Voice of the first time voters: A closer look at their perspectives

IT is said that students are to emerge as leaders in the future. It is also said that a change can come through a young mind's determination. Yes, I am talking about the political arena of-course. Strangely, the very word "Politics" gives us a series of negative visual images. Bangladesh has lately witnessed dynamic changes in terms of politics. Situations changed, role-players stumbled, and along with it changed students' perceptions. With the whole new system of voter ID and the promise of holding a free and fair election, today's young generation differs from every other individual in terms of their own political perspective. To take a closer look into their mind, I talked to some fellow students who are first time voters of the country. So, were they excited to cast vote for the first time? Or were they reluctant to be a voter? What do they think? What are their perspectives about the present system? Yes, that's exactly what I am going to ramble on for today.

A student of ETE department, North South University- **Shamma M. Raghib** stressing on her expressions on being a voter for the first time says- "Being officially a voter for the first time has made me realise the responsibilities I hold for my country. Although at this time I may not know whom to vote for, or whether or not I am going to vote at all, I do know that it is my right to vote and also vote for the right person. Thoughts about the election and voting has provoked me to question the authorities, why aren't there a proper channel through which we youngsters can have a leadership role or a say in our politics? We need a platform to voice our expectations, if it's not welcomed we would just stop responding at all."


Zannatul Lamea

Students who went abroad for higher studies has actually an optimistic outlook on the overall situation - "I am really proud and ecstatic to be enlisted as a voter of Bangladesh. It really makes me feel good, thinking that from now on, I'll make a small contribution to the development of my motherland provided the election is fair. Sad but true that all these days, the only impression I had about the national election is that it's all about vote-rigging. However, I really appreciate the recent initiatives undertaken by the caretaker government regarding the election system. I really wish the election was held when I would be back home, because I truly want to witness my first vote being cast in a fair election." expressed **Ridoy Podder**, currently enrolled at 3rd year Electronics and Communication Program at University of Birmingham.

Interestingly, most of the students seemingly were in absolute dilemma about the whole matter. **Fauzul Azim Kibria(Ankon)**, studying in 4th Year at IBA mentioned- "On one hand, I am glad that I have a chance to exercise my civic right to vote and play a part (however minuscule) in electing a democratic government for my country. On the other hand, why bother, exactly? Every single political party in the country is the same wolf in different disguises. It goes like this party A goes to power, makes some immeasurably stupid decisions, party B starts picketing, claiming they could do the job so much better, party B gets the job, and makes a bigger mess out of the whole situation. I think we should implement the "Onastha" vote system. Then again, in that case, whom do we elect?"

Speaking about his trail of thoughts, **Adnan Ahmed** from North South University narrated, "Since childhood, I had a dream of being a voter (I still don't really know why). But while growing up, and coping up with our political scenario, the childhood dream of being a voter has just been wiped out. But I love to dream. For the sake of my romantic-self, I love to believe that with my voter power, I will make a difference in the making of my government. I am very excited nonetheless to reflect my will in the forming of a new government. I hope after all this "reformations and extensive preparations", we will find some better people to rely on. It is undeniable that, some "out of the reach of law" people who did sufficient role-playing in our political arena are now out of the political scenario. This single thing has brought back by inspiration towards voting, and I really am excited!"

Nusaiba Jasmine, a student from Sher-E-Bangla Medical College, Barisal- cited her personal feelings regarding being a voter. She said, " Years ago I used to watch my parents go to cast their votes with a high spirit and I wondered when will my time come? And now when I am finally a voter, it seems like a huge responsibility! Now I know that it's not only a task rather it's a huge duty imposed upon me for selecting the suitable leader who will be able to take us to a new height. I hope from the bottom of my heart for the election to take place in due time and may Allah help me to cast my vote justifiably."