



Reforms in the Election Commission



Very recently BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia placed few proposals for reforms in the Election Commission. The Hon'ble President thus invited BNP leadership to hold a dialogue to discuss the matter further. We are now all waiting to see when this dialogue will happen and what its results will be.

Since the main objective of this dialogue is to ensure a free and fair election, we feel that since we are the citizens of this country, we also have something to say.

Those who read our papers regularly are aware that we proposed some reforms in the Election Commission in the paper titled “**Indefinite Corruption**” in order to eradicate corruption from the society. The paper was published back in 2009.

In that paper we identified the funds flow for electoral campaigns as one of root causes of political corruption and thus we proposed the Election Commission to take over the charge of electoral campaigns for the candidates.

Those who haven't yet read the paper can access the following link and read pages 48-58 (<http://www.ideasfd.org/assets/Paper1.pdf>).

This is actually not our idea. We borrowed this idea from the Awami League leadership when they proposed this electoral reform back in 2005.

Later Awami League Chief and present Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina wrote about this idea in an article titled “**Please, call White white and Black black**”, which was published in the Daily Jugantor. In that article, Hon'ble Prime Minister stated,

“...there was a reform brought in the election process in order to curb the flow of black money and the influence of hooligans. This was, the posters of all the candidates will be printed by the Government. The Government will take all the responsibilities of election expenses. The candidates can only go from door to door. They can jointly hold processions and meetings. They will stand in the same podiums. The Government will take all these measures but it will neutrally bear all the expenses. Two bi-elections were held under this method. In Kishoreganj, one school teacher won the election. The brother of Vice President Syed Nazrul Islam lost against him. Despite being in power, he neither manipulated the election nor he abused his power to make his brother a winner.”



The successful implementation of the idea proposed by Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina might bring significant changes in the future

If this new idea is implemented, we believe it will bring a far-reaching impact all over the country. Whether a candidate has money or not will no longer be a factor for winning the elections. Thus the candidates who are qualified and educated but not having much money, can also win in the elections.

This will accelerate the competition for doing good deeds in the society. This will also increase the tendency to win over people's hearts with the help of character and quality.

Very recently we learnt from the Indian media that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is also considering such an idea for implementation.

We don't know whether Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been influenced by the idea of Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. If this is the case, then we can say that Bangladesh is now not only an exporter of garments, ceramics and plastics, she has also become an Idea Exporter.

We fervently request Hon'ble President to consider this idea for discussion in the forthcoming all party dialogue. If everybody supports this idea, and if this idea is successfully tested later on, then Bangladesh's name might be written in the books of Combating Corruption.

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