

International Foundation for Election Systems

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**Issues and Priorities for Bangladesh:
The 2000 IFES NATIONAL SURVEY**

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INTRODUCTION

Between the dates of November 18 and December 15, 2000, two thousand adults across Bangladesh were interviewed for a nationwide survey conducted by the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES).¹ The survey measured opinions of the voting age public about a range of social and political issues. It is the first poll of its kind in Bangladesh. This report summarizes the findings from the survey.

The current political arena in Bangladesh is dominated by ongoing conflict between the two major political parties. In the midst of the political battle, many believe that vital issues now facing Bangladesh, one of the world's poorest and most densely populated countries, may be left unresolved, and the development of the country may be a casualty of the conflict. IFES conducted this national survey of the Bangladeshi population in order to learn about attitudes of the voters toward the political and economic system in Bangladesh, to identify voters' opinions on issues of importance to them, to document policy preferences and issue stands held by the public, and to inform political parties, the ruling government, and civil society about opinions of the voters and matters of greatest concern to them.

Social conditions in Bangladesh provided challenges for the survey. The sample population was designed to represent the urban and rural voting population throughout the country. However, there is a high rate of illiteracy in rural areas, where approximately 80% of Bangladeshis live. To navigate this, the analyst developed separate sections in the questionnaire to accommodate different levels of literacy and overall knowledge about national affairs between the urban and rural populations. Two questionnaires were developed, with overlapping design and content, where valid. The total includes a nationally representative sample of 2,000 face-to-face interviews of adults 18 years of age and above. This number was evenly divided by design between the rural and urban areas in Bangladesh. The sample was weighted and percentages for the national population presented in this report are representative of the adult population by age, sex and region. It is difficult to find current and reliable demographic data that accurately reflects the urban transition in Bangladesh. However, special effort was made to obtain the most accurate estimates on current urban and rural populations for this survey.

All surveys are subject to errors caused by interviewing a sample rather than the entire population. The theoretical margin of error for a sample of 2000 is +/- 1.3 at a 95 percent confidence level.

The report uses demographic analysis to identify differences among sub-groups in the population on specific questions. One of the demographic criteria used for this analysis was the respondent's Social Economic Status (SES). For this report, respondents were grouped in five categories of equal size (quintiles) by their relative level of material well being. The methodology for constructing this SES scale is described in Appendix 2.

The project director and principal analyst for this first IFES survey in Bangladesh was Thomas Carson, Ph.D.

¹ This assessment was funded through the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS), a grant agreement of IFES, National Democratic Institute, and International Republican Institute with the Democracy and Governance Center at USAID/Washington.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

IFES conducted a national survey of the adult (18 years +) population in Bangladesh in November and December 2000. Dr. Thomas Carson designed the survey, oversaw implementation, and analyzed the data resulting from the survey. Fieldwork for the survey was conducted by an experienced marketing research organization.

The purpose of the survey is to identify issues of importance to the electorate in Bangladesh, and voter opinion on the social, economic, and political environment in the country. This report provides data on the opinions of the Bangladeshi electorate regarding their attitudes toward political parties, the actions of these parties, political institutions, and democracy and development in Bangladesh. The objective, scientifically reliable findings contained in this report highlight the needs and concerns of Bangladeshi voters, and should help shape the policies that political parties and elected representatives address in the post-election period.

The survey shows that most Bangladeshis

- **Believe that Bangladesh is a democracy.** A majority of respondents believe that Bangladesh is a democracy (65% rural, 53% urban).
- **Think that development should be the foremost concern for leaders.** Most respondents feel that improving roads and communications, increasing literacy and educational opportunities, and establishing industries and employment opportunities, irrigation, and access to electricity should be national priorities for their leaders.
- **State that politicians do not spend enough time on contemporary problems.** Seventy-one percent of rural and urban respondents agree with the statement that, "Politicians spend too much time on past events...and not enough time on the problems of the present."
- **List development issues as top priorities that Parliament should address.** Urban respondents listed the following issues as ones on which Parliament should focus: how the country can develop (22%), law and order situation (17%), unemployment (14%), education (10%), and economic stability (10%).
- **Support elections for officials at all levels of government.** Both rural and urban Bangladeshis overwhelmingly support electing officials at all levels of government: village level (96% rural, 94% urban), union *parishad* level (98% rural, 96% urban), *upazilla/thana parishad* (93% rural, 92% urban), and district *parishad* (90% rural and urban).

Regarding political parties and political actions most respondents

- **Oppose hartals and boycotts.** A majority of rural (52%) and urban (58%) respondents are against the use of hartals. A larger majority (59% of both rural and urban respondents) are against the boycott of Parliament by political parties. A plurality of respondents is against both of these actions (37% rural, 41% urban), while very few support both actions (17% rural, 19% urban).
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- **Believe disagreements between parties are over important issues, but have negative effects.** Over half of both rural and urban respondents feel that the disagreements between the government and opposition are over important issues, but have negative effects on Bangladesh's development.
- **Agree that political parties serve a 'useful' purpose.** When asked whether they agree with the statement "...political parties serve a useful purpose in Bangladesh," almost three-quarters of respondents (73% rural, 70% urban) agree with the statement.

With respect to the 2001 general elections, most respondents

- **Would primarily vote for candidates because of their character.** In contrast to the common belief of Bangladeshi analysts that people voter primarily for their preferred political party, 49% percent of urban respondents and 42% percent of rural respondents cite a candidate's character or behavior as the most important reason for voting for a candidate. The second most popular response for both rural and urban respondents was to choose a candidate who does "...good for the country" (22% rural, 19% urban).
- **See commitment to development as important for a candidate.** The top reason for not choosing a candidate is if the candidate is not perceived to work for development (16% rural, 15% urban). Other reasons for not voting for a candidate included no confidence in the candidate (13% rural, 10% urban) or the candidate is perceived as 'incapable' (13% rural, 13% urban).
- **Support reserved seats for women in Parliament.** Seventy-six percent of urban respondents support women gaining reserved seats in Parliament. Most of these respondents (88%) think that women should be elected and not appointed to these seats. Rural respondents on the survey were not asked this question.

Bangladeshis are satisfied by and large with specific institutions

- **They express confidence in most public institutions.** Both urban and rural respondents express confidence in most governmental and private institutions. The police, foreign businesses, and political parties receive the lowest ratings among all institutions listed. Urban respondents are slightly more critical of these institutions than rural respondents.
 - **Strong majorities of both rural and urban respondents believe that elected officials and citizens generally act in the best interest of Bangladesh.**
 - **However, most respondents believe official corruption is a common problem.** Both rural (59%) and urban respondents (67%) state that official corruption is a common problem in Bangladesh. Though the highest percentage of respondents identified the police as having a serious corruption problem, substantial percentages also referred to corruption problems with the courts, the government, the union council, and the district/thana administration. The military is felt to have the least serious problem with corruption.
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- **They evaluate most government programs highly over the last ten years.** A majority of respondents are satisfied with the performance of most government programs over the last ten years. Of these programs, crime prevention and relief for the poor receive the lowest rating.
- **More respondents believe that military should not be involved in civil affairs.** Fifty percent of urban respondents and forty-two percent of rural respondents think that the military should not be involved in civil administration, as opposed to 38% of urban respondents and 40% of rural respondents who think the military should be involved.
- **Most strongly support human and civil rights.** Strong majorities of both urban and rural respondents are supportive of human and civil rights.

When asked about the economy and development

- **Most respondents are optimistic about the future.** A majority of both rural and urban respondents are optimistic that the future will be 'bright' (52% rural and 59% urban). Sixty percent of rural respondents and 59% of urban respondents believe that the economic situation will be better in one year.
- **Urban respondents overwhelmingly favor foreign investment.** Eighty percent of urban respondents are in favor of foreign investment in Bangladesh. The industrial, agricultural, and educational sectors are the ones considered attractive for foreign investment.
- **Urban respondents are more likely to trust private business for development.** When asked who could do the most for Bangladesh's development, rural respondents were likely to overwhelmingly name the government (government 81%, private business 51%, NGOs 31%). Urban respondents were more likely to name business in addition to government (government 72%, private business 66%, NGOs 44%).
- **Rural respondents are interested in a broad range of development projects.** When asked about preferred development activities in their union or thana, rural respondents mentioned construction of roads, bridges, and culverts (52%), establishment of educational institutions (22%), electrification (18%), and employment-generating projects (15%).
- **The majority is satisfied with government performance regarding development.** Seventy-six percent of rural respondents are satisfied with their local government's development performance over the past five years. Eighty-eight percent of urban respondents are satisfied with the national governments' development performance over the past ten years.

Access to media sources and information is a significant problem

- **There is a large rural-urban gap in media access.** Rural respondents have significantly less access to media sources than urban respondents. Fifty-seven percent of rural respondents have no access to TV compared to 29% of urban respondents; 87% of rural respondents have no access to newspapers compared to 75% of urban respondents.
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- **There is a large gender gap in media access.** Men have consistently greater access to media sources than women. Seventy-seven percent of women have no access to radio in both rural and urban locales; 90% of urban women and 97% of rural women have no access to newspapers.
 - **Sources of information differ between rural and urban respondents.** Rural respondents rely more on radio and family and friends to gain information about political and economic events, whereas urban respondents rely more on TV and newspapers.
 - **There is a disparity in levels of information about political and economic affairs.** Fifty percent of rural respondents have little or no information about political and economic developments; urban respondents are more informed (57% informed about political development, 54% informed about economic developments).
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PART I. GENERAL ATTITUDES: DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT

The IFES survey in Bangladesh was particularly interested in three issues central to Bangladeshi society today: democracy, development, and party conflict. As an introductory note to the findings that follow, this chapter details the general mood and attitudes of the Bangladeshi electorate toward these issues. The chapter presents general opinions on the state of Bangladeshi democracy, the needs and concerns that the electorate thinks leaders should address, and attitudes toward the party conflicts evidenced in Bangladesh over the past few years.

BANGLADESH AS A DEMOCRACY

Respondents on the IFES survey were asked whether Bangladesh is a democracy. One key aspect influencing replies is whether respondents understand the meaning of democracy. A definition of democracy was given to the respondents before the question was asked:

In this day, most countries wish to be democracies. There are different opinions about what a democracy is and is not. In general, democratic countries are those which have regular and fair elections, in which the people vote for and elect leaders to represent them, and where the people can expect that those who they elect govern the country in the interests of the people who elect them.

Would you say that Bangladesh is a democracy, somewhat a democracy, or is not a democracy?

Responses to this question are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Bangladeshi Democracy, by Region

	Total	Dhaka	Chittagong *	Khulna *	Rajshahi *
	Rural (n=992)				
Democracy	65%	57%	68%	57%	74%
Somewhat	24%	30%	15%	33%	21%
Not a Democracy	2%	*	6%	1%	2%
DK/NA	9%	13%	12%	8%	3%
	Urban (n=1008)				
Democracy	53%	49%	66%	34%	64%
Somewhat	38%	42%	21%	57%	30%
Not a Democracy	5%	4%	6%	5%	4%
DK/NA	4%	5%	6%	3%	1%

* Rounding error

Most Bangladeshis think that Bangladesh is a democracy (65% rural, 53% urban). Few say it is not, but a substantial number do respond that it is only somewhat of a democracy (24% rural, 38% urban). Rajshahi rural respondents are the most likely to definitively state that Bangladesh is a democracy (74%). Urban respondents in Khulna (34%) and Dhaka (49%) are the least likely to voice this opinion.

The belief that Bangladesh is a democracy varies among individuals as well:

- 67% of males versus 56% of females believe it's a democracy
- 33% of those with the highest level of education, versus 60% of those with high school or secondary school certification (HSC/SSC), 67% with less than 10 years of education, and 60% of the illiterate think Bangladesh is a democracy
- Fewer of those at the lowest Social Economic Status (55%) and the highest (58%), think it is a democracy compared to 62% - 67% of the middle levels of Social Economic Status (SES)

The belief that Bangladesh is a democracy varies with one's level of confidence in the government. Only 18% of those with no confidence in government believe Bangladesh is a democracy, compared to 46% of those with at least 'not much' confidence. Those confident in government are much more likely to believe Bangladesh is a democracy (56% of those with a fair amount and 67% of those with a great deal of confidence).

The amount of political information available to respondents (in their own assessment) has some effect on the belief that Bangladesh is a democracy as well. Those who report that there is a great deal or a fair amount of information available are slightly more likely to report Bangladesh is a democracy (approximately 65%), compared with 62% and 59% of those who believe there is not very much or no information at all available.

DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Priorities for National and Local Action

Respondents on the survey were asked to provide their opinion on the most pressing needs in Bangladesh. The survey asked: *What are the most important actions leaders of the country should take to make a better future in Bangladesh?*

Developmental activities are at the top of the list of actions:

- Improvement in roads and communication (34% rural, 26% urban)
- Improving education and literacy (26% rural, 24% urban)
- Establishing industries (19% rural, 22% urban)
- Creating employment opportunities (19% rural, 22% urban)
- Improving irrigation systems (11% rural, 10% urban)
- Helping the poor (9% rural, 13% urban)
- Maintaining law and order (4% rural, 11% urban)

Regional variations are important. Rural respondents close to the major metropolitan centers of Dhaka and Chittagong were the most likely to mention roads and communications, more than any other group in the sample population. Rural respondents living in the Dhaka region were more likely to mention roads, literacy, electricity, establishment of industries, and employment as important development activities than were rural respondents from other regions. Rural respondents in Rajshahi region frequently mentioned irrigation systems. Both rural and urban respondents from Chittagong, as well as urban respondents from Khulna, were more likely to emphasize maintaining law and order than others. Helping the poor was mentioned as a

national priority for 18% of urban respondents from the Chittagong region. Differences in priorities highlight regional differences and needs.

After looking at the largest needs for Bangladesh as a whole, the survey also asked respondents to think about local-level needs. The survey asked: *What action should leaders of the local community take to improve the quality of life here?*

Responses are provided in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Local Needs in Rural and Urban Areas

	Rural (n=992)	Urban (n=1008)
Improve roads, communications	56%	50%
Improve educational institutions	19%	15%
Improve law and order situation	3%	14%
Help the poor	11%	13%
Provide electric supply	21%	10%
Establish tube wells/safe water	10%	9%
Establish industries	6%	9%
Improve waste disposal system	1%	5%
Create employment opportunities	3%	5%
Ensure proper sanitation systems	5%	4%
Arrange agricultural loans	4%	3%
Establish health/medical facilities	6%	2%
Construct flood protection embankments	3%	2%
Condition of our locality is not good	17%	8%
Situation of this place is good	23%	28%

Many urban respondents indicated that the ‘situation of this place is already good.’ This opinion has wide variation among urban respondents by region, ranging from 41% in Dhaka and 32% in Chittagong, to 10% in Rajshahi and a low of 1% in Khulna. Many rural respondents state that ‘the situation of this place is not good.’ The overall mention is 17% of the rural population, ranging from 13% in Dhaka, 35% in Chittagong, 14% in Rajshahi, and less than 1% in Khulna.

Problems in Rural Areas

Rural respondents were also asked about the prevalent problems that their communities face. Comparing the list of problems identified in Figure 3 below with the actions listed in Figure 2 indicates that rural respondents generally want their local leaders to undertake actions that directly address the problems their communities face. For example, the top five problems listed in Figure 3 on the next page are: poor roads and communications, electricity, access to clean drinking water, lack of educational institutions, and floods. The top five local actions desired by rural respondents in Figure 2 are: roads and communications, electricity, educational institutions, helping the poor, and safe drinking water.

Figure 3 shows the percentage of people that mentioned each specific problem, in each region. These problems are coded from open-ended responses, and more than one mention was allowed. Responses are sorted in descending order based upon the Total % column.

Figure 3. Main Problems in Rural Communities (in %)

Problems Mentioned	Total Rural (n=992)	Dhaka (n=297)	Chittagong (n=252)	Khulna (n=157)	Rajshahi (n=286)
Poor roads and communication	47	54	58	39	34
Electricity problem	21	24	31	14	12
Access to pure drinking water	17	19	21	18	11
Lack of sufficient educational institute	16	25	15	13	8
Flood problem	12	3	11	6	26
Unemployment problem	11	13	11	14	9
Health services	10	11	15	9	5
Others	9	13	3	10	12
Sanitation problem	8	12	6	8	5
Irrigation problem	8	7	8	8	8
Don't know	6	5	9	4	7
High prices of seeds and fertilizers	3	2	1	5	3

"What are the problems people face here in [GIVE NAME OF UNION AND THANA]"?

As the table indicates, specific regions are more likely to stress particular problems than other regions. For example, education is a greater concern in the Dhaka region (25%), and floods are a greater concern in the Rajshahi region (26%).

Urban Opinions on Issues That Parliament Should Address

Urban respondents to the survey were asked what issues the national Parliament should address during its deliberations. The most important issues cited were

- Development (22%)
- Law and order (17%)
- Unemployment (14%)
- Education (10%)
- Economic stability (10%)

Development, economic concerns, and maintenance of law and order are the priority items for urban respondents.

The previous sections indicate that development is a primary concern for most Bangladeshis. To gain further information on the types of development activities favored by respondents, the survey asked about different aspects of development. As noted, IFES designed this survey as two separate questionnaires, rural and urban, that use a shared methodology and report. At times the questionnaires included common questions. For some topics, common questions were replaced with equivalent themes. Development was one issue where equivalent themes were used. IFES assumed that a source of investment (e.g., the government, direct foreign assistance, or foreign-funded development) would not matter to rural respondents. What

mattered was whether development was carried out. So, rural respondents were asked general questions on development. Urban respondents, on the other hand, were specifically asked about foreign investment.

Priorities for Development in Rural Bangladesh

Rural respondents were asked: *What developmental activities should be undertaken to improve the life of the people here [name of respondent's union or thana]?*

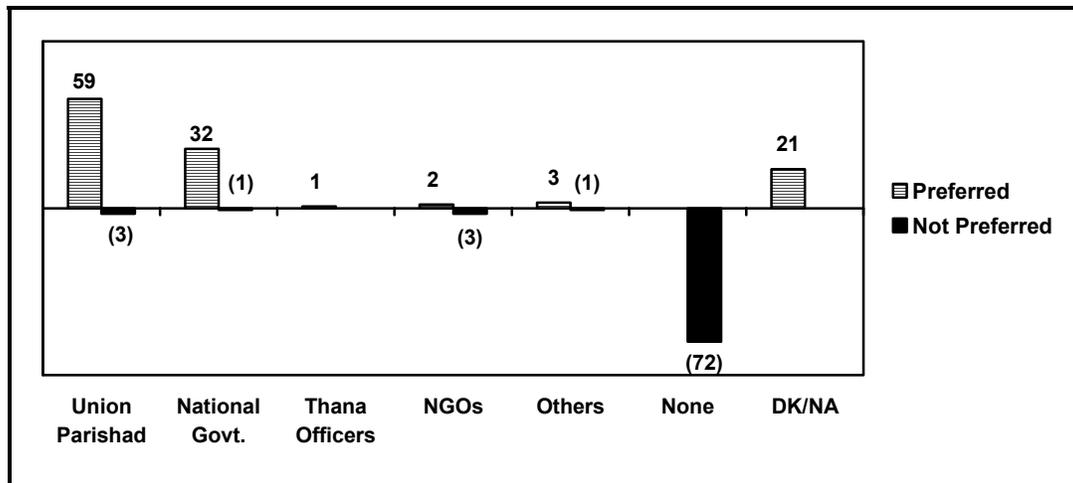
Responses provide a priority list for governmental programs in their areas. Four top priorities are consistently mentioned across the rural regions of Bangladesh:

- Construction of roads, bridges and culverts (mentioned by 52% of respondents)
- Establishment of more schools and institutions of higher learning (22%)
- Electricity in the rural areas (18%)
- Employment-generating projects (15%)

The order of the last two priorities is reversed in Khulna and Rajshahi regions.

Rural respondents were also asked who they thought should have the most active role in the development of the respondent's union or thana. In addition, they were asked who definitely should not be involved. As Figure 4 shows, few people object to any specific body or institution being active in developing the local communities. Most rural respondents prefer that the union parishad take the most active role (59%) in development activities in rural areas. The second leading institution mentioned by rural respondents is the national government (32%).

Figure 4. Institutions Preferred and Not Preferred to be Involved in Development, Rural Respondents (in percent, n=982)



Foreign Investment

Urban respondents on the survey were asked about their attitudes toward foreign investment. When asked whether they supported foreign investment, 81% of urban Bangladeshis report being in favor of it; only 7% are not. Reasons for supporting foreign investment include self-sufficiency (47%), it is required for a poor country (18%), and it will create employment (18%).

Only 73 persons out of 1008 urban respondents do not support foreign investment. Their primary reasons included the feeling that it would be bad for the country (28% of the 73), that Bangladesh's resources would be taken away (11%), and that opposing foreign investment will make the country self-sufficient (9%). Other reasons for opposing foreign investment include the responses that profit will leave the country and foreign investment will harm the market for locally produced goods.

Urban respondents were asked which sectors were good and bad for foreign investment. Most urban Bangladeshis favor foreign investment

- In the industrial sector (43%)
- In agriculture (31%)
- In the educational sector and in technical education (8%)

Other sectors thought to be good for foreign investment are garment exports, road transportation, communication, and fisheries.

Data on support for foreign investment and sectors ideal for foreign investment are presented in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Attitudes toward Foreign Investment (n=1008)

Are you generally for foreign investment in Bangladesh, or generally against foreign investment?	
Strongly/Somewhat For	81%
Strongly/Somewhat Against	7%
DK/NA	12%
Concerning foreign investment, in what sectors is foreign investment good for our future? *	
Industrial Sector	43%
Agriculture Sector	31%
Education/Technical Sector	8%
Garments	8%
Road Transport/Communications	7%
Fisheries	6%

*Rounding error

Preference for Social Change through Incremental Reforms

How fast do respondents think that change should occur in Bangladesh? The survey included a question that tried to gauge the pace at which the Bangladeshi people would like development and change to occur. The specific question asked was:

There are three views on the society we live in. Please, choose the one that best of all reflects your own opinion.

1. *The whole organization of our society should be changed with the help of dramatic measures and actions.*
2. *Our society should be changed by incremental reforms.*
3. *There is no necessity to change our society whatsoever.*

Fully 92% of respondents prefer change by incremental reforms. The tendency to prefer gradual rather than rapid social change appears to reflect a cultural predisposition, as there is no significant difference among respondents with different demographic background or among respondents with differences of attitudes on other important sociopolitical matters.

POLITICAL BEHAVIOR

Party Conflict in Bangladesh

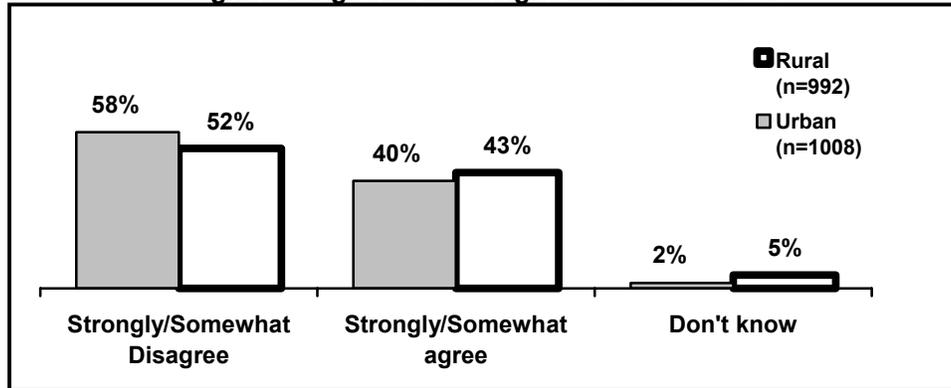
Another issue of societal concern in Bangladeshi politics over the past seven years has been the conflict-laden relationship between the two major parties in the country, the Awami League and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party. The IFES survey asked several questions that gathered respondents' attitudes on the methods used in the conflict and overall impressions of the effect of this conflict on Bangladeshi development.

Disapproval of Hartals and Boycotts

The main tools used by both parties in this conflict have been parliamentary boycotts and countrywide strikes (*hartals*) called by each party while in opposition. These actions have had a disruptive affect in Bangladesh and the survey attempted to ascertain the opinions of the Bangladeshi people on the use of *hartals* and boycotts by opposition parties. We asked the following question regarding hartals:

Both the current opposition and the current government when it was in opposition have used hartals as a political strategy. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Hartals are an effective way to force the government to do or to agree to something.

Figure 6. Agreement/Disagreement with Hartals

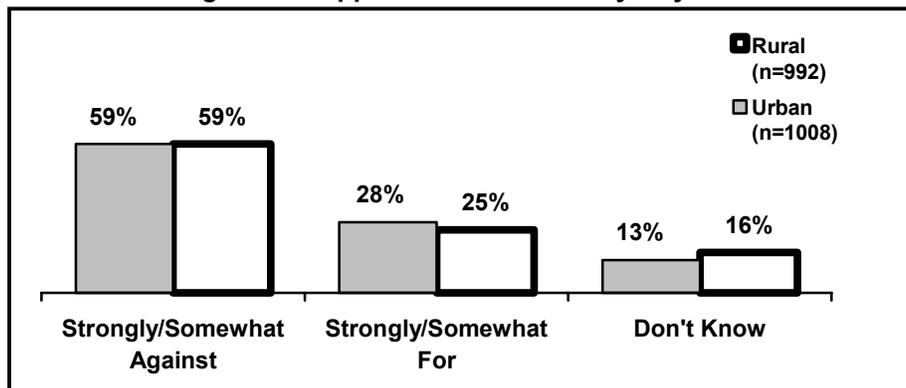


- 58% urban, 52% rural strongly or somewhat disagree that hartals are an effective way forward
- 40% urban, 43% rural agree that hartals are effective

There was also a question on the use of parliamentary boycotts:

Both the current opposition and the current government when it was in opposition have asked their MPs to stay out of the meeting of the Jatiya Sangsad as a means to oppose government actions. Are you strongly for, somewhat for, somewhat against, or strongly against this action?

Figure 7. Support for Parliamentary Boycotts



Fifty-nine percent of both rural and urban respondents are against the boycott of Parliament, while 28% of urban and 25% of rural respondents are for the boycott of Parliament.

Cross-tabulating the answers to both these questions can show whether respondents tend to support or oppose both actions—hartals and boycott—at the same time. This shows

- Nearly 40% oppose both actions (37% rural, 41% urban)
- 17% favor both actions (17% rural, 19% urban)

- A substantial percentage (37% rural, 26% urban) oppose either hartals or boycotts, but are not against both
- The rest did not know or did not answer one of the two questions (8% rural, 14% urban)

Thus, a plurality of respondents is against the use of both hartals and boycotts by political parties. However, considerable support for one or both of these actions remains among both rural and urban adults.

There are some distinctions between social groups on these two questions. Males are more likely to have polarized opinions than females, either supporting or opposing both actions. Twenty-three percent of males support both, 42% oppose both. Among females, 12% support both, 35% oppose both. Support for hartals is lower among the moderately well off (the 4th SES quintile) and the moderate-low group (the 2nd SES quintile), and slightly higher among the lowest and moderate SES groups. There are no statistically significant differences by age or level of education.

Those who *oppose both* actions tend to be urban, from Dhaka and Khulna regions, and from the top 40% of Social Economic Status hierarchy. The divide by SES is quite clear. Approximately 45% of the two highest quintiles (the most well off respondents) oppose both actions. This compares to only 31% of the lowest SES group, 38% of the moderate-to-low respondents, and 35% of the moderately well off.

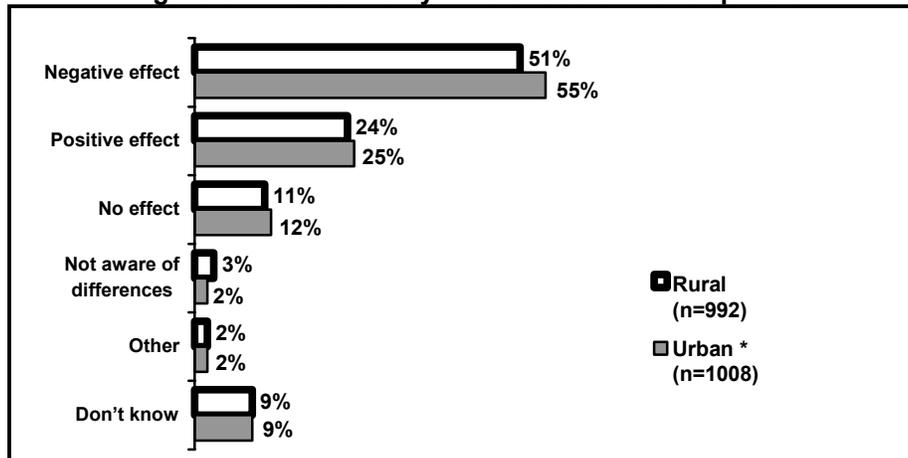
Those who *support both* actions are more likely to be from the Rajshahi and Chittagong regions, and rural areas. No clear pattern emerges concerning other social characteristics of this group. Support for both actions is limited to a small group, but this position appears to cut across social distinctions.

Disagreements between Political Parties

Respondents were also asked whether the differences between political parties in Bangladesh were over important issues. Most respondents are of the opinion that the differences are over important issues. Fifty-six percent of rural respondents and 54% of urban respondents state that disagreements between the government and opposition are about important issues. Twenty-one percent of rural respondents and 25% of urban think that the disagreements are not about important issues.

The respondents were next asked whether these disagreements have an effect on Bangladesh's development and whether this effect is negative or positive. The responses are presented in Figure 8.

Figure 8. Effect of Party Differences on Development



"Do the disagreements effect the development of Bangladesh?"
"[If yes] Do these have a positive or negative effect on the development here?"
* Rounding error

A majority of both rural (51%) and urban respondents (55%) feel that the disagreements between the political parties have a negative effect on Bangladesh's development.

The data presented in this and the previous section indicate that a large part of the Bangladeshi electorate is opposed to the types of actions (hartals, boycotts) that have characterized Bangladeshi political life. Further, most respondents feel that the disagreements between the political parties are having a negative effect on Bangladesh's overall development. These attitudes could be a signal of frustration with the political practices of Bangladeshi parties over the past few years.

Assessment of Bangladeshi Leaders in Confronting Contemporary Problems

Another question asked respondents whether they thought that politicians pay adequate attention to current problems:

Some people say that 'Politicians spend too much time on past events or what has happened in the past and not enough time on the problems of the present.' Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with the statement.

The majority (71%) of urban and rural respondents either completely agree or somewhat agree that their politicians do not spend enough time on issues of contemporary importance.

PART II. THE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

The findings in this chapter state that Bangladeshis are generally optimistic about their country's political situation despite the misgivings about the political conflicts among political elites, and the apparent dissatisfaction with politicians' lack of responsiveness to current problems. Perhaps because of this ambiguity, more people are not interested in political affairs than are, and most do not exhibit political efficacy. Yet, most believe that both officials and citizens act in the best interest of Bangladesh, and they give high evaluations to government programs over the last ten years. However, official corruption is a nearly universal concern among the respondents.

Political Situation in Bangladesh

A slight majority of Bangladeshis describe the political situation in the country, in general, as favorable. Figure 9 gives the overall direction of their open-ended replies to a question asking the respondents to describe the political situation in Bangladesh. The range of responses are collapsed into four categories for the table: favorable, unfavorable, mixed (favorable and unfavorable responses by the same person), and the residual category for don't know and absence of response.

Figure 9. Overall Political Situation in Bangladesh

	Total *	Dhaka *	Chittagong	Khulna	Rajshahi
Rural (n=992)					
Favorable	57%	65%	42%	65%	57%
Unfavorable	23%	17%	36%	19%	20%
Mixed	1%	0%	3%	0%	0%
DK/NA	20%	18%	19%	17%	23%
Urban (n=1008)					
Favorable	50%	56%	48%	48%	42%
Unfavorable	37%	33%	39%	42%	43%
Mixed	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%
DK/NA	12%	11%	12%	10%	15%

"How would you characterize the political situation in Bangladesh in general?"

* Rounding error

Urban respondents are more likely to perceive the current political situation as unfavorable than rural respondents (37% versus 23%). On average, very few respondents (1%) give mixed answers -- responding favorably in one answer, then unfavorably in another. This suggests that the issue may be fairly delineated. Among rural respondents, fewer in Chittagong say the current political situation is favorable (42%). The percent of favorable responses for rural respondents is higher in Rajshahi (57%), and peaks in Dhaka and Khulna regions (65% favorable).

The urban respondents in Dhaka are most likely to rate the political situation as favorable (56%). The other regions are at least eight percentage points lower, with Rajshahi having the lowest percentage of urban respondents (42%) classifying the political situation as favorable.

The favorable-unfavorable coding was derived from the answers that respondents gave to this question. Respondents on the survey could simply state that the political situation was either generally favorable or unfavorable, or they could voice specific responses that were then coded as favorable or unfavorable. Many people described the political situation in Bangladesh as generally positive or negative. The positive general responses were classified as favorable (26% rural, 32% urban). As for specific favorable responses, two were recorded:

- The situation is better (28% rural, 25% urban)
- Politicians are good (4% rural, 5% urban)

Negative responses are more varied. Among the most frequently mentioned negative responses were

- Parties do not care (6% rural and urban samples)
- Politics is violent (5% rural, 10% urban)
- Politicians are corrupt (4% rural, 8% urban)

Twenty percent of urban respondents and 14% of rural respondents provided generally negative statements that were coded as 'unfavorable'.

Official/Citizen Motivation

When asked to assess the motivations of their fellow citizens and government officials, most respondents were quite magnanimous. The IFES survey asked if they agreed or disagreed with the following statements:

Elected officials act first of all in the interest of Bangladesh.

Fellow citizens act in the interest of society.

Most respondents agree with both statements. Most of the rural (84%) and urban respondents (74%) believe that citizens act in the interest of society. Many also believe that elected officials act first in the interest of the country (69%).

Responses to these questions form a scale; a high value [4] indicates the respondent is strongly for or completely agrees with the statement. This allows consideration of the average response for easy comparison across social categories. These averages are presented in Figure 10.

Figure 10. Mean Attitudes toward Elected Officials and Citizens
 (4=Strongly Agree)

	Citizens Act in Interest of Bangladesh	Elected Officials Act in Interest of Bangladesh
	Average Mean Score	Average Mean Score
Gender		
Male	3.53	3.05
Female	3.27	3.04
Age		
Less than 26	3.38	3.08
26-35	3.43	3.12
36-45	3.40	3.00
46+	3.43	2.95
Education		
Illiterate	3.41	3.09
Less than 10 years	3.45	3.05
HSC/SSC	3.28	3.00
Higher education	3.21	2.51
Social Economic Status		
Low	3.40	3.02
Low-Moderate	3.46	3.10
Moderate	3.46	2.94
High-Moderate	3.36	3.17
High	3.35	3.00

The perception that elected officials act first in the interest of Bangladesh generally declines with age. Respondents over the age of 45 are the least likely to believe that elected officials generally act in the interest of Bangladesh.

Females are less convinced than males that citizens act first in the interest of society. However, as noted above, the average response is greater than 3, which indicates high levels of agreement with this statement. Those with higher levels of education are slightly less certain of this statement than others.

Political Attitudes and Orientations

Several questions were also asked about the respondent's overall orientation to politics and political processes. These questions are useful for tracking social and political change over time:

How interested are you in politics?

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Sometimes politics is so complicated that people like me can't understand what's really happening.

People like me have little or no influence on what's going on in Bangladesh.

The range in opinions among rural and urban respondents on these questions shows that

- Nearly half the rural sample are not interested in politics, while nearly half are interested (48% versus 46%)
- Fewer urban respondents are interested in politics (43%) than those who are not interested (55%)
- Most completely agree that politics is 'too complicated' (70% rural and 72% urban)
- Fewer rural respondents than urban agree that they have no influence (49% versus 62%)

Figure 11. Attitudes toward Politics

	Rural	Urban
Interest in Politics		
Very interested	11%	7%
Rather interested	35%	36%
Rather not interested	18%	22%
Not interested at all	30%	33%
DK/NA	6%	2%
Politics Too Complicated		
Agree completely	70%	72%
Agree somewhat	15%	15%
Disagree somewhat	6%	5%
Disagree completely	3%	3%
DK/NA	6%	5%
Have No Influence *		
Agree completely	39%	50%
Agree somewhat	10%	12%
Disagree somewhat	18%	14%
Disagree completely	4%	7%
DK/NA	29%	16%

*Rounding error

These questions on political attitudes may also be scored with an underlying scale, where a high value [4] indicates either strong interest or complete agreement with the statement. Averages may then be taken to better compare variations among social characteristics.

The mean averages show that females are less interested in politics than men, on average, and more likely to believe 'politics is too complicated' and that 'people like me' have no influence.

Interest in politics increases with education, but it declines among the most educated respondents. Interest in politics does rise with level of SES. Respondents with the lowest levels of material well-being are the least likely to believe they have influence. However, both the highest and lowest SES respondents are the least likely to say that 'people like me' have 'influence on what's going on in Bangladesh'.

The findings in the sections above indicate that although Bangladeshis are generally satisfied with the political situation in Bangladesh and with the motivations of officials and citizens, this has not resulted in a majority exhibiting political efficacy. A majority of Bangladeshis feel alienated from the political process, both in terms of understanding it and exercising influence over it.

Confidence in Institutions

The generally favorable assessment of Bangladesh's political situation (see Figure 9) carries over to specific institutions in society. The IFES pre-election survey found that most respondents had 'a great deal' or 'a fair amount' of confidence in a range of governmental and other institutions familiar to most people in Bangladesh. Figure 12 provides the percentage of respondents who have a great deal or fair amount of confidence in each institution.

Figure 12. Confidence in Institutions
(% with Great Deal or Fair Amount of Confidence)

	Rural (n=992)	Urban (n=1008)
Government	94%	88%
District/Thana Administration	88%	86%
Government Banks	88%	91%
Parliament	87%	85%
Military	86%	88%
Media	83%	88%
Courts	82%	77%
Private Businesses	79%	82%
Union Council	78%	82%
NGOs	72%	74%
Political Parties	64%	59%
Police	62%	53%
Private Banks	55%	60%
Foreign Businesses	53%	60%

"I am now going to ask you about several governmental and non-governmental bodies and groups. For each, please tell me how much confidence you have in them."

The percentages in Figure 12 indicate that both urban and rural Bangladeshis have confidence in their national institutions. Official central institutions are the ones most highly rated. Non-official institutions such as political parties or private banks receive the lowest ratings. Of official institutions, only the police are rated at the bottom end of the scale. Overall, rural respondents have the highest level of confidence in the government, and the least in foreign businesses. Urban respondents have the highest level of confidence in government banks, and the least in the police.

Overall Evaluation of Government Development Programs

In a similar vein, we asked respondents about their overall evaluation of government development programs over the years (10 years for urban respondents, 5 years for rural respondents). Most respondents believe the government has had a good performance in its development activities for the country over the last 5 and 10 years. Both rural and urban majorities are positive toward the government's efforts at development, with the rural population slightly less positive than the urban population. Accordingly,

- 13% state performance is very good in the rural areas, compared with 15% in the urban
- 22% of the rural population said government's performance over 5 years was bad, compared with only 9% of the urban population

Data on this question is presented in Figure 13.

Figure 13. Evaluation of Government's Development Performance

	Total	Dhaka	Chittagong	Khulna	Rajshahi
Rural (n=992)					
Good	76%	80%	63%	83%	79%
Bad	22%	19%	34%	15%	18%
Other	2%	2%	2%	1%	3%
Urban (n=1008) *					
Good	88%	89%	81%	94%	89%
Bad	9%	7%	14%	4%	8%
Other	4%	4%	5%	2%	3%

Rural: "Overall, how would you evaluate the performance of the local government regarding developmental activities in [GIVE NAME OF UNION AND THANA] in the last 5 years?"

Urban: "Overall, how would you evaluate the performance of the government regarding developmental activities in Bangladesh in the last 10 years?"

* Rounding error

Who Does Most for Development in Bangladesh

Finally, respondents were asked which of three institutions were likely to do the most for development in Bangladesh: government, private business, or NGOs. Figure 14 presents the data for this question.

Figure 14. Institutions Involved in Development in Bangladesh

“Think about the different institutions and organizations active here in Bangladesh: government, NGOs, private business/industry. Which of these, in your opinion, is likely to do the most for the development of Bangladesh?”		
	Rural (n=992)	Urban (n=1008)
First Mentions		*
Government	73%	53%
Private Business	14%	24%
NGOs	7%	18%
DK	6%	6%
Total Mentions		
Government	84%	72%
Private Business	51%	66%
NGOs	37%	44%

*Rounding error

Two types of data are provided in answers to the question. The top part of Figure 14 shows the total percentages for the first replies given by respondents. This represents the institution respondents think of *first* when answering this question. And 73% of rural respondents think first of the government in its role of developing Bangladesh. Fewer urban respondents think first of the government (53%). More urban respondents than rural respondents think first of private business (24% urban, 14% rural) or NGOs (18% urban, 7% rural).

The bottom part of Figure 14 gives the totals for the three main institutions mentioned by respondents. Most urban respondents (72%) mention the government as likely to do the most for developing the country; 66% mentioned private business and 44% NGOs. Of rural respondents, 84% in total mention the government, 51% mention private business, and 37% NGOs.

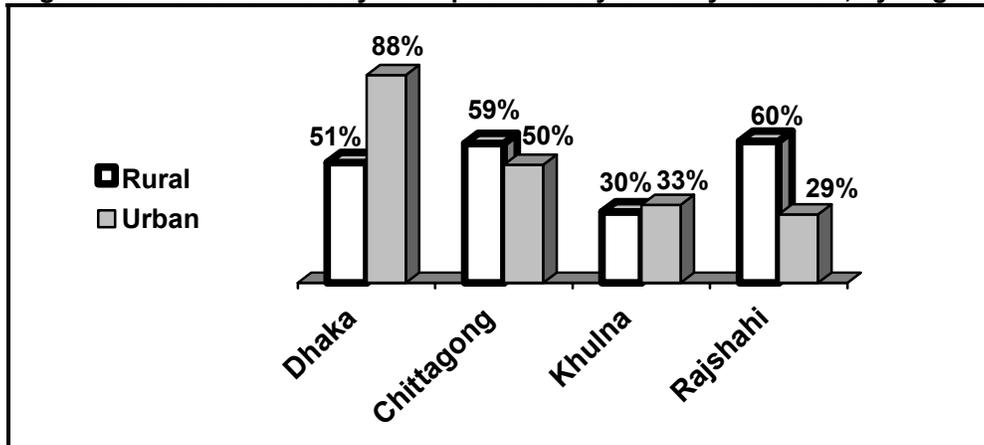
Official Corruption

Despite the generally positive assessments of the overall political system as well as specific institutions and officials, the issue of official corruption is a concern for a majority of respondents. Most respondents believe official corruption is a common problem. Thirty-seven percent of rural respondents state corruption is very common and 22% state that it is somewhat common, while 41% of urban respondents state corruption is very common and 26% say it is fairly common.

Combining the ‘very common’ and ‘fairly common’ categories shows that nearly two out of three respondents believe corruption is common. This perception is held less by rural respondents (59% versus 67% urban). Differences between regions are perhaps more important.

Urban residents in the Dhaka region are the most likely to state that corruption is common (88%). Rural respondents in Chittagong (59%) and Rajshahi regions (60%) are more likely to state that corruption is common compared to rural respondents in the Dhaka region (51%). Khulna city and region have the lowest overall frequency of people giving this response.

Figure 15. Percent Who Say Corruption is Very or Fairly Common, by Region



"In your opinion, how common is the problem of corruption in Bangladesh?"

Corruption in Select Institutions

Respondents were then asked a follow-up question – to name the institutions that have a serious problem with corruption. Overall, police are the most frequently mentioned institution in which corruption is a problem. Just over half of the rural respondents (53%) and 60% of urban respondents mention the police. The courts are mentioned by nearly one out of three. Relatively few people mention the military as a corrupt institution.

In national averages, urban respondents are more likely than rural to mention the police, courts, political parties, and the government as institutions with corruption. Rural respondents are more likely than urban respondents to mention the union council, district or thana administration, and the government banks as institutions with corruption. Private business, foreign business, and private banks are mentioned by 5% or less of either rural or urban samples. NGOs are mentioned by 7%, while Parliament is mentioned by nearly 3%. Figure 16 presents regional data on these institutions.

Figure 16. Corruption in Institutions by Region and Type of Community
 (% Mentioning Each Institution)

	REGION							
	DHAKA		CHITTAGONG		KHULNA		RAJSHAHI	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Police	56%	60%	77%	75%	41%	59%	35%	42%
Courts	23%	26%	40%	47%	12%	36%	23%	20%
Government	19%	23%	21%	23%	13%	15%	14%	7%
Union Council	33%	21%	47%	33%	25%	16%	25%	10%
District /Thana Administration	17%	19%	29%	27%	18%	12%	13%	5%
Political parties	12%	19%	37%	39%	24%	40%	7%	7%
Government Banks	15%	10%	16%	10%	4%	6%	9%	4%
NGOs	11%	7%	8%	13%	4%	2%	4%	4%
Private banks	4%	5%	7%	6%	7%	3%	1%	3%
Parliament	1%	3%	3%	7%	3%	3%	1%	
Media		3%	6%	5%	1%	1%	0%	1%
Private business	3%	2%	6%	5%	3%	3%	1%	1%
Foreign business	2%	2%	7%	9%	3%		1%	
Military		0%	3%	4%		1%	3%	0%

"When you think of corruption, which institutions or organizations do you think have a serious problem with corruption?"

Both rural and urban respondents in Chittagong give larger estimates of corruption in all institutions compared to those from other areas. Rural respondents in Khulna and Rajshahi regions generally provide lower estimates of corruption than rural residents in Dhaka and Chittagong.

Military

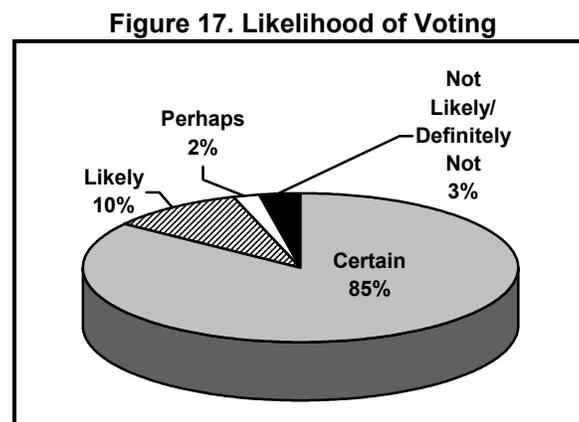
As the table above illustrates, the military is thought to be the least corrupt of all institutions that respondents were asked about. Confidence in the military is high for most Bangladeshis. The survey asked respondents their opinion on the best role of the military in civil administration. Opinions on this issue are fairly split. Among urban respondents, 50% state the military should not be involved, 38% think that it should be. Among rural respondents, 42% think the military should not be involved in civil administration, while 40% think it should. Despite the overwhelming confidence in the military exhibited by respondents, there is still reluctance on the part of a plurality of Bangladeshis to think of the military in a governing or administrative role.

PART III. ELECTORAL ISSUES

The IFES survey in Bangladesh was fielded before the parliamentary elections in 2001. The survey included several items to ascertain the expected rate of participation in the elections and issues of importance for the elections, as well as ordinary Bangladeshis' attitudes toward political parties. The responses to these questions indicate a population interested in the political process and the upcoming elections, possessing fixed opinions on important issues for Bangladesh, and anxious for its political leaders to constructively address these issues.

Majority of Respondents Would Participate in the 2001 Election

A large majority of respondents said that they intended to vote in the 2001 general election (85% certain, 10% most likely). Large majorities of both rural and urban respondents indicated that they were 'certain' to vote in the election (85% rural, 84% urban).



"How likely are you to vote in the general election when it is held?" (n=2000)

Not only did most respondents state that they would vote in the 2001 election, a large majority also believe that by voting, they can influence decision-making in Bangladesh. Seventy-one percent of rural respondents and 65% of urban respondents completely agree with the statement: "Voting gives people like me a chance to influence decision-making in our country." Another 19% of rural respondents and 22% of urban respondents somewhat agree with this statement. Very few respondents disagree with the statement. The belief that voting gives one an avenue to influence decision-making may be one reason for the high interest in voting in the elections. The lowest and highest educated respondents are the least likely to believe that voting gives influence. Interestingly, both the lowest and highest SES groups are the least likely to believe voting gives people influence in decision-making.

Most respondents also have confidence in the legitimacy of elections in Bangladesh. When asked whether elections in Bangladesh can be free and fair, 71% replied in the affirmative. Only 26% do not believe that elections can be free and fair in Bangladesh, and 4% have no opinion. These responses show relatively little variation across different social categories.

Reasons for Voting

The survey asked respondents who had voted in the parliamentary elections in 1996 why they had voted.

The leading reasons for voting given by these respondents are listed in Figure 18 below. The plurality response was that it was the right of every citizen to vote (28%).

Figure 18. Reasons for Voting (n=795) *

It is right and responsibility of every citizen	28%
For the development of our locality	19%
There will be peace in the country	17%
Hope that a new government will develop the country	14%
The candidate is a good person	14%
To elect the right candidate	6%
To work for the country and the people	3%

"What were your reasons for voting in the last [PARLIAMENTARY / GENERAL] election?"

* Rounding error

Reasons for Voting/Not Voting for a Candidate

Respondents were asked their primary reasons for choosing or not choosing a candidate. The responses for both these questions are listed in the two figures below.

Figure 19. Leading Reasons for Voting for a Political Candidate

	Rural (n=982)	Urban (n=1008)
Reasons for Voting for a Candidate		
Person with good character/behavior	42%	49%
One who does good for the country/society	22%	19%
Those who do good work for the people	7%	5%
I will vote based on the party symbol	5%	2%
Depends on education and background of candidate	4%	4%
One who will stand by the people during distress	2%	1%
Political capability	1%	1%

"What is the most important reason in choosing the party or candidate you will vote for?"

The character of the person is the most frequently mentioned reason for choosing a candidate by both the rural and urban electorate (42% rural, 49% urban). Second in importance is the choice of someone who will do good for the country (22% rural, 19% urban). Few are likely to vote for a candidate based on party affiliation (5% rural, 2% urban).

Figure 20. Leading Reasons for Not Voting for a Political Candidate *

	Rural (n=982)	Urban (n=1008)
Reasons for Not Voting for a Candidate		
Those who I think will not work toward development	16%	15%
Those in whom I have no confidence	13%	10%
Incapable person	13%	13%
One who is corrupt	2%	3%
Not educated	2%	2%
One who does not stand by people during distress	2%	1%
Not a friend of the people	1%	1%

*What is the most important reason for you not to choose a party or candidate?"

The electorate does not want a candidate who will not work for development (15%), is incapable (13%), or in whom they have no confidence (13% - 10%). As the next section will show, development is a primary concern of the Bangladeshi people.

Important Issues for Campaign

When respondents were asked what issues politicians should focus on in their election campaigns for the upcoming general elections, accessibility to candidates and information were cited as the two major issues for the campaign. The top two responses, 'Go door-to-door and meet people' (38%) and 'Print posters/campaign slogans' (32%), reflect a desire on the part of Bangladeshis for more information about political matters from their politicians and parties (Figure 21).

Figure 21. Important Issues for Election Campaign

Go door-to-door and meet people	38%
Print posters/campaign/slogans	32%
Build better roads	15%
Provide relief during crises	8%
Develop country/community	8%
Commit work honestly/Work for people/poor	6%
Improve education	4%
Keep commitments/promises	3%
Provide wells, water	3%
Provide electricity	2%
Improve mass communications	2%
Maintain law and order	2%

"What are the issues that political candidates should focus on in their political campaign?" (n=2000)

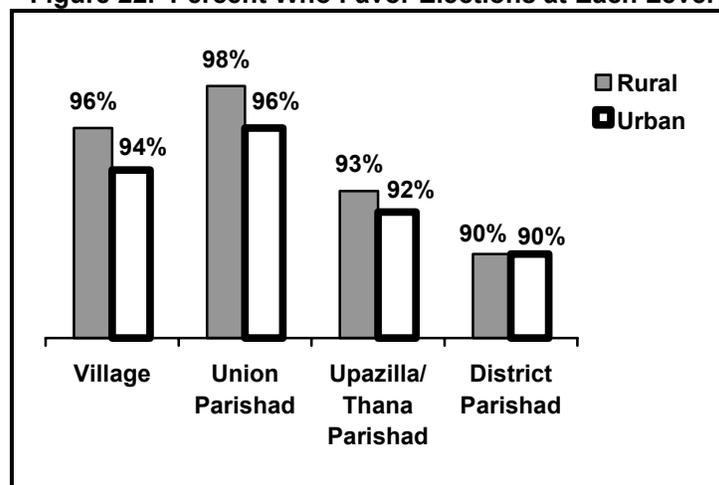
Developmental issues are also of great concern to Bangladeshis and are frequently mentioned. Building better roads and providing electricity, wells, or clean water are other specific manifestations of the general development category mentioned earlier in the report. Education and law and order are also mentioned as important issues for politicians to address in the campaign.

This question was open-ended, i.e. the respondents were not given a list of specific answers to choose from; they were free to respond with any answer they deemed appropriate for this question. That fact that 70% of respondents indicated a desire for more information and contact with candidates highlights the lack of information on political matters. This lack of information is an important issue because the consequences lay unevenly across society. Analysis later in this report will show that different groups in Bangladesh society have varying levels of access to media and political information. For example, the severe lack of access to information for women in rural areas, one stark finding, will be discussed later in this report.

Elections for All Local Levels of Government

Another important general finding from the IFES survey is that Bangladeshis would like their local-level leaders to serve through popular mandate rather than appointment. There is overwhelming support among both rural and urban respondents for electing officials at all levels of local government. The survey listed four levels of government at the local level and asked respondents if they preferred election or appointment for officials at these levels. The percentage of respondents who favor elections are listed in Figure 22.

Figure 22. Percent Who Favor Elections at Each Level



"At which level (s) do you believe there should be a local government elected by local people?" (n=2000)

Respondents were also asked about the level of power for local elected governments such as union councils, municipal councils, or upazilla councils. A plurality supports increasing the power of local elected governments:

- 45% of urban respondents, 56% rural say to increase local power
- 41% of urban, 32% of rural say to keep it the same
- 9% of both say to decrease local power

Reserved Seats for Women in Parliament

The issue of a quota of seats in Parliament for women is an important issue in Bangladesh. Urban respondents were asked two questions on this subject. First, they were asked if the present practice of reserving seats for women in Parliament should be continued. A majority of urban respondents favor reserved seats for women in Parliament (76%: 74% among men, 81% among women). Only 23% believe that no seats should be reserved for women (26% men, 20% women). And, most respondents believe these positions should be filled through elections (88%: 89% men, 86% women).

Of those who support reserved seats for women

- Men believe 38 seats should be set aside (on average)
- Women believe 49 seats should be set aside (on average)
- The average respondent believes 33 seats should be set aside
- 41% believe 30 seats should be set aside for women

Rural respondents were also asked their opinions on whether elected women members are playing an active and effective role in their union councils. Approximately half of the respondents believe that women play an active and effective role in the councils (49%: 41% men, 57% women), while 44% do not (55% men, 32% women). More women replied they did not know (10% compared to 4% among men).

PART IV. PUBLIC INFORMATION AND MEDIA

The analysis of findings in this section will show that there is a large rural-urban gap and a significant gender gap in Bangladesh with respect to access to media sources. This finding has important implications for the levels of information about economic and political affairs in Bangladesh between rural and urban respondents. In turn, lack of information about political affairs can have a considerable impact on the democratization process in Bangladesh.

Access to Media

Overall, rural respondents have limited access to media. Slightly more than half the rural population have no access to television (57%). Radio reaches 37% of rural respondents, and 63% claim they have no access. Print reaches few: 87% in villages claim they have no access to print media. Only 5% claim to have access to daily newspapers in the villages.

The media situation in the urban communities is somewhat improved. Most have access to television (71%, 29% do not). Fewer respondents report they have access to radio (60% do not). Most urban respondents also claim they have no access to print media (75%). However, 15% in the urban areas claim to have daily newspapers.

The tables below provide data on the frequency of media usage by type, location, and gender. Media usage occurs more on an occasional basis in the villages, when they do have access. Less than 12% watch television daily in villages, compared to 35% in urban communities. But there are important differences between males and females regarding access to media.

In the villages, 45% of males report they have no access to television. This compares to 69% of females. While 16% of males watch television almost daily in the villages, only 8% of females do. In the urban areas, only 24% of males have no access to television, compared with 36% of females. Daily viewing habits are more similar between the genders: 38% of males and 32% of females watch television almost daily.

Access to radio is similar across urban and rural settings. Nearly half (47%) of urban males have no access, compared to 50% of rural males. For females, 77% have no access to radio in both urban and rural communities. While nearly one in four males listens to the radio almost daily (23% urban, 22% rural); only about one in ten females do (8% urban, 10% rural).

The largest difference between urban and rural areas occurs with access to print media. Overall, 63% of urban males report they have no access to print, compared to 77% of rural males. Few women have access to print media: about 10% in the urban areas and 3% in villages. Print is an important source of information in the urban areas, and 23% of males read papers daily. This compares to 9% of rural males. Among females, 6% in urban areas read daily, and less than 1% do in villages.

Figure 23. Media Usage, by Location

	Almost Daily	Several Times/Week	Once a Week	Occasionally	No Access
TV					
Urban*	35	10	3	22	29
Rural	12	6	4	21	57
Radio					
Urban	17	6	1	16	60
Rural	16	5	2	14	63
Newspapers					
Urban	15	3	1	6	75
Rural	5	2	<1	5	87

*Rounding error

Sources of Information

Given the large differences in access to media sources between rural and urban areas, it is not surprising that there is a large variation in the means Bangladeshis use to stay informed. Broadcast media is more accessible to urban inhabitants. They rely on TV more than rural respondents (30% versus 19%). Rural respondents depend more on radio (20% versus 11%). Urban respondents rely more than rural people on newspapers by a factor of three. Rural respondents rely more on friends and family members (21%) and on the community (8%) than urban respondents. Figure 24 presents the complete data on this question.

Figure 24. Sources of Information (in %)

Source	Rural* (n=992)	Urban (n=1008)
No answer	18	8
Friends or family	21	12
Community	8	5
Local/Community Leaders	3	3
Religious Leaders	0	1
Government/Political Leaders	1	1
TV	19	30
Radio	20	11
Newspapers	8	28
NGOs	0	0
Others	4	1

"What is the most important source for you to gain information about political and economic events here in Bangladesh?"

*Rounding error

The questionnaire proceeded into other areas of media habits and usage that are discussed below. After a series of evaluations for each type of media, the IFES survey asked respondents:

Of all these (media) you have mentioned, which one do you rely on the most for political and economic news?

The results are given below in Figure 25. Overall, 70% of rural respondents do not rely on broadcast or print media as their main source of information about politics and the economy. Only 43% of the urban respondents do not rely on broadcast or print media.

Print is the media most frequently relied upon for information among those urban respondents who use media (23%), followed by television (19%) and radio (13% combined). Only 30% of rural respondents rely on media. Of these, television is the source they rely on most (13%), followed by radio (11%) and print (6%).

Figure 25. Main Source of Information about Political and Economic Developments in Bangladesh

Main Source	Rural (n=992)	Urban (n=1008)
TV (General Ant.)	13%	19%
Cable TV	0%	2%
One band radio	4%	4%
Two band radio	3%	3%
More than two bands	4%	6%
Daily newspaper	6%	23%
Do not rely on media	70%	43%

Level of Information about Politics and Economics

The IFES survey asked both rural and urban respondents about the amount of information that is available on national events in their country:

How much information do you feel you have about the political situation in Bangladesh – a great deal, fair amount, not very much, or none at all?

How much information do you feel you have about the economic situation in Bangladesh - a great deal, fair amount, not very much, or none at all?

Responses for these two questions are presented separately in Figure 26 below for rural and urban respondents.

Figure 26. Amount of Information About Political and Economic Developments in Bangladesh

	Political		Economic	
	Rural (n=992)	Urban* (n=1008)	Rural* (n=992)	Urban* (n=1008)
Great Deal/Fair Amount	42%	57%	41%	54%
Not Very Much/None at All	50%	38%	50%	39%
DK/NA	8%	6%	6%	8%

*Rounding error

The results indicate that

- 50% of rural respondents state there is little information available about both the political and the economic situation in Bangladesh
- 57% of urban respondents state there is a 'fair +' amount of information about the political situation, while 54% state there is 'fair +' information available about the economic situation
- 44% of urban women and 59% of rural women state there is little information available about political events, and approximately 10% don't know or do not answer
- 43% of urban women and 59% of rural women state there is little information available about economic developments; approximately 12% don't know or do not answer

Thus, rural respondents, especially women, are the least likely to have information about political and economic developments in Bangladesh. This data corresponds to the data on media access along the rural/urban and male/female dimensions. Considering that 82% of Bangladesh's population lives in rural areas, this finding has significant resonance for the country's democratic development. If Bangladesh is to continue on a path to democratic development, provision of information for rural areas and women should be a high priority.

Evaluation of Specific Media

The questionnaire included a series of questions that asked respondents to evaluate the media they rely on. First, respondents were asked to list all the media they had access to (as reported above). Next, they were asked which media they watched, listened to, or read most often from the list of those media. For example, if a respondent said she watched television, she was then asked which television station she watched most often.

Respondents were asked to evaluate the television and radio stations they watch and listen to most often, and the print media they read most often. Finally, respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed with the following statements:

[Media mentioned] is dependable when it comes to political and economic news.

Information we get from [Media mentioned] on important national issues, such as the privatization of major industries in Bangladesh, is reliable.

[Media mentioned] gives us news regarding the activities of all the political parties.

For each question, the respondent could 'agree,' 'disagree' or 'partially agree.' Responses are coded so that Agree = 3, Partially Agree = 2, and Disagree = 1.

Among urban respondents, the two most-watched TV channels were BTV and Ekushey. Rural respondents only reported watching these two channels. Data on the most popular TV, radio, and print outlets is provided in Figure 27 (next page) without comment. The data reports the percent of respondents who agree with the three statements above. The percentages are based on the number of respondents who reported using the particular media outlet.

Figure 27. Evaluation of Media Outlets

Outlet (rural sample n; urban sample n)	Outlet is Dependable		Outlet Provides Reliable Information		Outlet Covers All Political Parties	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
TV						
BTV (n=289 ; n=408)	65%	59%	65%	65%	51%	36%
Ekushey (n=135 ; n=228)	78%	79%	75%	77%	77%	71%
Radio						
Bangladesh Beter (n=162 ; n=205)	75%	67%	75%	67%	55%	47%
BBC (n=103 ; n=64)	67%	84%	68%	88%	55%	77%
Dhaka ka (n=34 ; n=58)	85%	69%	82%	68%	74%	59%
Khulna (n=49)*	82%		78%		69%	
Dhaka Kha (n=42)*	79%		93%		78%	
Print						
Dainik Ittefaq (n=95)**		61%		68%		59%
Dainik Janokantha (n=87)**		71%		74%		44%
Dainik Prothom Alo (n=61)**		75%		73%		63%
Dainik Jugantor (n=37)**		76%		84%		65%
Dainik Inquilab (n=35)**		83%		69%		57%

*Only rural respondents use in sufficient quantity to report percentages (n>25)

**Only urban respondents use in sufficient quantity to report percentage (n>25)

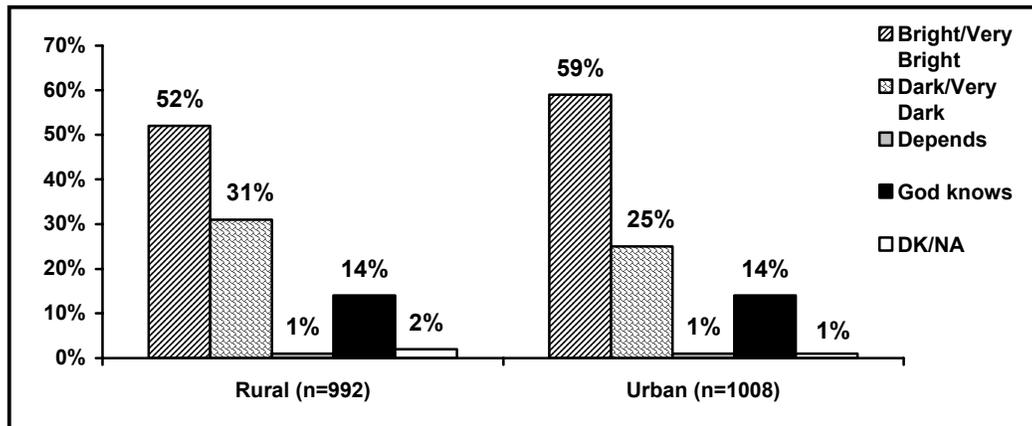
PART V. PRESENT AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

This chapter presents data on the general outlook about future economic conditions among the respondents. The findings show that most Bangladeshis are optimistic about the future. This attitude mirrors those toward the general political climate.

Optimism toward the Future

Respondents to the survey were asked to evaluate the future by indicating whether they thought it would be bright or dark. Most Bangladeshis are optimistic about the future, as shown in their responses. In Figure 28, a majority see the future as bright or very bright (52% of the rural respondents and 59% of urban respondents). Only 31% of rural respondents, and 25% of urban see the future as dark or very dark. Only 31% of rural respondents, and 25% of urban see the future as dark or very dark. Only 14% of rural respondents, and 14% of urban see the future as God knows. Only 2% of rural respondents, and 1% of urban see the future as DK/NA.

Figure 28. Outlook for Future



"Does the future promise to be bright or dark for you and your family?"

Reasons for these attitudes are displayed in Figure 29 on the next page. Respondents were asked:

For which reasons do you believe the future will be [BRIGHT/DARK] for you and your family?

This question was asked in an open format, and responses were coded by theme. The respondents' current economic situation appears to be the main determinant for their outlook toward the future. The leading reason the future is seen to be bright is the personal economic situation of the person responding, regardless of whether that person lives in a rural or urban setting. Nearly half of those who gave 'dark' estimates for the future state that their personal or their family's financial situation is bad (69% rural, 61% urban).

Figure 29. Reasons for Outlook

Reason for Bright Future	Rural* (n=518)	Urban* (n=588)	Reason for Dark Future	Rural* (n=304)	Urban* (n=252)
Personal economic situation is good	39%	35%	Personal economic situation is not good	47%	43%
My children will be able to go to school when they grow up	13%	15%	Family's economic situation is not good	22%	18%
There are job opportunities	13%	8%	I don't have land	20%	5%
Business or trade is good	10%	16%	There is lack of education	4%	4%
I am in government service I have a job	9%	13%	The general environment is not good	3%	12%
There are benefits from improvements in agriculture	9%	2%	Law and order situation is not good		3%
I am very confident about myself, I am educated	3%	7%	Other negative	6%	14%
There is opportunity to work abroad	5%	2%			

*Rounding error

Other reasons to be confident about the future are that the respondent's children will be able to go to school (13% rural, 15% urban), business is good (10% rural, 16% urban), the respondent has a job or good job opportunities (22% rural, 21% urban), and there are improvements in agriculture (9% rural, 2% urban). Education is mentioned by 7% of urban respondents (3% of rural), as a good reason for a bright future.

Many rural respondents (20%) state they do not have access to land, and for that reason the future will be dark for them. Urban respondents gave a wider range of reasons why the future would be dark, including the general environment (12%), lack of education (4%), and that the law and order situation in Bangladesh is not good (3%).

Economic Assessment

Respondents were also asked to assess economic conditions compared to five years ago. Rural respondents were asked to evaluate economic conditions in their local thana or village, while urban respondents evaluated national conditions. Both of the groups appear to be generally optimistic about economic conditions:

- 66% (both urban and rural respondents) state that current economic conditions are better now than they were five years ago
- 60% of rural respondents and 59% of urban believe economic conditions will be better in one year than they are now

The rate of non-response and don't know responses is only 1% when people evaluate the present versus the past. However, 23% of rural respondents and 16% of urban respondents don't know what future economic conditions will be like. This pattern is fairly typical in survey research.

Figure 30. Economic Conditions, Now and in One Year

	Now versus 5 ago		In one year	
	Rural * (n=992)	Urban (n=1008)	Rural (n=992)	Urban (n=1008)
Better	66%	66%	60%	59%
Same	16%	12%	9%	13%
Worse	18%	22%	8%	12%
DK/NA	1%		23%	16%

Compared to 5 years ago, is the current economic condition or situation in [THANA or BANGLADESH] better now than it was five years ago, the same, or worse?

In your opinion, will the economic condition or situation in [THANA or BANGLADESH] in one year be better than it is now, remain the same, or get worse?"

* Rounding error

PART VI. HUMAN RIGHTS AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Importance of Human Rights

Respect for human rights is one of the essential characteristics for any democratic government. IFES asked respondents to rate the importance of human rights in Bangladesh:

How important is it to you that the following rights be respected in Bangladesh?

- One can choose from several parties and candidates when voting
- Honest elections are held regularly
- The private property of individuals is protected by law
- Citizens have the right to form political parties
- The right to publicly criticize the government is protected
- All can freely practice the religion of one's choice
- All can form associations or unions without any government involvement
- Women are given equal treatment under the law

The interviewer asked respondents to rate the importance of each right, whether it is very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important. This response forms a scale where a high value [4] indicates a high degree of importance attributed to that right.

Figure 31 gives the average level of importance for each human right on this list. The top panel gives averages for rural respondents; below are those for urban respondents. The list of human rights is sorted in descending order based on the total average (second column). On a scale of 1 to 4 [where 4 = very important], choice of parties (political parties), is rated the highest among rural respondents (3.93), but is third in preference among urban respondents (3.91). Urban respondents rank honest elections first in importance among the different rights.

Figure 31. Evaluation of Importance of Human Rights
 (4=Very Important, 1=Not At All Important)

	Total	Dhaka	Chittagong	Khulna	Rajshahi
Rural (n=992)					
Choice of Parties	3.93	3.9	3.94	3.93	3.95
Freedom of Religion	3.92	3.92	3.96	3.92	3.90
Honest Elections	3.92	3.89	3.96	3.94	3.91
Private Property	3.91	3.85	3.97	3.96	3.90
Free Speech	3.59	3.54	3.57	3.74	3.59
Women's Rights Protected	3.42	3.30	3.56	3.46	3.38
Free to Form Parties	3.33	3.30	3.31	3.58	3.25
Freedom of Association	2.96	2.83	3.07	3.15	2.88
Urban (n=1008)					
Honest Elections	3.94	3.92	3.94	3.97	3.93
Freedom of Religion	3.94	3.95	3.99	3.96	3.86
Choice of Parties	3.91	3.89	3.93	3.96	3.90
Private Property	3.91	3.88	3.97	3.94	3.87
Free Speech	3.61	3.67	3.61	3.74	3.33
Women's Rights Protected	3.48	3.43	3.63	3.39	3.54
Free to Form Parties	3.34	3.48	3.37	3.40	2.86
Freedom of Association	2.99	2.98	3.06	3.13	2.80

The table provides several other comparisons. Both rural and urban respondents place the second highest level of importance on freedom of religion. Rural and urban residents also give equal rankings to private property (4), freedom of speech (5), equal treatment for women under the law (6), the right to form parties (7), and freedom of association (8).

Figure 31 seems to indicate that both urban and rural residents of Dhaka generally attach lower importance to each of these rights than their counterparts in other regions. Figure 32 provides another way to look at this data in order to compare regions and see how they relate to each other vis-à-vis the importance of human rights. Figure 32 ranks each region in order with respect to the importance it gives for each right. Each region is given a ranking from 1 to 4 for each category. In this case, the region attaching the highest importance to this right would get a 1, the region attaching the second-highest importance would get a 2, and so on. For example, both rural and urban Dhaka respondents rate choice of parties lower than rural and urban respondents in Rajshahi, Chittagong and Khulna. Therefore, Dhaka respondents have the lowest rating, or 4th out of the 4 regions in both the urban and rural categories.

Figure 32. Regional Ranking for Human Rights
 (1 = Highest, 4 = Lowest)

	Dhaka	Chittagong	Khulna	Rajshahi
Rural (n=992)				
Choice of Parties	4	2	3	1
Freedom of Religion	3	1	2	4
Honest Elections	4	1	2	3
Private Property	4	1	2	3
Free Speech	4	2	1	3
Women's Rights Protected	4	1	2	3
Free to Form Parties	3	2	1	4
Freedom of Association	4	2	1	3
Total =	30	12	14	24
Urban (n=1008)				
Honest Elections	4	2	1	3
Freedom of Religion	3	1	2	4
Choice of Parties	4	3	1	2
Private Property	3	1	2	4
Free Speech	2	3	1	4
Women's Rights Protected	3	1	4	2
Free to Form Parties	1	3	2	4
Freedom of Association	3	2	1	4
Total =	23	16	14	27

The row at the bottom of both the rural and urban sections gives the total for each region based on its rankings for each individual right. The lower this total, the more importance rural or urban respondents attach to the collective group of rights. The table shows that rural residents of Dhaka are ranked last compared to rural respondents in other regions for 6 out of 8 of the rights, and are ranked last among the four regions with a total score of 30. Among urban participants, Rajshahi respondents attach the least importance to the collective group rights. Both rural and urban residents of Khulna and Chittagong place higher importance on human rights than their counterparts in Dhaka and Rajshahi.

Figure 33 takes a look at this data from another perspective, the rural-urban differential. Except for choice of parties and private property, the level of importance attached to each human right is consistently higher for urban respondents than rural respondents. It should be noted that the differences between rural and urban respondents are small, and not statistically significant. However, the patterns are of interest. In general, there appears to be a greater difference between the rural and urban respondents living in Dhaka than might be true for other regions. A positive number indicates higher importance attached to the right by urban respondents, and a negative number indicates higher importance attached to the right by rural respondents.

Figure 33. Urban Mean – Rural Mean
 (Derived from Figure 32)

	Total	Dhaka	Chittagong	Khulna	Rajshahi
Women Rights Protected	0.06	0.13	0.07	-0.07	0.16
Freedom of Association	0.03	0.15	-0.01	-0.02	-0.08
Honest Elections	0.02	0.03	-0.02	0.03	0.02
Free Speech	0.02	0.13	0.04	0	-0.26
Freedom of Religion	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.04	-0.04
Free to Form Parties	0.01	0.18	0.06	-0.18	-0.39
Private Property	0	0.03	0	-0.02	-0.03
Choice of Parties	-0.02	-0.01	-0.01	0.03	-0.05

There are also significant differences across social categories. Overall, males believe most human rights are more important than females. One exception is that females place higher importance on equal rights for women under the law. The importance of human rights generally rises with age, and then falls among the oldest group (46 years of age and above). The oldest age group rates the right to form political parties and the right to private property higher than other age groups. There is little difference between age groups in the importance of freedom of religion. The importance attached to women's rights under the law falls with age.

Educational differences do not produce a clear pattern in the data. Those with the highest levels of education place more importance on private property, freedom to form parties, and freedom of religion. However, there is no clear upward trend in the mean levels of importance as education rises. One interesting finding is that the highest educated respondents place the least importance on women's rights under the law, on average.

Those with the highest levels of material well being believe the right to private property is more important than those at lower levels of SES. The lowest SES group places the least importance on private property. This would be expected, and provides some internal validity for the SES measure. The highest SES respondents place higher importance on freedom of association, on average.

The Role of NGOs

Attitudes toward and knowledge of NGOs were assessed in the survey. Respondents were asked: *In your opinion, how important is the role of NGOs?* The combined category of respondents who said either very important or somewhat important shows that most people believe NGOs are important: 74% of the urban respondents and 69% of rural. Nearly one out of

three in both rural and urban communities give the most extreme response, that they are very important. This data is illustrated in Figure 34.

Figure 34. Importance of NGOs, by Region
 (% Saying Very or Somewhat Important)

	Total	Dhaka	Chittagong	Khulna	Rajshahi
Rural	69%	64%	69%	73%	73%
Urban	74%	71%	76%	81%	69%

Urban respondents rate NGOs as more important than rural respondents in all regions, except in Rajshahi where this is reversed. A higher percentage of both rural and urban respondents rate NGOs as important in Khulna and Rajshahi regions than in the regions that have the highest populations, and largest urban centers.

There is no significant difference of opinion between females and males on the importance of NGOs. Approximately 70% of each group gives this opinion. There is more variation among the age groups. Respondents 36 – 45 years of age are the most likely to state NGOs have an important role in society. Approximately 75% give this opinion in this group, compared to 68% - 70% in the other age groups.

The perception that NGOs have an important role increases with education. However, those with mid-level education (HSC or SSC certificates) are the most likely to give this response (81%), followed by those with higher education (73%), and those with lower levels of education (approximately 68%).

The perceived importance of NGOs also rises steadily with Social Economic Status. In the lowest SES group, 65% believe NGOs are important. This rises to 76% of the highest SES group, the top 20% of the sample.

NGO Membership

Respondents were also asked if they were members of any NGO-type groups (respondents were given a list of groups). Figure 35 provides data on membership in NGOs by region and type of community. Nationally, most respondents do not belong to NGOs. For Dhaka, 51% of urban and 59% of rural participants claim they do not belong to NGOs. The percentages are higher in Chittagong: 62% urban and 77% rural. This percentage is lower for Khulna (48% urban and 65% rural do not belong), and Rajshahi (50% urban and 55% rural do not belong to NGOs).

Figure 35. Membership in NGOs

	Rural		Urban	
	Non-Member	Member	Non-Member	Member
Rajshahi	55	45	50	50
Dhaka	59	41	51	49
Khulna	65	35	48	52
Chittagong	77	23	62	38

"Are you a member of any of the following organizations?"

The table indicates that membership in an NGO is highest in Rajshahi among both rural and urban respondents. Membership is lowest in Chittagong among both rural and urban respondents. Dhaka has the second highest rate of membership according to these self-reports, followed by Khulna, for both rural and urban respondents.

The table also indicates that membership is higher in urban areas within each region. The gap between urban and rural membership is highest in Chittagong, where the rural membership is 15 percentage points lower than the urban figure.

In general, membership increases steadily with SES, with rises in the level of education, and with age. Membership often falls among the oldest age group and highest educational level.

As for the types of groups to which respondents belong, religious groups, cooperatives, and micro-credit organizations are the NGOs people most frequently cite in each of the regions. Micro-credit groups have the highest overall membership, with 10%. Religious groups have 9% membership, followed by educational groups (5%), and political groups (4%). Overall, 61% state they are not members of any group. Membership in political parties varies widely across regions. In Khulna, 12% of the urban respondents claim membership in a political party. In Dhaka and Rajshahi, only 6% do. Membership in political parties is lower among rural respondents in these regions, except that 7% of rural respondents in Rajshahi claim membership in a political party. Educational groups have a low but steady membership across the regions. Many of the other NGO groups have little membership.

Figure 36. Membership in NGOs

Not a member of any group	61%
Micro-credit groups	10%
Religious groups	9%
Educational groups	5%
Political groups	4%
Youth groups	3%
Sport groups	2%
Trade groups	2%
Legal groups	1%
Environmental groups	1%
Women's groups	1%
Other groups	5%

"Are you a member of any of the following organizations?"
[Multiple responses allowed]

PART VII. CONCLUSION

The analysis in this report included statistical regression as a method to summarize the significant variations in attitudes among respondents. The responses for many of the questions asked in the interview form ordinal scales that may be used for this technique. Regressions provide a statistical guide to the general tendencies in the data. Two general sets of factors were considered in the models used behind the tables. First was the location the respondent lives in, either rural or urban, and which of the four regions was named for the major metropolitan center (Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi). The second set includes characteristics of the individual common across all regions: gender, age, education and social economic status (SES). Ordinal measures were regressed on both sets of factors to assess which characteristics help explain variation in the responses given. These results helped in deciding the analyses (tables and figures) presented in the report.

Regression analyses used in the survey analysis also help highlight the effect different characteristics have on attitudes. Overall, regional variation appears to be one of the important factors in shaping attitudes in Bangladesh, even after other factors are accounted for (education, gender, age, SES). Respondents' answers are shaped by where they live. This is shown in the priorities for safe drinking water, development of wells, health care, and relief programs shown in the Rajshahi and Khulna regions. This is also seen in the added emphasis for development of industries and improvement of roads and communication observed in the more metropolitan areas surrounding Dhaka and Chittagong.

Over and above other factors, residing in the Chittagong region seems to influence attitudes. There is a consistent downward effect on satisfaction with most government activities over the last 10 years associated with residing in this region. There is also a consistent effect on levels of confidence. Though respondents from Chittagong tend to be relatively negative toward the government, they are more confident toward many other social institutions. Rural respondents from this region, however, have the lowest levels of confidence about the current situation. Nearly 37% evaluated the current political situation as 'unfavorable.' (This compares to the general tendency in rural areas to evaluate things positively compared to urban respondents.) While most rural respondents in Chittagong believe Bangladesh is a democracy, at least in comparison with the statement read to them, 6% did not. This is a small number, but the next highest percentage among rural respondents is 2% in the Rajshahi region, and less than 1% in Dhaka and Khulna. Thirty-four percent (34%) of rural respondents in Chittagong stated that over the last 10 years governments have performed badly in developing the country. And, higher percentages of rural respondents there mentioned corruption in all social institutions than other rural areas, except for NGOs among Dhaka rural respondents and private banks among Rajshahi rural respondents (tied with Chittagong at 7%).

Rural respondents generally evaluate government programs and social institutions more favorably than urban respondents. However, rural respondents were much less satisfied than urban respondents in efforts over the last 10 years in agriculture and relief of poverty. It would seem they would be more knowledgeable about this than urban respondents. This may also reflect the progress they have experienced in their own lives. Most (66%) state that their financial situation is better now than it was 5 years ago. In most countries, respondents are acutely aware of their current household financial situation, and prepared to evaluate it

compared to the past and future. Urban respondents tend to be less confident in social institutions.

One striking finding for this analyst is the high degree of interest in politics among rural respondents. Results in this report indicate that rural people are even more interested in politics than their urban neighbors. They are also more likely to believe that voting brings influence, and less likely to state that they have no influence compared to urban respondents. Also, rural people seem more confident that citizens act first for the good of the country, and are less critical of corruption in social institutions in general.

On the other hand, there are clear and wide differences in the amount of information that is available to rural and urban people. Those nearer cities and large towns are more likely to report there is adequate information about political and economic developments in Bangladesh. These differences may also be seen in the media usage patterns of rural and urban respondents. Higher percentages of rural respondents have no access to television and print media than those in urban areas. The differences are minor for radio broadcasting.

A striking finding is the low access many women have to media relative to men. There is generally a 20% - 30% increase in the number of women that do not have access to media, relative to men, for both urban and rural areas. The difference is only 12% regarding access to television in rural areas, but the pattern remains.

Another important finding is the variation in attitudes by gender. Women are much less confident in many social institutions than men. They are also less certain that political parties are important or that citizens act first for the good of the country. Women give lower evaluations for the importance of human rights, except for receiving equal treatment under the law. Women are also as likely as men to vote in the 2001 elections. However, they are more likely than men to report that politics is too complicated and that they have no influence. Women appear to be alienated from the political system of the country.

The report presents an interesting juxtaposition of findings. On several attitudes, the richest and poorest respondents in the sample appear to be similar. Both are less likely than the other 60% to believe that voting will give them influence. Both are more critical than others about efforts made to give access to education. Reasons may vary, but the association is unexpected.

Education does not provide clear clues to opinions. On one hand, higher educated respondents generally place greater importance on human rights. This is to be expected. On the other, the level of education gives few clues toward understanding political attitudes. The highest educated do appear to be the most cynical, and are the most likely to disagree that citizens and officials act first in the common good.

Age has mixed effects on attitudes. Support for the rights of women decreases steadily with age. Support for private property (that this is protected under law) increases with age, but drops among the oldest. Both may be generational effects. Women's rights is a relatively newer emphasis. Private property may be less of a concern for the youngest and oldest respondents. Confidence in institutions generally increases with age. Interest in politics and optimistic expectations about the economy (both national and family) decreases, other things considered. The older the respondents, the less likely they are to believe there is adequate information about political and economic developments.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Methodology

This section is based on the technological report provided by a local research organization in Bangladesh. The IFES 2000 survey was conducted between November 18 and December 15, 2000. Interviewers rated respondents' level of cooperation. Less than 5% were rated as 'uncooperative.' Slightly over one-third (34%) 'cooperated, but gave little detail' in their responses, and another 42% were 'cooperative, and gave some detail.' Finally, 20% were rated as 'very cooperative' by the interviewers. Urban respondents cooperated more readily than rural. Nearly one in five urban participants were 'very cooperative,' versus 15% in rural areas.

A multistage cluster sampling was employed for the study. The whole country was divided into 4 broad regions – Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi. Seven municipal cities/towns and 7 non-municipal towns were sampled for the urban sample. Thirty-one (31) rural centers were selected for the rural sample: 8 from the Dhaka region, 7 from Chittagong, 6 from Khulna and 10 from Rajshahi. A systematic random sampling technique was used for the selection of these centers. In urban areas the Electoral Roll method was followed to select the sampling blocks. In rural areas, the center was divided approximately into four equal blocks and a random start selected. Interviewers used systematic random sampling to select households. Random sampling technique was used to select a respondent from a household using the Kish-selection chart.

Characteristics of the sample are provided below. Approximately 80% of the population of Bangladesh live in rural areas. For this reason, results are often presented separately for urban and rural respondents. Otherwise, the total combined sample would mainly reflect the attitudes of the rural population.

In total, 2741 people were contacted by interviewers. Of these, 408 (9%) were eliminated from the net sample because nobody was home, and 205 (4%) because the persons there were under the age requirement for the survey (18 years of age). This resulted in a net sample of 2128 respondents who were eligible and available for the survey. Of these, 128 refused to take part in the survey (6% refusal rate), resulting in the final sample size of 2000 respondents.

The main reasons for refusing to participate in the survey included shortage of time and lack of desire to participate because the respondent had no confidence in public surveys, or did not wish to open the door to unknown people.

Table 1. Contact Information

[1]	[2]	[3]				[4]	[5]	[6]
Type	# of Completed Interviews	Number of uncompleted				Households Contacted	Level of Respondent's Accessibility (%)	Refusal Rate (%)
		[3.1] Nobody Home	[3.2] Age < 18	[3.3] Refuse	[3.4] Total			
MC*	560	150	43	51	244	804	69.7	8.3
NMC**	448	114	45	32	191	639	70.1	6.7
Rural	992	144	117	45	306	1298	76.4	4.3
Total	2000	408	205	128	741	2741	73.0	6.0

* Municipal Center

** Non-Municipal Center

Appendix 2. Social Economic Status (SES)

The survey included a series of questions designed to objectively measure the respondent's material well being. Interviewers assessed the roof of respondents' homes and whether they owned their own home or rented. Next, interviewers listed the consumer goods present in the household.

In the urban households:

Concrete roof:	21%
Corrugated metal:	67%
Bamboo:	12%
Owned their home:	65%
Rented:	32%
<u>Other arrangement:</u>	<u>3%</u>
Refrigerator:	13%
Bicycle:	20%
Radio:	22%
Color TV:	13%
Black and White TV:	27%
Electricity in home:	67%
Water in home	24%
Cooker:	12%

In the rural households:

Concrete roof:	2%
Corrugated metal:	80%
Bamboo:	18%
Owned their home:	97%
Rented:	4%
<u>Other arrangement:</u>	<u>2%</u>
Refrigerator:	<1%
Bicycle:	26%
Radio:	23%
Color TV:	2%
Black and White TV:	9%
Electricity in home:	20%
Water in home	<1%
Well:	53%
Cooker:	<1%

Interviewers also evaluated the respondents' level of literacy by whether they could understand the printed lists used in the interview:

- * 36% of urban respondents could not read, another 11% read poorly
 - * 56% of rural respondents could not read, another 15% read poorly
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A Social Economic Status (SES) measure was then developed from the combined list of household goods and the respondents' education. Respondents were grouped into five equal categories (quintiles) based on their score: (1) low (bottom 20%), (2) moderate-low, (3) moderate, (4) moderate-high, and (5) high (top 20%). The categories were used as another characteristic of the respondent.
