

Explaining voter participation: Evidence from Bangladesh

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Voter participation is crucial for any democracy. Without effective participation, elections are not representative of public opinion and thus positive outcomes of democracy are hard to expect. Not surprisingly economists and researchers of other interested disciplines try to find the set of variables that explain voter participation. They used wide varieties of methodologies starting from rational voting models to game theoretic approaches. However studies are mostly focused on developed economies which already have institutionalized democracy in operation. For a growing democracy like Bangladesh situation can be different. Using data of national election of Bangladesh in this study we have found voter participation is positively related to intensity of voter competition, rate of literacy and number of centers available. Population, however, has a negative impact and the level of economic activities (district level GDP) does not seem to have an effect on voter participation.

Key words: Voter participation, Bangladesh, General election