	57.5%
No Answer	6	15%
Total	40	100%

Source: Survey Findings, Field Survey, 2024

This table provides an overview of the state of youth involvement in the forthcoming 2024 national election, as extracted from the responses by 40 participants. The highest number, at 57.5%, indicated not participating in the election—a great proportion of youth to show disengagement or disinterest in participating in the electoral process. On the other hand, 27.5% or 11 participants answered "Yes" and were willing to take part in the election. This group is smaller but not insignificant in their interest in becoming active youth. Finally, 15% or 6 participants said "No Answer," and this suggests that part of the participants either did not want to answer if they were involved or simply did not want to answer the question. This is data indicating a very

disturbing trend in low participation in elections among youths, where more than half are not intending to participate in the election.

## DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The study carried out in Dinajpur Sadar aimed to unveil the diverse political viewpoints within the community, encompassing individuals from various professions and backgrounds. The findings provide a comprehensive understanding of the attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions of the residents, including a shopkeeper, a teacher, and a businessman. Here are the key findings:

**Local Concerns:** Residents prioritize issues such as infrastructure development, healthcare access, and education. These concerns reflect the fundamental needs of the community, indicating that voters are looking for tangible improvements in their daily lives through governance.

**Economic Influence:** Economic considerations significantly shape political sentiments. Job opportunities and income growth are critical for 40% of respondents, including individuals like shopkeeper Sadequl Islam, who prioritize the economic situation in their voting decisions.

**National Development & Foreign Influence:** Some respondents relate the country's development in general and the influence of foreign powers. These are indicative of larger issues of governance, decisions about society, and the rule of law that are determining the future of the nation.

**Political Dynamics:** One-party continuous governance has ensured development trends, but at the cost of marginalizing opposition parties, which essentially calls for a participatory election to create a balancing act in democratic functioning.

**Changes in Loyalty:** The study highlights the fact that political preferences and ideologies of residents have shifted, marking a changing political landscape induced by local and national factors.

**Economic Priority:** Economic conditions are still the primary concerns, as the bulk of the population underlines economic stability as one of the decisive factors in their choice for voting. This represents livelihood-related issues in the choices made in electoral decisions.

**Civic Engagement:** The past election participation is also active across professions. The civic sense of responsibility, as shown by the teacher Imam Ali and businessman Sarwar Ali, reflects high voter awareness.

**Lack of Confidence in Election Integrity:** 55-60% of the respondents are skeptical about the freedom from corruption and manipulation in the coming election. This cautious attitude upholds the imperatives of accountability and transparency in the electoral process.

**Misinformation:** This means that 15-23.3% of respondents face misinformation, as they come across false or misleading information related to the election online. It is in this regard that the media literacy programs are much needed.

**Gender Representation:** The research is balanced between male and female respondents at 58% and 42%, respectively. It ensures the diversified views are represented among the community members.

**Electoral Excitement:** Levels of excitement for the 2024 election are mixed: 37.5% reported being somewhat excited, while a larger portion, 43.3%, remains neutral, showing a lack of strong attachment or enthusiasm toward the event. Only 12.5% express high excitement.

**Trust in Election Officials:** Moderate trust exists in local election officials to take the steps necessary to ensure a fair election, with 55.8% believing so. However, 10.87% have significant concerns, which shows there is room for improvement in the conduct of elections.



**Party Trust Division:** Political parties face divided opinions. While 58.33% trust them to represent public interests, 41.67% express skepticism. This division reflects a mix of confidence and doubt among residents regarding political representation.

**Corruption Fears:** Concerns over potential corruption and manipulation dominate, with 55-60% fearing these issues could impact the election process. This skepticism calls for stringent measures to ensure a credible electoral environment.

**Media Literacy Need:** The misinformation challenge, faced by 15-23.3% of respondents, signifies the need to increasingly equip citizens with media literacy to identify credible information and counterbalance misleading narratives.

These findings highlight a complex picture of electoral interest and engagement in Dinajpur Sadar. While a moderate level of trust in political parties and local election officials is observed, there is also substantial skepticism, particularly concerning election integrity and political transparency. The high level of disengagement among youth is particularly concerning, as it suggests a need for targeted outreach efforts to reinvigorate young voters' interest in the democratic process. Additionally, the significant role of economic issues in shaping political opinions suggests that parties and candidates who address local economic concerns may resonate more effectively with the electorate. The prevalence of misinformation, especially among individuals who play active roles in the community, points to a broader issue regarding information sources and the impact on political opinions. Initiatives aimed at media literacy and credible information dissemination could help mitigate misinformation and foster informed civic participation.

Overall, the study reveals both the strengths and challenges of political engagement within Dinajpur Sadar. While there is an established base of trust and interest in political representation, the high levels of disinterest and distrust reflect areas where electoral confidence and civic engagement efforts can be strengthened. The findings underscore the importance of addressing economic, transparency, and information accuracy issues to create a more engaged and informed voter base.

## CONCLUSION

The study on voter attitudes and perceptions in Dinajpur Sadar before the national election of 2024 indicates a complex interrelationship of socio-economic, political, and informational factors in shaping the behavior of electorates. Issues of infrastructure, healthcare, education, and economic stability arise as critical concerns driving decisions by the electorate, reflecting the immediate needs and priorities of the community. While there is evidence of active civic participation across various professions, skepticism over the integrity of elections and transparency of political life underlines the need for reforms to build trust in the electoral process. The results of this research show a very torn attitude toward political parties: a great amount of trust and skepticism among respondents. Corruption, manipulation, and misinformation make the demand for stringent measures to guarantee fair elections and unbiased information dissemination very topical. This study underlines how youth participation is very crucial in determining the future face of politics and thus requires reaching out to them at the grassroots to revive their interest in democracy. Addressing economic issues, fostering transparency, and promoting media literacy are basic components that help build an informed and interested electorate. The insights from this study form a basis on which policymakers, political leaders, and civic organizations can take targeted actions to strengthen democracy and improve voter confidence in the electoral system. By addressing these areas, Dinajpur Sadar and the greater electoral landscape of Bangladesh can be more inclusive, fair, and participatory in democratic processes.

## RECOMMENDATION

1. Free and just election practices instill trust in the Election Commission and credibility in the electoral process.

2. Transparency in party manifestos may help reduce mistrust and lead to better decision-making on the part of the electorates, especially in a multi-party system such as Bangladesh.
3. Programs with youthful themes and issues may attract more participation from these critical demographics.
4. Awareness of the importance of every vote can come in handy and create higher participation in places that have traditionally shown very low turnout.
5. Allowing voters and candidates to openly discuss issues allows the electorate to understand policies and make informed decisions.
6. Encouragement of candidates' policies on job opportunities and income stability reflects a key concern for the voters, therefore helping to build civic trust and participation.
7. Ensuring that women's perspectives are represented can enhance inclusivity and encourage broader participation in elections.

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