

CHITTAGONG CITY CORPORATION ELECTION

Youths, middle-income group, female voters ended Mohiuddin era

Says survey



ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury



M Manjur Alam



e-voting

STAR REPORT

ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury, the longest serving mayor of Chittagong who finally lost the election to BNP-backed candidate M Manjur Alam, got less support from the youths, middle-income group and female voters, a survey revealed.

Mohiuddin's rift with his party, his overconfident attitude and 'misconduct', lack of support from minority voters and less contact with the voters were quoted by respondents as some of the reasons for his defeat.

The survey was conducted by

Nielsen Bangladesh following the Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) election.

Respondents said they voted against Mohiuddin as they were tired of his long 'autocratic' tenure and wanted a change. He also did not approach the women voters adequately.

On the other hand, the survey found that Manjur Alam won because of his good behaviour, politeness and image as an honest person. His less attacking campaign against his opponent and his approach to all irrespective of gender and religion also made him the winner.

Target respondents

To ensure that the sample properly represents all possible categories, respondents from the following groups were extracted:

- Area:** 41 wards
- Gender:** Male and female
- Age group:** Voters (age 18 years and above)
- Interview at household level or pre-appointed place of the voters**

Study methodology

The poll was quantitative in nature. A total of around 2,546 eligible voters/respondents were interviewed, covering all the wards under Chittagong City Corporation. In each ward, there are a number of mahallas, developed by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. From each ward, two mahallas were selected randomly. These mahallas were considered as primary sampling units (PSUs)/clusters.

Respondents profile

A total of 2,546 respondents were interviewed under the scope of the study from 41 wards of Chittagong City Corporation (CCC). Fifty percent of the respondents were male while rest 50 percent were females.

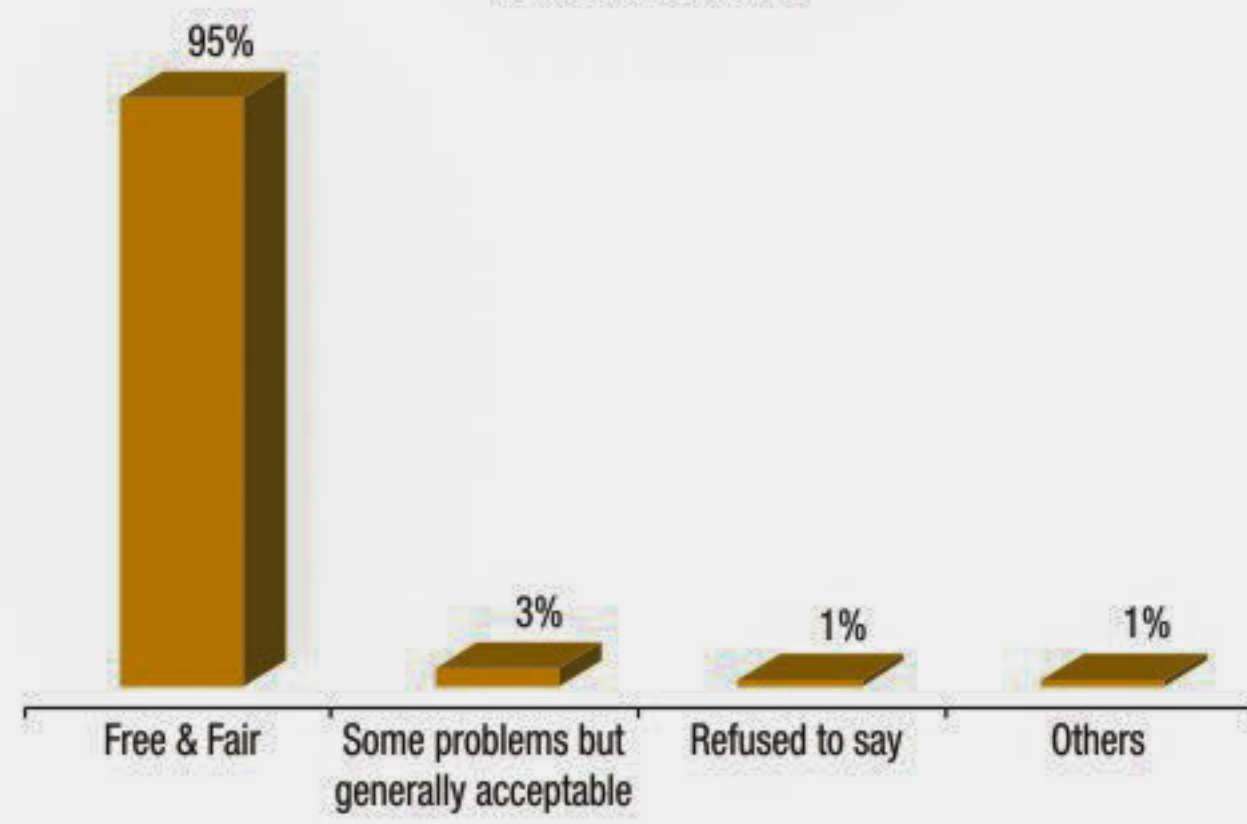
Nearly 60 percent of the respondents were from the age bracket 25-45. While nearly one fifth (19 percent) were young voters within the age of 19-25 years.

As expected, majority of the respondents were Muslim (85 percent) while around 14 percent were Hindu. Christian and Buddhists were 1 percent.

Polling environment

Almost all the voters (95 percent) viewed that the Chittagong City Corporation election was held peacefully, free and fair. They further reported that they did not encounter any problems, difficulties or irregularities. None of the voters felt "insecure" as such. However, only 3 percent of the voters said that "the wait was too long".

Overall, how would you describe the election environment?

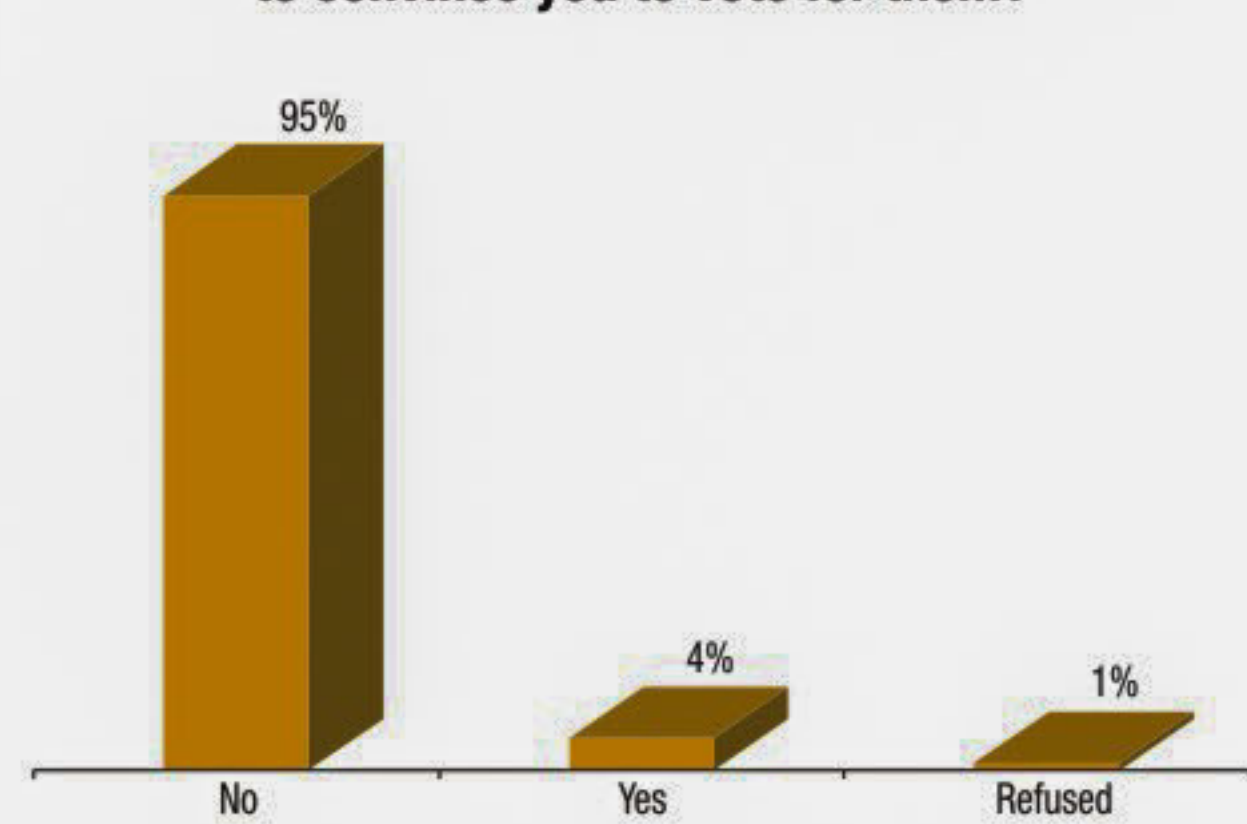


Decision about the candidate

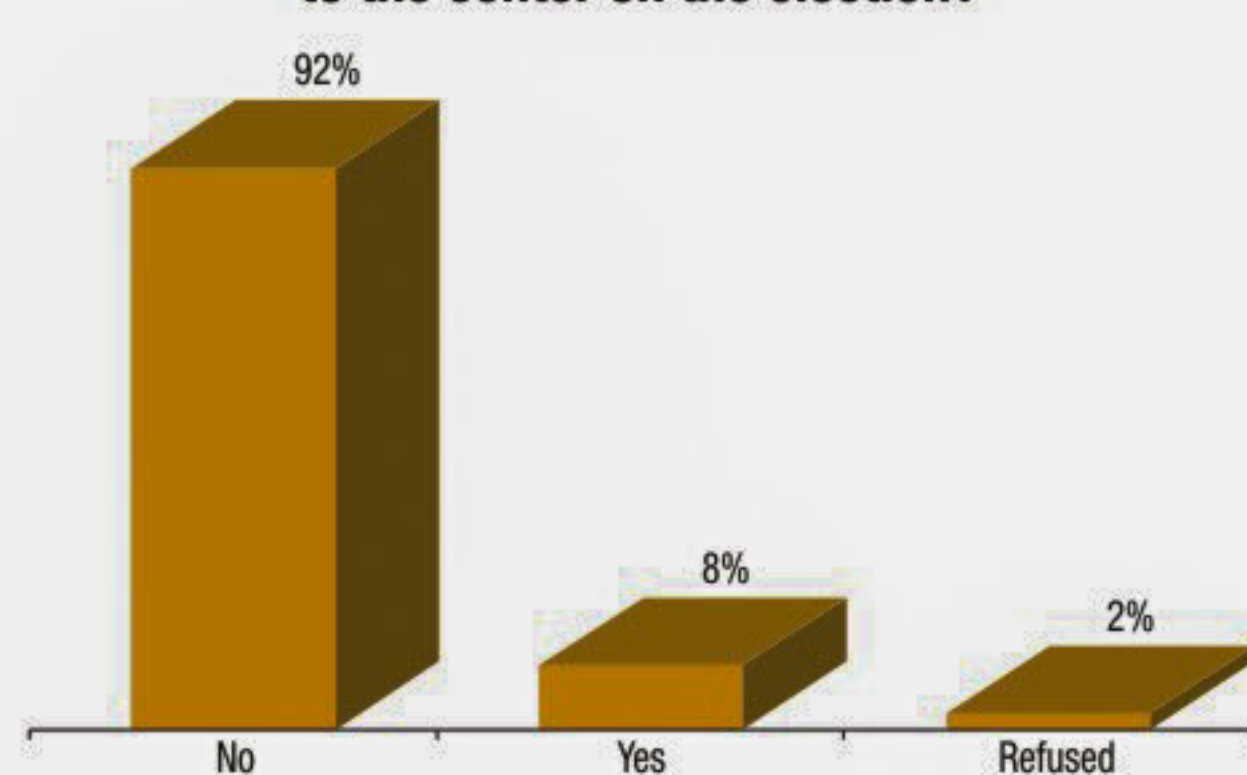
Although there was backing from the political parties, but more than one-third (38 percent) of the voters took decision about the candidate just before the polling started -- within last 48 hours! The last moment decision was extremely critical for the candidate. Females (42 percent) were the ones who took last minute decision more compared to males (35 percent). Across age groups, 40 percent of the young voters (19-25 years) took the voting decision within last two days, while 36 percent of the senior group (55+ years) doing the same.

Nearly another one third of the voters (31 percent) decided during the campaign i.e. after the announcement on candidates made by Bangladesh Election Commission (BEC). Only 19 percent were loyal to political party decision and that inherits in their family, such loyalty was higher among males (19 percent) compared to females (15 percent). Therefore, the personal quality of the candidate was extremely crucial to the voters during this CCC mayoral election.

Since the elections were scheduled, has any one offered you a gift, a favor, food, or money to try to convince you to vote for them?



Were you facilitated by the candidate to go to the center on the election?



Corruption by the candidates

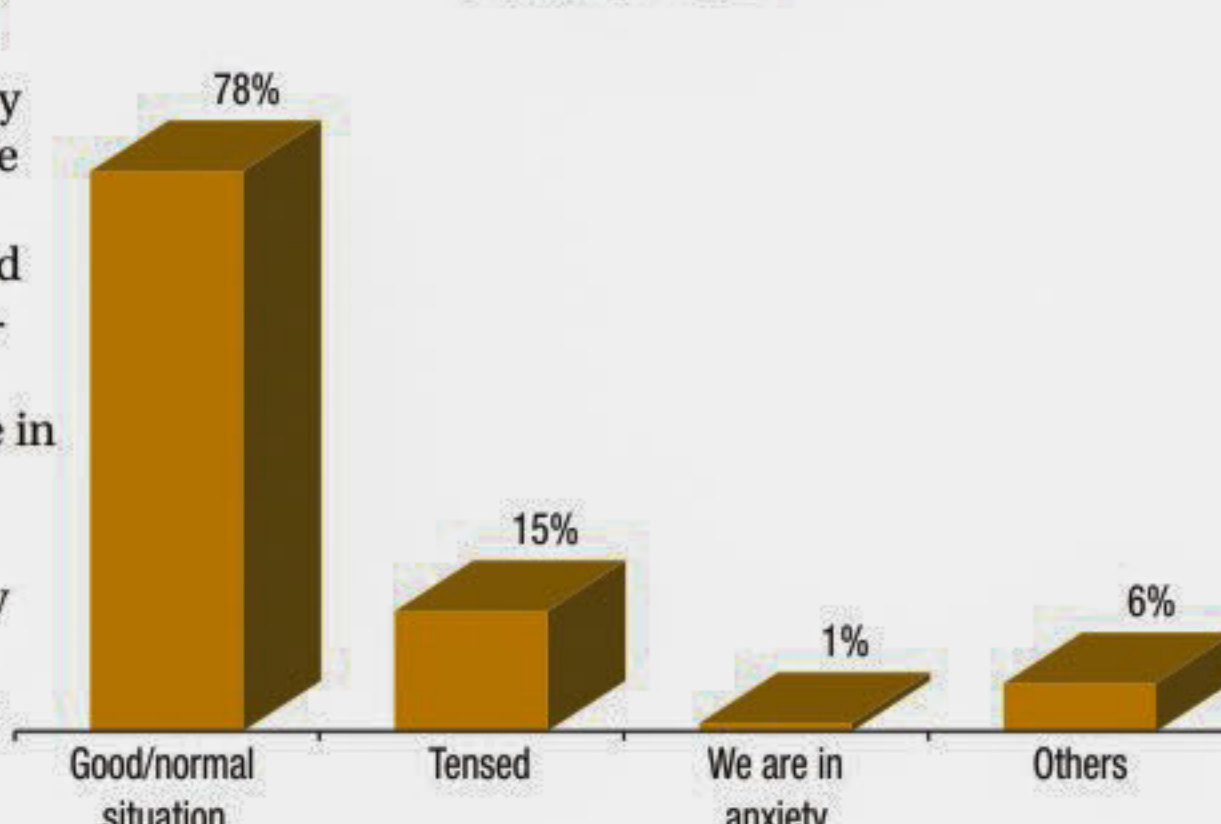
Almost all the voters (95 percent) reported that they haven't received any gift, food, or money from the candidate or their workers trying to convince them to vote for them. However, 4 percent of the voters said that "received something".

Similarly 92 percent of the voters said that the candidates or political party did not facilitate them going to the polling centre. But 8 percent of the voters have received facilities in some form from the candidate or his party for going to the polling station. Considering the low percentile of such incidence it can be concluded that, overall the election was free from corruption, as such to the voters.

Post-election environment

Although opposition party backed candidate won the election, majority of the voters (78 percent) termed the post election environment as "peaceful". However, 16 percent were in tension or anxiety. People appreciated the gesture of the ruling party in accepting the election result and congratulating the opposition winning candidate. The feelings were similar irrespective to religion, age or gender.

What is the post-election situation now?



Winning candidate

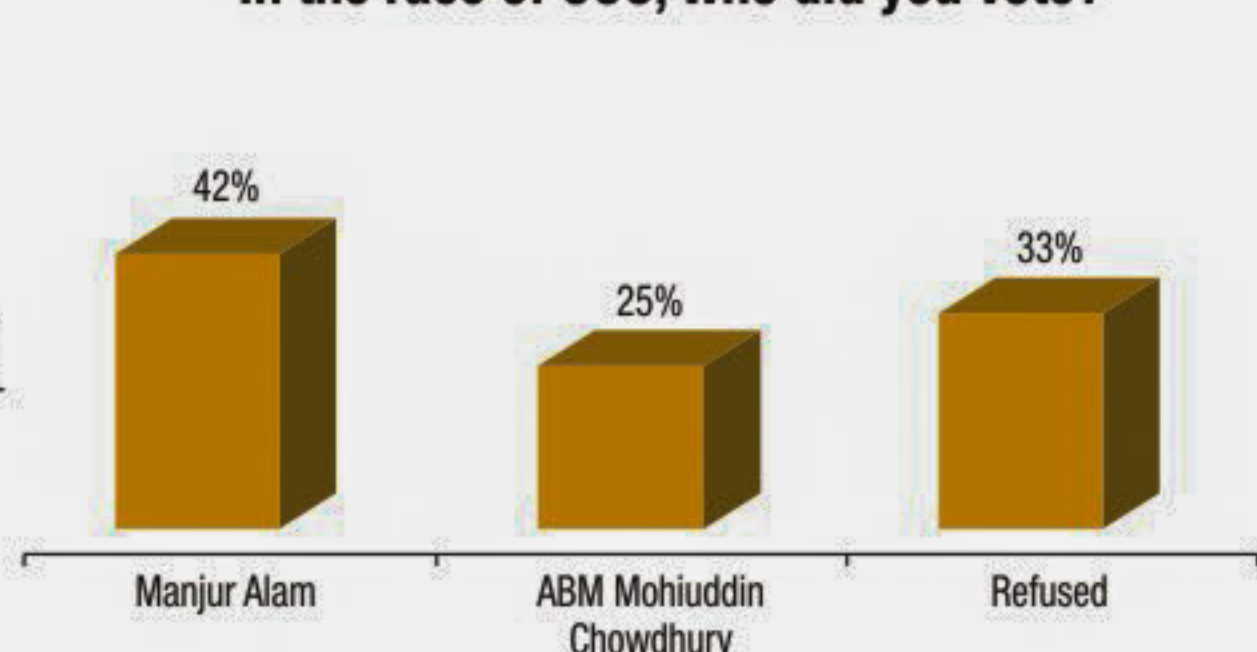
The respondents were asked directly reveal the name of the candidate they had voted for. One third of them (33 percent) refused to disclose their choice. However, 42 percent of the voters spontaneously said they have cast their votes to Manjur Alam, while 25 percent reported that they have voted for Mohiuddin Chowdhury.

Across income groups, Manjur was preferred and voted by people of all income brackets, while more by the lower income population. He got 45 percent vote of the population group having income less than BDT5,000, while Mohiuddin got only 24 percent vote from this group.

Across gender and age groups, Manjur

was also preferred more by all age groups and irrespective of genders. Among the Muslim's 45 percent preferred Manjur as against only 22 percent preferred Mohiuddin while among the Hindu voters, 45 percent voted for Mohiuddin, while 20 percent voted for Manjur. Chittagong dwellers. Incidentally, there was heavy rain during the polling day

In the race of CCC, who did you vote?



which also triggered to swing voters toward him, Finally people wanted "change".

Qualitative reasons for winning and losing

Nielsen researchers interviewed in-depth a large number of voters irrespective of areas, gender, income and occupation to understand the underlying factors for losing the poll by Mohiuddin and winning by Manjur. The main reasons were as follows:

- ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury:** The main reasons for him to collapse were - Less support from young and middle income and female voters, Detached from his party (central and local), Overconfidence and misconduct, Ignoring local problems (i.e. waterlogging, traffic congestion etc.), Less support from minority voters

Gender discrimination to some extent In addition, since there was a three-day holiday (Thursday (polling day) and weekly holidays Friday and Saturday) -- most of the floating voters i.e. coming from other districts left Chittagong also contributed to his failure.

People were tired of his long autocratic tenure and opted for a change.

Manjur Alam: The main reasons for him to win were - Good behaviour, Polite and soft spoken,

Perceived as honest (it may be recalled that he worked as acting mayor during military-backed caretaker government; Mohiuddin was in jail at that time), and people found him honest,

Less attacking to opponent during the campaign

His campaign was above any gender or religious discrimination

Waterlogging is a major crisis in the CCC area. It was a long demand for

e-Voting

First time introduced e-voting in Jamal Khan Road (Ward # 21) was highly accepted by 94 percent of the voters. Nearly 44 percent of the voters also suggested introducing this through out the country. However, people suggested for wider campaign about the process, techniques etc so that elderly and less literate voters get proper knowledge about using the e-voting machine.

Perception about the government

The poll was held after one and half years of the government in power. Around three-fourth of the voters (73 percent) perceived that the country is in the right track. However, 13 percent viewed as "wrong track". The respondents had more or less similar views irrespective to religion, gender or age groups.

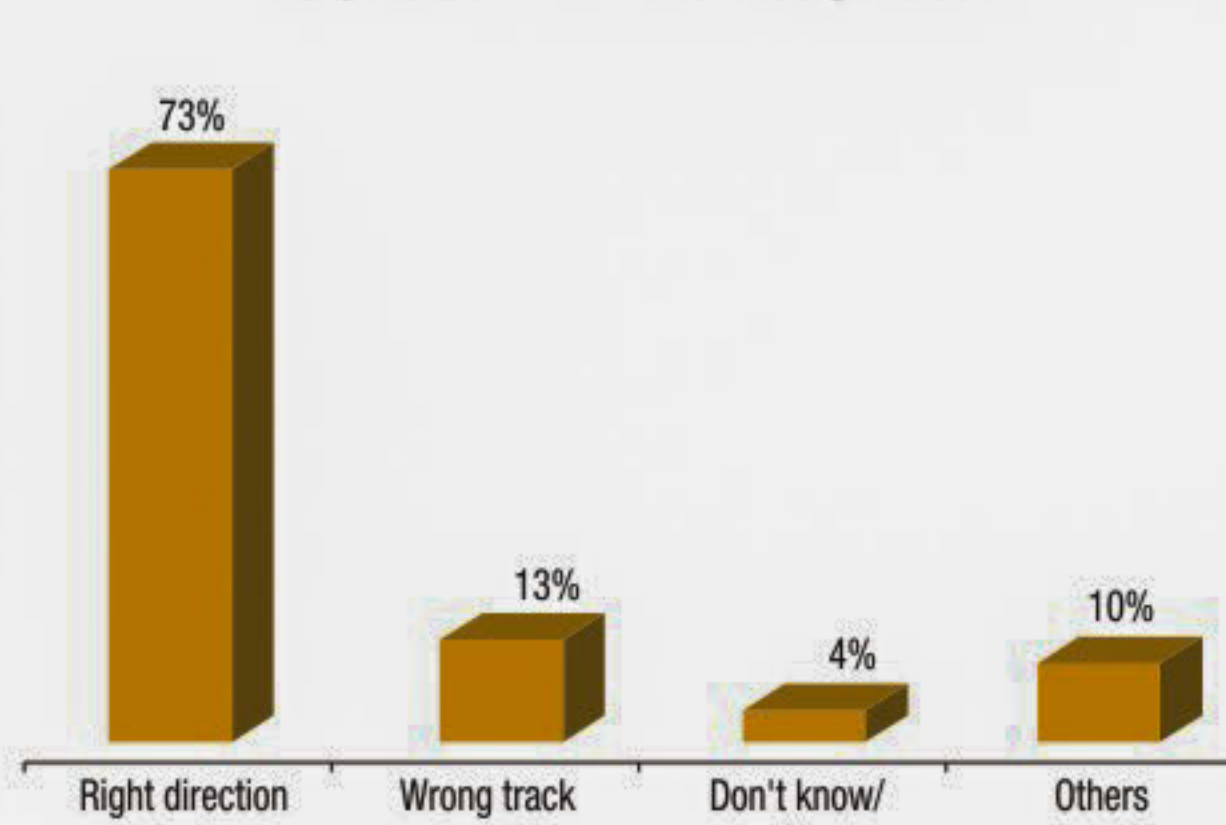
Interestingly, the view is also similar with respect to the candidate they have voted for. Majority of the respondents who have voted for Manjur (72 percent) also feels that the country is going into the right direction, similar to those who have voted for Mohiuddin (79 percent).

Satisfaction on government performance:

Similarly, 70 percent of the voters are satisfied with the performance of the government; as against 18 percent of the dissatisfied voters.

Interestingly, majority of the voters who supported opposition-backed candidate also have similar views (64 percent).

Overall, do you think that Bangladesh is headed in the right direction or do you think that they are off on the wrong track?



Concluding remarks

People have shown full confidence in Bangladesh Election Commission (BEC). The election was free and fair and it was acceptable to almost all the voters. They have not accepted any statement or opinion about the quality of the election, in general, raised by any political party or candidate after the election. The election result matches with the opinion poll findings.

Overall, the electronic voting (e-voting) system was accepted among the voters. However, some of them suggested for more campaign about the techniques and process of e-voting for wider acceptance. It will help increasing awareness and knowledge using the e-voting machine effectively.

Finally, it is perceived by majority of the voters that the country is in the right track and the citizens are satisfied with the performance of the government.