

Ensuring Good Governance in Bangladesh: An Overview

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Abstract: *The terms 'governance' and 'good governance' are increasingly being used in development literature. Intellectuals, bureaucrats and civil society members alike are accepting the spirit of the concept and are conceiving it in the context of their own experience and environment. The Bangladeshi government has recently been under constant pressure from various donor agencies for ensuring good governance. The implementation and achievement of good governance depends upon the transparency, honesty and efficiency of the legislature, executive and judiciary, along with the cooperation of civil society and the private sector. This paper mainly focuses on the concept of governance and good governance, secondly, it aims at identifying the elements or indicators and characteristics or features of good governance, thirdly, it describes the present state of governance along with examines the main constraints to good governance in Bangladesh and finally, it recommends to apply some important steps for ensuring good governance in Bangladesh.*

Introduction:

'Good Governance', a splendid notion, is being debated around the world, particularly in developing nations, to combat corruption and poverty, and gain economic development. But how could it be achieved? In this context, scholars, academics, economists, politicians, civil society members and international organizations like World Bank, UNDP, European Union etc. are presenting their valued opinions, thoughts and theories at brainstorming seminars or roundtables to ensure good governance for gaining faster economic growth and improving the lifestyle of the poor people of the developing countries like Bangladesh.

It is clear that, 38 years have already elapsed since the country's independence but good governance in Bangladesh could not be established perhaps because of widespread corruption, abuse of power, inefficiency of bureaucracy, deteriorating law and order and political interference in the administration. So, we can obviously say that , Bangladesh could not yet reap the fruits of independence due to poor governance and lack of political commitment. In fact, no government in the past took serious and effective measures to curb corruption and promote good governance in the administration and social life. Abuse of

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power, nepotism, politicization of administration and corruption were the order of the day by politicians, policy makers and high officials. They were not made accountable for their wrong doings and corrupt practices. As a result, people's frustration has increased. Therefore, in such a situation, to ensure good governance the present government has to take remarkable initiatives which among all state institutions must be strengthened.

This article is based mainly on secondary data collected from different sources including books, magazines, journals, reports, periodicals, published and unpublished documents and daily newspapers etc. Moreover, it covers the reading materials available in the internet and websites.

This paper mainly focuses on the concept of governance and good governance, secondly, it aims at identifying the elements or indicators and characteristics or features of good governance, thirdly, it describes the present state of governance along with examines the main constraints to good governance in Bangladesh and finally, it recommends to apply some important steps for ensuring good governance in Bangladesh.

Defining 'Governance' and 'Good Governance': A debate

Notwithstanding popular usage of terms 'governance' and 'good governance,' these are not amenable to precise definitions. The development aid community is yet to adequately define the contours of 'governance' and 'good governance.' 'Governance' may imply different things to different people who have very little in common in terms of their worldview, ideology and class status. From NGOs and community organizations to powerful states and multilateral institutions- all swear by governance. The grounds for supporting 'governance' are as diverse as their avowed proponents. As a result, one finds that a variety of definitions, often at cross-purposes, are being used to describe 'governance,' thereby further confounding the concept (Singh, 2003).

American Heritage Dictionary (2000) defines governance as "the act, process, or power of governing." Simply, 'governance' means the process of decision-making and the process through which decisions are implemented. The concept of 'good governance' conveys the qualitative dimension of governance. Attempts to define what constitutes good or bad governance have failed in the past because concepts and processes of 'governance' vary from country to country. For instance, what is

considered corrupt practice in one country (for example, insider trading, tax evasion, money laundering, etc.) may be considered as normal business practice in another. Due to lack of precise definition, the debate over the use of term 'governance' instead of government remains inconclusive.' (Singh, 2003)

In terms of distinguishing the term governance from government "governance" is what a "government" does. It might be a geo-political government (nation-state), a corporate government (business entity), a socio-political government (tribe, family, etc.), or any number of different kinds of government. But governance is the kinetic exercise of management power and policy, while government is the instrument (usually, collective) that does it. The term government is also used more abstractly as a synonym for governance, as in the Canadian motto, "Peace, Order and Good Government". (<http://www.answers.com/governance> accessed on 5-8-2009).

Conceptual Definition:

Governance: Governance is a multifaceted concept with wide ramifications. This is so because of the fast-changing and interdependent global environment. No country can afford to continue with a governance system that is outdated, slow, ineffective, expensive and corrupt in this age of globalization (Khan, 2003).

Governance though is increasingly widely used it is not a new term. It was first used in the fourteenth century. At that time it was used in two senses. In first case it meant action, method of governing; and in the second sense it included action and manner of governing (Khan, 2006:19).

But the term is still deprived of a universally accepted definition. This may be one reason as to why the term has been labeled as confusing (Pierre and Peters, 2000:14); not clear (Smouts, 1998:81); and not precise (Senarciens, 1998:92). In spite of lack of unanimity about definition has not hindered the overflowing of definitions about the term.

¹ Some analysts have offered plausible economic and political reasons for the use of term 'governance' instead of government. According to Sophal Ear, a former World Bank official, "the phenomenal rise of governance as opposed to government, in a normative context, may also have a great deal to do with its more palatable sound-to say "bad government" to a Prime Minister is akin to telling him he is a "bad" person. While to say that his government suffers from bad governance sounds more diplomatic-and international financial institutions (IFIs) like the World Bank and the IMF are, if nothing else, diplomatic organizations."

Governance is ultimately concerned with creating the conditions for ordered rule and collective action (Stoker, 1998). Governance has a dual meaning; on the one hand, it refers to the empirical manifestations of state adaptation to its external environment as it emerges in the late twentieth century (Pierre, 2000); on the other hand, governance also denotes a conceptual or theoretical representation of coordination of social systems and, for the most part, the role of the state in that process (Pierre, 2000).

According to Webster's Dictionary, 'governance' means 'the act or process of governing, specifically authoritative direction and control' (Cited from Aminuzzaman, 2006). This interpretation specifically focuses on the effectiveness of the executive branch of government.

In general terms, it can also denote "how people are ruled, how the affairs of the state are administered and regulated as well as a nation's system of politics and how this functions in relation to public administration and law" (Landell-Mills and Serageldin, 1991:304).

In general terms, governance occurs in three broad ways:

1. Through networks involving public-private partnerships (PPP) or with the collaboration of community organisations
2. Through the use of market mechanisms whereby market principles of competition serve to allocate resources while operating under government regulation
3. Through top-down methods that primarily involve governments and the state bureaucracy. These modes of governance often appear in terms of hierarchy, markets, and networks. (<http://www.answers.com/governance> accessed on 5-8-2009)

Governance is a broader notion than government, state, and regime, and is the interaction between formal institutions and civil society. It is seen as a process whereby elements in society wield power, authority, and influence and enact policies and decisions concerning public life, and economic and social development (<http://www.gdrc.org/u-gov/work-def.html>, accessed on 04-08-2009). In this context governance is defined as "a system" of government concentrating on effective and accountable institutions, democratic principles and electoral process, representation and responsible structures of government, in order to ensure an open and legitimate relationship between the civil society and the State (Halfani et al. 1994:4).

In the broadest sense, governance concerns performance of the government including public and private sectors, global and local arrangements, formal structures, informal norms and practices, and spontaneous and intentional system of control (Roy, 2006:5). McCarney et al define governance as a system of government concentrating on effective and accountable institutions, democratic principles and electoral processes, representative and responsible structures to ensure an open and legitimate relationship between the civil society and the state (McCarney et. al. Cited in Khan, 1997).

In the 1990s the study of governance was a major growth industry in the social sciences. M. Whitehead sees governance 'as a process whereby formal governing structures are no longer focused primarily on the political realms of public sector government...but are increasingly incorporating a range of interests drawn also from the private sector and civil society'. (<http://www.answers.com/governance> accessed on 5-8-2009)

The Governance Working Group of the International Institute of Administrative Sciences (1996) describes governance has no automatic normative connotation. However, typical criteria for assessing governance in a particular context might include the degree of legitimacy, representativeness, popular accountability and efficiency with which public affairs are conducted.

Governance is basically a process by which stakeholders' interest are articulated, their input is absorbed, decisions are taken and implemented, and decision makers are held accountable (Bakker, 2003 cited in Aminuzzaman and Sharmin, 2006). According to McCarney et al., (1995) governance is "the relationship between civil society and the state, between rulers and the ruled, and the government and the governed"

Governance, thus, not only include the political and administrative institutions of government and interrelationships but also the relationships between government and society including the disadvantaged (McCarney, 1996). Empirical evidences further suggest that governance for basic services to poor and disadvantaged should follow an approach which is open and transparent, inclusive and communicative; coherent and integrative; and equitable and ethical (Resnick & Birner, 2006).

Hodges *et. al.* in Corporate governance in the public services: issues and concepts an article published in Public Money and Management 16 (2) 7-13 define governance as:" the procedures associated with the decision making, performance and control of organizations, with providing structures to give overall direction to the organization and to satisfy expectations of accountability to those outside it." (<http://makingendsmeet.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=5148966>(accessed on 04-08-2009). How an organization controls its actions. Governance describes the mechanisms an organization uses to ensure that its constituents follow its established processes and policies. It is the primary means of maintaining oversight and accountability in a loosely coupled organizational structure. A proper governance strategy implements systems to monitor and record what is going on, takes steps to ensure compliance with agreed policies, and provides for corrective action in cases where the rules have been ignored or misconstrued. <http://www.looselycoupled.com/glossary/governance>(accessed on 04-08-2009)

Broad definitions of governance are often rather vague (Box 1). There is a very considerable literature that discusses how, precisely, the concept of governance might be defined ; for the purposes of this paper this literature may be summarised as emphasising the following:

- The processes by which governments are chosen, monitored, and changed.
- The systems of interaction between the administration, the legislature, and the judiciary.
- The ability of government to create and to implement public policy.
- The mechanisms by which citizens and groups define their interests and interact with institutions of authority and with each other.

Considering these issues in the context of governance, two comments may be made. First, a good deal of governance is about the exercise of various forms of power. There are different types of power--ideological, political, legal, military, economic, administrative, and so on--and governments everywhere frequently use various combinations of power to govern. It is important that economists, when considering issues of governance, bear in mind that many senior government leaders see economic policy tools as part of the broader spectrum of levers of power which they can draw upon at any time to achieve their goals. Just as one famous brief definition of economics is that economics is about "who

produces what, and for whom", so a brief definition of governance might be "who controls what, and for whom".

Some Definitions of Governance:

"GOVERNANCE is the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority to manage a nation's affairs. It is the complex mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights and obligations, and mediate their differences." (UNDP)

"GOVERNANCE is the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's social and economic resources for development. Governance means the way those with power use that power." (ADB)

GOVERNANCE is "... the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised for the common good. This includes (i) the process by which those in authority are selected, monitored and replaced, (ii) the capacity of the government to effectively manage its resources and implement sound policies, and (iii) the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them." (World Bank)

"The term governance, as generally used, encompasses all aspects of the way a country is governed, including its economic policies and regulatory framework. Corruption is a narrower concept, which is often defined as the abuse of public authority or trust for private benefit. The two concepts are closely linked: an environment characterized by poor governance offers greater incentives and more scope for corruption. Many of the causes of corruption are economic in nature, and so are its consequences - poor governance clearly is detrimental to economic activity and welfare." - IMF, 2002.

"Governance encompasses the values, rules, institutions, and processes through which people and organizations attempt to work towards common objectives, make decisions, generate authority and legitimacy, and exercise power." (Canadian International Development Agency, <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/CIDAWEB>)

Second, for the purposes of discussing governance, it is useful to distinguish between issues of governance at the macro and micro level.

- Matters which might be classified at the macro level include such things as constitutional reform; the overall role of government itself (size and resources); the relationship between the key national institutions of the administration, the legislature, the judiciary, and the military; and the manner in which the political market operates.

- Micro issues of governance can be taken to include issues in many sectors of the nation including at the regional and unit level: government departments, state owned enterprises (SOEs), commercial firms, education and health institutions, cooperatives, organizations active in civil society affairs (such as the media, think tanks, and non-government organizations), and informal institutions of governance which operate in the large informal sector across Indonesia (Mc Cawley, 2005) .

Governance broadly deals with the political process that attempts to raise the living standard of the people to create an environment for them to enjoy the benefits of freedom equally. The political philosophy and objectives of different governments, the economic policies, the internal and external security of the nation and the relationships with other nations are important aspects that shape the type of governance (Gunapala, 2000). However, there are at least seven separate uses of governance relevant to the study of Public Administration: corporate governance; the new public management; good governance; international interdependence; socio-cybernetic systems; the new political economy and networks (Rhodes, 2000)

A UK based professional body for people in public finance, The Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountability (CIPFA) in its publication "Accountability: a framework for public services" includes the following elements which form the basis of a governance framework:

- Openness: access to information, communication with stakeholders and appointments to posts
- Financial and performance management - annual reports and corporate planning
- External review: audit arrangements and regulation
- Due process: compliance with the law, standards of behaviour and conflicts of interest
- Redress: complaints mechanisms and independent review

(<http://makingendsmeet.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=5148966>, accessed on 04-08-2009)

The Commission on Global Governance (1995) defines governance as: "the sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs". It is a continuing process through

which conflicting or diverse interests may be accommodated and co-operative action may be taken. It includes formal institutions and regimes empowered to enforce compliance, as well as informal arrangements that people and institutions either have agreed to or perceive to be in their interest (Oxford University Press, 1995 cited in Lyon, 2000).

The World Bank's Experience, as it has special relevance for the developing world: World Bank, (1989) denotes the governance as " ... exercise of political power to manage a nation's affairs". Governance is also examined as "the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development," (World Bank, 1992). In the World Bank's definition, 'governance' encompasses the form of political regime; the process by which authority is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development; the capacity of governments to design, formulate and implement policies and discharge functions.

The World Bank's focus on governance reflects the worldwide thrust toward political and economic liberalization. Such a governance approach highlights issues of greater state responsiveness and accountability, and the impact of these factors on political stability and economic development. In its 1989 report, *From Crisis to Sustainable Growth*, the World Bank expressed this notion as follows:

"Efforts to create an enabling environment and to build capacities will be wasted if the political context is not favorable. Ultimately, better governance requires political renewal. This means a concerted attack on corruption from the highest to lowest level. This can be done by setting a good example, by strengthening accountability, by encouraging public debate, and by nurturing a free press. It also means ... fostering grassroots and non-governmental organizations such as farmers' associations, co-operatives, and women's groups".

To conclude, it is clear that the concept of governance has over the years gained momentum and a wider meaning. Apart from being an instrument of public affairs management, or a gauge of political development, governance has become a useful mechanism to enhance the legitimacy of the public realm. It has also become an analytical framework or approach to comparative politics, administration and international relation ("Governance Barometer: Policy guidelines for good governance" Website of South Africa's National Party <http://www.gdrc.org/u-gov/governance-understand.html>, accessed on 04-08-2009).

Now, I shall focus on two variant of governance - good and bad - to understand their symptoms.

Good and Bad Governance:

In order to know what constitutes good governance, it is useful to explore why bad or poor governance exists (Bhuiyan, 2008). Moore (2001) argues that 'bad governance' is neither inherent in the culture or traditions of the people of poor countries nor a product of poverty. It is rather the result of the ways in which state authority in the South has been constructed - and is being maintained - through economic and political interactions with the rest of the world. He further points out that the policies and practices of Northern governments and the pattern of international economic transactions help sustain poor governance in the south (Moore, 2001). A 1992 World Bank report identified the following key symptoms of bad governance (cited in Khan, 2002:66):

1. Failure to make a clear separation between what is public and what is private, hence a tendency to direct public resources for private gain.
2. Failure to establish a predictable framework of law and government behavior conducive to development or arbitrariness in the application of rules and laws.
3. Excessive rules, regulations, licensing requirements, and so forth which impede the functioning of markets and encourage rent-seeking.
4. Priorities, inconsistent with development, resulting in a misallocation of resources.
5. Excessively narrowly based or non-transparent decision making.

Why should 'bad governance' be relatively concentrated in poor countries? Insofar as an answer to the questions is implicit in their behavior, it would appear to be some notion of institutional deficit: poor countries lack the appropriate governance institutions that are found in the rich countries, in the shape of auditor-generals, police academies, freedom of information laws, judicial autonomy, public policy research institutes, and many other things (Moore, 2001 Cited in Bhuiyan, 2008). I shall now turn to discuss good governance.

Good Governance :

The World Bank first used the concept of good governance in its 1989 report, Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth, in which it characterized the crisis confronting the region as a "crisis of governance" and linked ineffectiveness of aid with governance issues (Singh, 2003). Since then, Good governance is now-a-days a widely used term in developed as well as developing countries. Bangladesh is no exception to this global trend. Politicians both in power and in opposition talk of their quest to achieve good governance. In true sense, government reform is a world wide trend and 'good governance' is the latest flavour of the month for international agencies such as the World Bank, shaping its lending policy towards third world countries. For instance, Good governance defines an ideal which is difficult to achieve in full. However, to ensure sustainable human development, actions must be taken to work towards this ideal. Major donors and international financial institutions, like the IMF or World Bank, are increasingly basing their aid and loans on the condition that reforms ensuring good governance are undertaken.

Good governance is a term used in development literature, which implies that public institutions conduct public affairs, manage public resources, and guarantee the realization of human rights. Good governance accomplishes this in a manner essentially free of abuse and corruption, and with due regard for the rule of law (UNESCAP, 2009).

Leftwich identifies three strands to good governance : systemic, political, and administrative. The systemic use of governance is broader than government covering the 'distribution of both internal and external political and economic power'. The political use of governance refers to 'a state enjoying both legitimacy and authority, derived from a democratic mandate'. Good governance, thus is more than mere sound and efficient public administration. It is the process of building enduring and consistently used bridges between the state and the society at large through an effective and people-oriented mechanism of administration (Rhodes, 2000).

A good governance is characterized by an accountable government at the top, an independent judicial system, freedom of thought and expression, and above all, freedom of choice for its citizens. Good governance also implies a democratic structure, human rights and freedom of media. Governance can be viewed as the sum of three major components: process, content and deliverables. The process of governance includes

factors such as transparency and accountability. Content includes values such as justice and equity. Governance cannot be all process and values. It must ensure that the citizens, especially the poorest, have the basic needs and have a life with dignity. A dictatorship that delivers basic needs to the citizens is no doubt better than a dictatorship that does not, but it is not good governance. Similarly, regular elections alone do not translate into 'good governance'. Rule of law that is transparent, but unjust- such as apartheid- is certainly not 'good governance'. It is only when all these three conditions are fulfilled that governance becomes 'good governance'. Within this broad conceptualization of good governance there are two distinct positions. The first, articulated by the World Bank conceptualizes good governance as management of a country's resources and affairs in a manner that is open, transparent, accountable, equitable and responsive to people's needs. Others argue that governance is 'good' when it serves not just any public interest but that of the most poor and marginalized people in society. Over the years, good governance has emerged beyond being a value concept. Increasingly it is understood as a process that when implemented in its totality leads to sustainable development and change (Aminuzzaman, 2006). However, the following table will provide the different dimension on good governance:

Table-1: Definition of good governance by different authors and agents

Author/Org.	Definition
Minogue, 1998	"Good governance is both a broad reform strategy and a particular set of initiatives to strengthen the institutions of civil society with the objective of making government more accountable, more open, transparent, and more democratic".
O'Neill, 2002	"Good governance means ruling justly, enforcing laws and contracts fairly, respecting human rights and property rights, and fighting corruption. Encouraging economic freedom means removing barriers to trade with neighbors and the world, opening the economy to foreign and domestic investment and competition, pursuing sound fiscal and monetary policies, and divesting government from business operations. Economic freedom also means recognizing that it is the private sector that creates prosperity, not central planning or bureaucracies."
Chopra, 1997	"Good Governance is a system of governance that is able to unambiguously identify the basic values of the society where values are economic, political and socio-culture issues including human rights, and pursue these values through an accountable and honest administration".
John Healey and Mark Robinson ²	"Good government" as follows: "It implies a high level of organizational effectiveness in relation to policy-formulation and the policies actually pursued, especially in the conduct of economic policy and its contribution to growth, stability and popular welfare. Good government also implies accountability, transparency, participation, openness and the rule of law. It does not necessarily presuppose a value judgment, for example, a healthy respect for civil and political liberties, although good government tends to be a prerequisite for political legitimacy".

² Governance Barometer: Policy guidelines for good governance" Website of South Africa's National Party <http://www.gdrc.org/u-gov/governance-understand.html> (accessed on 04-08-2009)

G8, Final Communiqué, 2001.	"Open, democratic and accountable systems of governance, based on respect for human rights and the rule of law, are preconditions for sustainable development and robust growth" (Singh, 2003).
European Union	"Good governance is the transparent and accountable management of human, natural, economic and financial resources for equitable and sustainable development. It entails clear decision-making procedures at the level of public authorities, transparent and accountable institutions, the primacy of law in managing and distributing resources, and capacity building for elaborating and implementing measures that aim to prevent and combat corruption" (cited in Aminuzzaman, 2006).
Office of High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR)	Governance is the process whereby public institutions conduct public affairs, manage public resources and guarantee the realization the human rights. Good governance accomplishes this in a manner essentially free of abuse and corruption, and with due regard for the rule of law. The test of 'good' governance is the degree to which it delivers on the promise of human rights: civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. The key question is: are the institutions of governance effectively guaranteeing the right to health, adequate housing, sufficient food, quality education, fare justice and personal security? (cited in Aminuzzaman, 2006)
World Bank, 1997	"Good governance is epitomized by predictable, open, and enlightened policy making, a bureaucracy imbued with a professional ethos acting in furtherance of public good, the rule of law, transparent process, and a strong civil society participating in public affairs. Good governance fosters strong state capable of sustained economic and social development and institutional growth".
UNDP, 2002	"... the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a nation's affairs at all levels and the means by which states promote social cohesion, integration, and ensure the well-being of their population".

One golden thread runs through all the definitions is the accountability and transparency in government actions and emphasizes the necessity and relevance of public morality in the conduct of the government for the welfare of the public (Rashid, 2008).

Governance encompasses every institutions and organization in the society, from the family to the state and embraces all methods - good and bad - that societies use to distribute power and manage public resources and problems. Good governance is therefore a subset of governance, wherein public resources and problems are managed effectively, efficiently and in response to critical needs of society. Effective democratic forms of governance rely on public participation, accountability and transparency.

Good governance is, among other things, participatory, transparent and accountable. It is also effective and equitable, and promotes the rule of law fairly. Good governance ensures that the voices of the poorest and the most vulnerable are heard in decision-making over the allocation of development resources, and that political, social and economic priorities are based on broad consensus among the three stakeholders the state, private sector and civil society. All three stakeholders are critical for sustaining human development: the state creates a conducive political and legal environment; the private sector generates jobs and income; and civil society facilitates political and social interaction. With the advent of

globalization and the integration of economies, the state's task is also to find a balance between taking advantage of emerging market opportunities and providing a secure and stable social and economic environment domestically.

(http://www1.aucegypt.edu/src/engendering/good_governance.html (accessed on 04-08-2009)).

Elements or Characteristics of Good governance:

After mentioning some definitions of good governance, it is necessary to discuss its elements or factors or parameters for better understanding the concept of good governance. The following are the parameters which are identified for promoting good governance expressed by Overseas Development Administration (ODA), 1993; UNDP, 1995; and World Bank, 1999:

1. participation; 2. legitimacy; 3. accountability; 4. openness and transparency; and 5. competence (Kumar, 2000).

Asian Development Bank (cited in Roy, 2006) identifies four basic elements of good governance (which McCawley calls democratic governance) such as accountability, participation, predictability and transparency. According to OECD (1992, cited in Khan, 2002), the salient features of good governance are:

1. Promotion of democracy and open pluralistic societies.
2. Strengthening of transparent, accountable, efficient and effective national government.
3. Reinforcement of the rule of law, including fair and accessible legal and judicial system.
4. Promotion of an independent media and dissemination of information.
5. Anti-corruption initiatives and efforts to reduce excessive military expenditure.

A new set of the World Bank public sector governance indicators covering 212 countries from the period 1996-2008 has been recognized as an effective measurement tool across the world. These governance indicators focus on the following six dimensions (Kaufmann et al., 2009):

- a) Voice and Accountability: measuring perceptions of the extent to which a country's citizens are able to participate in selecting their

government, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association, and a free media.

- b) Political Stability and Absence of Violence: measuring perceptions of the likelihood that the government would be destabilized or overthrown by unconstitutional or violent means, including politically motivated violence and terrorism.
- c) Government Effectiveness: measuring perceptions of the quality of public services, the quality of the civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government's commitment to such policies.
- d) Regulatory Quality: measuring perceptions of the ability of the government to formulate and implement sound policies and regulations that permit and promote private sector development.
- e) Rule of Law: measuring perceptions of the extent to which agents have confidence in and abide by the rules of society, and in particular the quality of contract enforcement, property rights, the police, and the courts, as well as the likelihood of crime and violence.
- f) Control of Corruption: measuring perceptions of the extent to which public power is exercised for private gain, including both petty and grand forms of corruption, as well as "capture" of the state by elites and private interests.

UNDP identifies nine core characteristics covering eight key urban issues which measure good governance (Mehta, 2000).

Core characteristics of good governance:

- 1) Participation: All men and women should have a voice in decision-making, either directly or through legitimate intermediate institutions that represent their interests. Such broad participation is built on freedom of association and speech, as well as capacities to participate constructively;
- 2) Rule of law: Legal frameworks should be fair and enforced impartially, particularly the laws on human rights;
- 3) Transparency: Transparency is built on the free flow of information. Processes, institutions and information are directly accessible to those concerned with them, and enough information is provided to understand and monitor them;

- 4) Responsiveness: Institutions and processes try to serve all stakeholders;
- 5) Consensus orientation: Good governance mediates differing interests to reach a broad consensus on what is in the best interest of the group and, where possible, on policies and procedures;
- 6) Equity: All men and women have opportunities to improve or maintain their well-being;
- 7) Effectiveness and efficiency: Processes and institutions produce results that meet needs while making the best use of resources;
- 8) Accountability: Decision- makers in government, the private sector and civil society organisations are accountable to the public, as well as to institutional stakeholders. This accountability differs depending on the organization and whether the decision is internal or external to an organization;
- 9) Strategic vision: Leaders and the public have a broad and long-term perspective on good governance and human development, along with a sense of what is needed for such development;

There is also an understanding of the historical, cultural and social complexities in which that perspective is grounded http://www1.aucegypt.edu/src/engendering/good_governance.html (accessed on 04-08-2009)

According to the UN, good governance has eight characteristics. Those are:

- Consensus Oriented
- Participatory
- following Rule of Law
- Effective and Efficient
- Accountable
- Transparent
- Responsive
- Equitable and Inclusive (UNESCAP, 2009).

Further, the United Nations Center for Human Settlements (UNCHS) identified five elements of good governance as follows:

1. Accountability: Good governance requires accountability by public officials; both elected political leaders and civil servants. Their public functions must serve the community at large.
2. Transparency: Good governance requires transparency in public procedures, process, investment decision, contracts and appointment. It is not sufficient that information simply be available, it must also be reliable and presented in useful and understandable ways to facilitate accountability.
3. Participation: Good governance requires wide participation in making public choices, such as policies and regulations (and even in the operation of markets).
4. Rule of Law: Good governance is built on the rule of law.
5. Predictability: Public and private institutions, such as government agencies and markets, must have some measure of predictability. The rule of law helps to protect against erratic uneven enforcement and the whims of public officials. But the process of making and changing public rules and expectations must also be predictable (Mehta, 2000).

As evident from the above-mentioned characterization, the international agencies like world Bank, UNDP tend to equate 'governance' within the ambit of government with an emphasis on corruption, transparency, participation and rule of law. Hence, their governance-related programs are concerned with public sector management, public administration, downsizing of bureaucracy and the privatization of state-owned companies. Without belittling the importance of these measures, the fact remains that such a narrow approach cannot help in understanding the myriad issues related to the concept of 'good governance.' The Bank as well as international donor community is oblivious to the relationship between 'good governance' and attainment of basic economic, social and political rights. With an emphasis on technicalities, the important issues related to politics and power relations both within and among nations are not given due attention. In fact, it is due to the World Bank's financial clout and intellectual hegemony, its definition of 'good governance' has gained wider currency within the dominant academic, diplomatic and development cooperation circles (Singh, 2003).

It should be mentioned here more that from the above characterization of good governance it is apparent that good governance is interrelated with

participatory development, human rights, democratization and economic development. A government can only be legitimate if it is based on the consent of the governed and if such is given through a recognized participatory process. Accountability of political and bureaucratic actors—a key requirement of democracy and human rights—can only be ensured through the free flow of information, scrapping of all black laws, freedom of print and electronic media, transparency in decision making and the institution of accountability mechanisms (Khan, 2003).

State of governance in Bangladesh: The following section highlights some aspects of governance in Bangladesh:

Bangladesh shows all the symptoms of an underdeveloped polity. Politics is still dominated by big money, goons and people with little background and training in formal politics. Power and authority are concentrated at the top echelon of the government based in the capital, leaving very little authority and resources at the disposal of elected bodies at the local level.

The economic disparity between the rich and the poor continues to widen, with frightening prospect for society. All the benefits of state patronage are provided to the rich, in spite of the fact most of them do not pay their taxes.

Social disparity among different strata of the population continues to deepen. Contrasting values and conflicting ethos are evident. Morality has become the biggest casualty at the present time. A recent survey on urban service delivery shows that slum dwellers in some areas of Dhaka have access to illegally supplied city only from the evening unit 5 AM at a monthly cost of Tk. 50 for each electric bulb. In contrast, Gulshan residents pay Tk. 13-15 for the same service but for 24 hours a day. Slum dwellers pay Tk. 2 for each bucket of water in areas where they can't have regular, water connections. In contrast, how much do people in Baridhara pay? - Tk. 4.33 per liters of water. These are examples of the inequitable consequences of poor governance and systemic inefficiencies. Poor people can't build resistance against this. They can't even complain, because they need the services but can't get them legally (Temple, 2002).

The Human Development Report has defined the goals of good governance as respect for fundamental rights and freedom, accountability of the rulers, fair rules, institutions and practices governing social interactions, non-discrimination based on race, ethnicity, class, gender, most importantly responsiveness of economic and social policies

conforming to people's needs and aspirations. Even countries with long and uninterrupted democratic records like India and Sri Lanka in the region have not fared very well in the report. In the 2002 Index, Bangladesh ranked 145 out of 173 nations, the Maldives 84, Sri Lanka 89, India 124, Pakistan 138, Bhutan 140 and Nepal 142. The scenario is not at all encouraging. True, there may not be any panacea to resolve manifold problems peculiar to this area but certainly things can be improved much given the will, sincerity and endeavors accompanied by realistic and pragmatic measures (Chowdhury, 2002).

Corruption in political arena is nothing uncommon in democracies and even in advanced nations but in South Asia it is a malaise in many ways. This hinders the growth and development of democracy and economy. In Bangladesh, Corruption has become so endemic that it has engulfed both public and private sectors and touched and affected, in one way or another, many individuals. The chief minister of West Bengal state of India lives a modest life in a 800-sq. feet apartment with his mother, wife and daughter, where many politicians of Bangladesh with no known source of income maintain a luxurious life (Chowdhury, 2002). So it is little wonder that the country enjoys the dubious distinction of being perhaps the most corrupt country in the whole world. No one seems to be too worried about this. This may be because the policy makers of Bangladesh have accepted the reality and feel that nothing needs to be done about it.

The following table depicts the strong undercurrents linking corruption to development indices.

Table 2 : Corruption & Development: A Vicious Circle

Country	CPI 2002 Score	Overall rank based on HDI 2002	HDI value
Bangladesh	1.2	145	0.478
India	2.7	124	0.577
Pakistan	2.6	138	0.499
Sri Lanka	3.7	89	0.741

The very fact that the three big countries in the region - India, Pakistan and Bangladesh- figure among the poor performers in both the CPI (Country Performance Indicator) 2002 (published by Transparency

International) and the HDR (Human Development Report)- 2002 (published by the United Nations Development Programme) has to be viewed against this stark backdrop. Interestingly enough, the table also reveals that the less corrupt a country is the better it fares in human development indicators. These surveys also tell us quite clearly and loudly the fact that there is a lack of accountability, which is considered to be the core of failure of governance in Bangladesh (Hasan, 2003).

A country's political system plays a pivotal role in shaping its destiny for good or bad. Political parties, the structure of government and international donors all in varying degrees influence or attempt to influence the nature of the political system of Bangladesh. Political parties, whether big or small, become most visible during election time. All parties profess to adhere to democratic principles. But the reality is different. The two major political parties of Bangladesh are Awami League (AL) and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). Both the supreme leaders of the AL and the BNP were given leadership positions with very little or no previous political experience. Heredity and kinship were the key determinates of their accession to power. The country's two major political parties thus survive on family tradition. This permanent nature of the supreme leadership has a number of adverse consequences for the healthy development of politics and political parties in the country (Khan, 2003).

The effective functioning of each and every organ of government is an essential prerequisite of good governance. In Bangladesh the dominant position of the executive within the political system is widely known. The parliamentary system that has been in existence without interruption for a little over a decade can best be termed a prime ministerial system. The prime minister enjoys and exercises an enormous array of power to the detriment of the legislature. The legislature in a genuinely parliamentary systems plays a critical role in overseeing the activities of the executive. Instead, in Bangladesh the legislature is confined to playing second fiddle to the executive.

The present size of the civil service is large compared with the tasks it performs. But reform-resistant public sector officials and employees are mostly poorly paid, ill disciplined and improperly trained. All these facts are linked with the overall work culture of this country and the way they are recruited. Avoiding responsibility for decisions and the non-merit-based selection of personnel combined together has created a

situation where competence is lacking. This lack of competence has created an environment of uncertainty, uneasiness and paranoia in the civil service. The greatest casualty of this situation is the ordinary citizen, who has to be content with poor service delivery, corruption and the bad behavior of street-level bureaucrats.

Good governance depends on having in place mechanisms that hold the government accountable to the public in a way that ensures the equitable treatment of all its citizens. This requires respect for the rule of law, based on an honest and fair judicial system and effective law enforcement. Effective accountability depends on systems and processes respected by everyone concerned, with effective and consistent sanctions applied when transgressions occur (Temple, 2002).

Judicial independence is a fundamental prerequisites for a society premised on the rule of law. Although the Constitution speaks volumes about the separation of the judiciary, but this has taken place after 38 years of independence. A number of amendments to the Constitution leave the judiciary dependent on the executive in several critical areas, including appointment of judges to the Supreme Court, financial grant and logistical support. The lower judiciary's ability to function properly, it is alleged, has been considerably eroded by constant government interference in its domain.

Judiciary is an era that is often talked about in Bangladesh and there is hardly any dispute that the system is expensive particularly for the poor. The expenses involved in the delivery of justice and the time consumed in the process may at times appear to be appalling. In 2002, we saw a report in newspapers that some people were sentenced to death in Bogra for committing murders but it took six years for the court to hand down the judgment. Then there are higher courts. At the same times, one notes with satisfaction the speedy trial of cases involving "Trisha" and "Shihab". The law minister spoke about more measures for quick disposal of cases of certain offences and these decision are definitely welcome. There have been a lot of talks by different quarters on the legal system, particularly at the lower tiers. This needs to be streamlined because a large number of rural people are involved with this apart from the issue of governance (Chowdhury, 2002).

One more important aspect of good governance is efficient and accountable management public finances. This is an area of great weakness in Bangladesh. The chain of accountability linking the people,

the legislature, and the executive has serious gaps. Repeated documentation of waste, fraud and abuse of public funds has resulted in very little action. This encourages further corruption (Temple, 2002).

One of the pressing problems in governance today concerns the politicization of the public bureaucracy and its effect on administrative performance. On the other hand, lack of accountability and transparency in the affairs of the state is considered to be a major impediment to effective governance. The governance system in Bangladesh is premised on a lack of accountability and secrecy. These two factors combined together have made governance in this country inefficient, ineffective and expensive.

The role of the donor community in a country like Bangladesh is significant as the country continues to depend heavily on the donor's aids and grants. International multilateral organizations and major donors have openly expressed their dissatisfaction with how the governance system works in Bangladesh. They have openly voiced concern about the deteriorating law and order situation, continuing political turmoil, massive corruption and inefficiency in the public sector, burgeoning size of the civil service and failure to leave business activities to the private sector. There is a strong unanimity of opinion among members of the donor community that governance has weakened significantly in recent years mostly because of a lack of collective improvement efforts (Khan, 2003).

So far we have discussed the state of governance in Bangladesh, by which has depicted the scenario of poor governance. It is apparent that lack of morality to the rulers and the administrators of the country like Bangladesh, they did not accomplish properly their duties and responsibilities which was concerned to service to the people. As a result after 38 years of the independence, the people of Bangladesh is far from development.

Recommendations:

In a workshop entitled "Good Governance and Accountability in Bangladesh", organized by News Network, Former World Bank Country Director for Bangladesh Frederick T. Temple strongly and confidently said that governance would improve in Bangladesh if loan defaulters, corrupt politicians, bureaucrats, businessmen, and terrorists is to be prosecuted successfully and incarcerated (Temple, 2002). However, a set

of recommendations are given here for establishing good governance in Bangladesh. The suggestions include reforms in various political systems, executive, judiciary and legislative branches and education system.

1. Political system must be overhauled with honest, competent, patriotic and visionary leadership through meaningful and effective reforms.
2. Freeing politics from ill clutches of power legacy or any kind of nepotism.
3. Zero tolerance to corruption by top leaders, including the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition.
4. Anti-Corruption Commission should extremely be empowered to initiate any kind of action on valid grounds against any person irrespective of alleged person's financial or social status.
5. Law enforcing agencies should be kept free from any political influence.
6. Ensuring complete independence of the Judiciary, Election Commission, local government institutions and Anti-Corruption Commission so the corruption within the government cannot impinge on them.
7. Parliament, Supreme Court, Election Commission as well as administrative and financial institutions should be made strengthened and effective.
8. Banning all activities, which go against public interests i.e. student politics, hartal, strike, blockade program etc.
9. Giving party nominations to honest, committed, energetic and patriot young people replacing those corrupt veteran politicians who are proved to be dishonest, self-centered and power hungry.
10. Rectification of the faults and loopholes in the whole education system of our country.
- II. Refinement of slipups in administrative infrastructure like local government.
12. Establishing realistic rules and regulations for all public recruitment and promotion, and keeping out the administration, police etc from all types of influence.
13. Ensuring freedom of mass media, both private and state-run ones in true sense. Establishing parliamentary democracy and holding all

discussions in Parliament.

14. Ensuring the right to information repealing the Official Secrets Act to ensure transparency and accountability of the administration.

15. Major national issues concerning governance should be made open for opinions and votes.

16. Conducting regular surveys and researches to monitor public opinion on important issues and revising policies and decisions accordingly.

17. Ensuring a high degree of transparency and accountability in public and corporate processes.

18. Promotion of independent media (both visual & print) to disseminate information about each elected parliament member's wealth status from day one of his/her submission nomination paper till the last day of his/her parliament membership.

19. Ensuring decentralization of power, responsiveness and adoptability of the government removing 'red-tapism' in the administration.

20. Strengthening local government and efficiency in managing resources.

21. Training of all government officials and employees to make the administration dynamic and effective.

22. Institutionalize a formal process for the private sector and civil society to participate rule-making and government decision-making.

23. Making people aware of their rights and strengthening and enforcing the election code conduct.

24. Appointing the Ombudsmen, surprising visits by top executives to different institution and places and making report back to their respective authorities for immediate actions corrections.

25. Privatization of the institutions and service sectors for better management to boost economic growth, for instance Chittagong Seaport, Mongla Seaport, Bangladesh Biman Bangladesh Railway, etc.

26. A strong and comprehensive security should be in place to protect investment.

27. Ensuring human security and improving human rights condition.

28. Pro-active role by civil society, professional bodies, NGOs in making public awareness about their rights in society and conducting social a campaign against misdeeds a corruption.

Conclusion:

Discussion and debate continue throughout the world about the meaning and dimensions of governance. Yet consensus still eludes as to the accepted and authoritative meaning of term. The quest for consensus is linked with using the term as a 'tool kit' to understand and analyze the relationship among various governmental institutions and other organizations and group operating with in the society. It should be clear that good governance is an ideal, which is difficult to achieve in its totality. Very few countries and societies have come close to achieving good governance in its totality. However, to ensure sustainable human development, actions must be taken to work towards this deal with the aim of making it a reality. Although a lot of measures need to be taken for ensuring good governance, yet scholars, academicians and intellectual groups think utmost importance needs to be given to make our parliament efficient and strength by suitable and honest leadership, building institutional capacity and strengthening parliamentary oversight. They hope, if sincere efforts can be taken for implementing the above-mentioned steps to make our parliament as well as other organs and institutions of the government effective and they can play their role sincerely and properly good governance will be ensured. On the other extreme, the oppositions, civil society, social groups and organizations also have the moral obligations to help and cooperate with the governments in this juncture.

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