

## The Challenges of Good Governance: A View from Bangladesh

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**Abstract:** This article will focus on challenges, experiences and strategies for good governance in Bangladesh. It will explore what capacities states need to develop in order to meet the demands and how to strengthen governance institutions, including electoral management bodies, parliaments and Judicial systems in Bangladesh.

**Key words:** Governance, transparency, accountability, parliament, human rights, democracy

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### Introduction

Good Governance is important for countries at all stages of development. Bangladesh has recently gone through major changes which are conducive to the development of transparent, accountable governance-well organized and transparent general elections held in October, 2001 with the highest ever turn out of voters, emergence of an independent role for the Election Commission, adequate access of all candidates to the media during the election campaign, and the decision by the present government to activate the parliamentary committees and to the broadcast part of the proceedings of the parliament to promote accountability (Shabbir Cheema, 1996).

Despite the above achievement, Bangladesh continues to face major problems in governance for sustainable growth and equity. There is no tier of elected local government above the union parishad, which were abolished a few years ago. The present procedures and processes through which the members of the parliament work hinder their effective role in ensuring the accountability of the executive branch-non-functioning committees, inadequate facilities for MPs, and lack of adequate opportunities for MPs to review and discuss policy issues and options in a rational manner instead of in an environment of political polarization systems of financial accountability need to be reformed.

Other immediate issues of governance that require a government response include the need to enhance the capacity and independence of the Judicial system, to improve access to the electronic media, to eradicate corruption, and to develop a coherent policy formulation process which enables the involvement of all segments of the society leading to consensus-building on major issues of national concern.

**Conceptual Framework:** Good governance is participatory, transparent and accountable. It is also effective and efficient. It promotes the rule of law and equal justice under the law. Good governance ensures that political, social and economic priorities are based on broad consensus in society and the voices of the poorest and most vulnerable are heard in decision-making. We can take it for granted that sustainable human Development will not be realized without it.

To be sure, we must not forget that Bangladesh accomplished a great deal in the past few decades, against all odds and ordeals. There have been striking reductions in fertility and infant mortality rates. Gone are the days of routine famines, with the rise in agricultural productivity and more efficient food production. Gone too are the days of massive casualties to cyclones and floods. More girls are educated, and a great deal more children are enrolled in primary schools. More children are immunized, and diseases such as polio are banished from the land. We even see a steady pace of economic growth and a downward trend in poverty. The poor people of Bangladesh have surely benefited from these gains.

But neither can we forget that a child's life saved in Bangladesh is still condemned to malnutrition that is among the worst in the world.

Good governance means all taxes due are collected and actually to the treasury. It means the same amount of Taka goes much further in financing development projects; because public procurement is transparent and efficient. It means all public spending are accounted for as intended, and audited currently.

Good governance requires an efficient executive, a functioning legislature, an independent Judiciary and the effective separation and balance of powers, all constituent elements of a democratic regime. Consequently, Good governance is not sustainable without effective democratic institutions. This article tries to explain, as simply as possible, what "Good governance" in Bangladesh. Good governance means Universities and colleges are a tranquil place for learning, instead of political agitation. It means teachers and professors are educators-qualified, certified, and motivated to teach full time, instead of just collecting paychecks or in private tutorials outside the class room. It means captains of industry can focus on their business growth protecting what they have from harassment and extortion.

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**Data Sources:** The paper is based on secondary information which includes recent publications, Journals, books, research reports and other documents.

**Key Elements of Good Governance:** The key elements of good governance as defined by UNDP are listed below:

**Participation:** Participation by both men and women is a key cornerstone of good governance. 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.

**Rule of Law:** Legal frameworks should be fair and enforced impartially, particularly the laws on human rights.

**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.

**Responsiveness:** Good governance requires that institutions and processes try to serve all stakeholders within a reasonable timeframe.

**Consensus Orientation:** There are several actors and as many view points in a given society. Good governance requires mediation of the different interests in society to reach a broad consensus in society on what is in the best interest of the whole community and how this can be achieved.

**Equity:** All men and women have opportunities to improve or maintain their well-being.

**Effectiveness and Efficiency:** Good governance means that processes and institutions produce results that meet the needs of society while making the best use of resources at their disposal.

**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." (UNDP, 1997)

**Political, Social and Economic Dimensions of Governance in Bangladesh:** Democracy as an institution is new and still fragile in Bangladesh. Over the last three decades since her independence Bangladesh has witnessed several political hiccups including assassination of two presidents, two army coups and two major political movements that caused the downfall of political regimes. Bangladesh has had three general elections during the past decade, both of which were believed to have been generally free and fair. yet democracy seems to be floundering.

**Electoral Process:** Donors supported the previous held general election through the coordination of international observers, support for election preparation and supporting the election commission information cell. Support to the electoral process has been appreciated by the government. As a result, the government requested the preparation of a project document to support the long-term needs to the Election commission. Officials from the Election commission particularly identified the need for support to the training institute, improved voter education programs, Computerization of the electoral roll, independence of the media in the election process and strengthening the capacity of the Election commission to enable it to perform its role effectively.

**Parliamentary System:** An effective parliamentary system is a vital element for improving Good governance. Parliament is the key institution in the national system of accountability. As an elected body it is the organization that empowers the Government and grants it legitimacy. Parliament scrutinizes the activities of the executive branch and holds it accountable to the citizens of the country. However, in Bangladesh experience of parliamentary government has been far from satisfactory. None of the first four parliaments proved to be largely ineffective due to a prolonged boycott by the main opposition parties; The sixth parliament merits a mention in the Guinness Book of Records for its unexpectedly short existence. The eighth parliament is now in session. Both the people of Bangladesh and the donor community, which are working to improve good governance in Bangladesh, have high expectations that the current parliament will be more effective. The need for the parliament to perform its role as specified in the constitution is recognized. However the performance of MPs is affected by several factors: The interruption of the democratic process during the past two decades (1971-1990), non-functioning committees of the parliament, lack of support facilities and services for

MPs, and an environment of political polarization. As a result, critical issues of public policy are not adequately discussed and the executive branch continues to make major policy decisions without adequate input from the opposition.

Representatives of the government and opposition have identified several areas in which support to the parliament would be needed: MPs do not have office space to undertake necessary preparatory work for the plenary sessions; MPs, with the exception of the Government ministers, do not have support staff assigned to them in order to undertake the necessary research work and analysis on issues being discussed in the house; committees of the parliament need to be made operational to allow for discussion in small groups; the library facilities and the capacity of the secretariat need to be strengthened; and most importantly, MPs need to be re-oriented concerning the rules and procedures for the legislative process. A major achievement of parliament has been to activate its committee structure. The Government has announced that the parliamentary committees will not be chaired by ministers as has been the case in the past. Private member can be the chairman of such a committee, known as the select Committee and the relevant departmental minister only sits as a member. In addition, a prime minister's hour to answer questions has been introduced. The Government has asked for U.N.D.P Support and donors are happy for U.N.D.P to take a lead in providing support to the parliament.

**Participation of Civil Society Organizations:** Good Governance requires not only democratic state institutions and a vital private sector, but also vibrant and active civil society organizations—for example, neighborhood associations, trade unions, women's organizations and constituency groups. Civil society organizations in Bangladesh have increasingly taken the form of NGOs. They have been active in Bangladesh since independence and have grown in size and number in response to new needs and a massive increase in donor funding. U.N.D.P and Bangladesh government helps these groups become stronger, self-sustaining and full participants in the political decision-making process.

**Decentralization and Support to Local Governance:** Bangladesh is seriously engaged in decentralization of power to local bodies with a view to bringing democracy to the grass-root level. In the past decades, Bangladesh has been handicapped by overly centralized and bureaucratic central government. Due to initiatory rule and an undemocratic culture, the local government system could not develop as a participative system of government factional cliques and parochial group interests determines the foundation and behavior of local government system. Local level needs and demands cannot be expressed properly. U.N.D.P assists the process of decentralization, which often results in more flexible and effective policies while fostering more direct citizen participation in the political process.

**Imperative to Increase Gender/Women Sensitivity:** The constitution of the people's republic of Bangladesh in its fundamental principle of state policy guarantees fundamental freedom and human rights of all citizens without any distinction. We are also encouraging increased participation of women in different decision making bodies. Efforts at gender mainstreaming through micro credit and non-formal education have helped empower women. These tools of societal transformation have met with success for all the world to see. This has also resulted in the election of a number of women parliamentarians. Their representations in other government bodies have expanded.

**Privatization:** The new policy of privatization is a good start. But the private sector could not come out of the shell. So government is largely responsible to administer public enterprise and make them efficient and at the same time working as an agent of private sector development. The government of Bangladesh is not capable (politically and administratively) to make a balance between these two approaches.

**Democratization Process:** It is true no system of Governance can claim perfection. Yet democracy is widely accepted as the best form of Governance that is ever known. Democracy upholds rule of law, ensures respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, makes the government accountable to people and renders decision-making transparent. For us in Bangladesh, the experience of the past and the realities of the present demonstrate quite clearly that there is no alternative to democracy if the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are to be respected.

Good Governance is the heart of democratization process. Democratization has been a rewarding experience for us in Bangladesh. Bangladesh government has made serious and sincere efforts to strengthen democratic institutions and promote good Governance institutions and promote good Governance. They have, in this, always had peoples support. We have put in place the non-party caretaker government, unique in the world, assumes the responsibilities for holding parliamentary elections on completion of normal tenure of an elected government. Already successive three changeovers took place under this system. The present government led by Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia was voted into office through such an election in October 2001. The election was a celebration of Bangladesh's democratic values.

**Corruption:** In Bangladesh corruption has existed a long time. This parasitic problem has grown distinctly since often the independence of Bangladesh. Due to the fact that, bureaucratic system has controlled all people's activities to supervise and to manage national and/or individual affairs under peaceful umbrella. The government corruption has been ignited in every echelon either public or private sector. Corruption has long deteriorated Bangladesh society and caused political turmoil. Good governance can lessen, if not eliminate, all forms of corruption and corrupt practices. There is little debate concerning the negative impact of corruption in Bangladesh. The factors that allow corruption to take place include: weakness in public financial management; low salaries and lack of incentive structures in the civil service; complex regulatory rules and procedures; weak public procurement systems; limits to judicial independence; closed-door practices in the policy development, legislative drafting, and public decision-making; and a culture of secrecy in public administration. The government has made progress in some areas including enactment of an Anti corruption commission (ACC) ACT.

#### **Ombudsman**

In Bangladesh, through an Act of parliament the office of ombudsman was created in 1980. Unfortunately nothing concrete came up after the promulgation of the law. No one was appointed to the office of Ombudsman. The office of Ombudsman never became operative.

**Public Administration Reforms:** Good governance puts requirements on the process of public policy formulation and implementation. Public sector reforms are a major element of the Good governance agenda. In Bangladesh the most recent, influential and comprehensive study of public sector reform is the 1997, World Bank report 'Government that works: Reforming the public sector' and the public administration reform commission.

The public administration reform commission (PARC) and several other recent studies underscored several areas for actions to improve public administration reform. These include elimination of outside interference in administrative decision making; independent exercise of delegated authority by mid level and local-level public officials; and increased public scrutiny of public administration and greater citizen demand for improvements in public administration. Other recommendations include creation of a service delivery culture through systematic merit based recruitment; needs-oriented professional training opportunities; appropriate compensation; performance-based professional review and promotion policies. Although the general impression gained was of wide acceptance of the recommendations of the report, very little of it has been implemented.

**Freedom of Expression and Speech:** Bangladesh constitution speaks of participatory process and accountability of government's actions and transparency of decision-making. Freedom of media is guaranteed. But Bangladesh has experienced severe discourtesy to freedom of expression and especially to the print media. Though no newspaper was banned yet government continued to exercise control through distribution and sales quotas of newsprint and government advertisements to newspapers and periodicals. Journalists were provided doles or favours to keep them in good humor, or were arrested. The Bangladesh newspapers are enjoying freedom of press; newsprint quotas and distribution of advertisements apparently controls the freedom of expression of the print media

**Human Rights and Security:** Good governance requires Human rights-freedom from discrimination and violence, equal opportunity, due process, freedom of expression and organization, and transparent, accountable government. Fundamental rights are guaranteed by the constitution of Bangladesh. Human rights is a much neglected issue in Bangladesh since the country started its journey in 1971. Violation of Human rights was practiced by the rulers of this country in the past and present and we can surely forecast that this situation will remain unchanged if something is not done about it in the future. In Bangladesh, the civil administration failed miserably to improve the law and order situation and therefore the army had to be deployed. It will be a grate mistake to think that this army drive will eradicate al the criminal elements from the society for good. The improved situation is a very short-lived one. The main responsibility will come back to the civil administration again and that will test their sincerity to the cause.

For decades, successive governments in Bangladesh have failed to curb serious human rights violations arising from the use of legislation and widespread practices in the law-enforcement and justice systems that violate International Human rights standards.

These violations include torture, deaths in custody; arbitrary detention of government opponents and others; excessive use of force leading at times to extra judicial executions; the death penalty; sporadic attacks against members of minority groups; acts of violence against women. Over years, Amnesty International has reported on all these Human rights violations.

Hence the government should urgently address factors which contribute to Human rights violations, such as a national Human rights commission, to investigate Human rights violations. Civil society in Bangladesh would welcome the creation of such a body with appropriate power to investigate, and forward their information to the prosecutors so that they undertake prosecution of offenders. Such a body should, in collaboration with the

Bangladesh law commission, review all laws that allow for impunity.

**Law and Order and Safety and Security of the Citizens:** What the people of Bangladesh aspire for is nothing but the slightest ray of hope regarding normal life. But an increasing darkness is still falling all over the land. Gun battles, murders, and acid throwing, dacoities, robbery, oppression of women, issuing of fatwa (religious edict) blackmail, campus violence etc, have become everyday incidents and people have little hope of their ending soon. Torture remained widespread. At least 13 detainees died in police custody. Police used unnecessary or disproportionate force against demonstrators, injuring hundreds of people, some critically. Over 130 people were sentenced to death. Two men were executed. Harassment of human rights defenders continued. Rape and other violence against women were widely reported (Amnesty international report, 2004).

**Torture and Deaths Under Police and Jail Custody and Jail Conditions:** Police torture is increasing day by day people are continually being battered by the police and law enforcing agents. The police's role in maintaining people's security is very disheartening. The people's saviors have become a reason for terror in the minds of the people. The jail situation in the country is beyond description. Laws and regulations are violated often. The jail codes and regulation of the eighteenth country are still in practice. Although an independent state has emerged, its jail code and regulations have not changed. Therefore, human rights are frequently violated. The current jail conditions in the country are beyond description. There are only 77 jails in our country-4 central jails, 30 district jails, 27 sub-jails, and 16 police station jails. The total capacity is 20, 856, whereas more than triple that number are now being kept in these jails. In the jails, there is no practice of the existing laws and regulations. Human rights are violated often. Although plans to build new jails have been drawn up, they are yet to be completed.

**Rule of Law:** One of the aspiration of our people, and the major goals of our constitution, is to secure "a society in which the rule of law, fundamental human rights and freedom, equality and justice-political, economic and social will be secured for all citizens. By upholding the rule of law judiciary protects the rights of individuals to live, work and enjoy without fear or favor. The promotion of good governance through judiciary depends on its independence to a great extent. The mass people of Bangladesh think that the rule of law is just not in practice in Bangladesh. Civil society is highlighting in particular its concerns with regard to two specific laws that facilitate endemic human rights violations in Bangladesh: the special Powers Act (SPA) which allows arbitrary detention for long periods of time without charge, and Section 54 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (Section 54) which facilitates torture in police or army custody.

According to a parliamentary sub-committee studying the use of the SPA from its inception in February 1974 until December 1998, at least 69,010 people had been detained under the law during this period. Of these 68,195 (98.8%) detainees were eventually released after their detention was declared unlawful by the High Court on the grounds, for example, that the SPA orders had been vague, issued by unlawful authority, not placed before the Advisory Board within 120 days, or that different reasons for detention were mentioned in the order and in the affidavit-in-opposition, or the detaining authority failed to communicate the grounds for detention to the detainee within 15 days, or it failed to produce the necessary papers in court, or because of delays in ordering an extension of detention. See 'SPA mostly misused', Daily Star, 8 September 2000.

Calls for the repeal of the SPA has come from the Bangladesh legal community and human rights organizations. It has also come from political parties but only when they are in opposition. When in government, they have defended the use of the SPA and maintained it.

**Independence of Judiciary:** The constitution of Bangladesh in its original form devised a scheme of completely independent Judiciary. Good governance depends on good and efficient judiciary. For that to attain, the nation must make due investments in the judiciary. 'A sound and independent judiciary in the sine qua non of a healthy society' (Halim, 1998). Independence of the judiciary truly means that the judges are in a position to render justice in accordance with their oath of office and only in accordance with their own sense of justice without submitting to any kind of pressure or influence. But it should be mentioned that the independent character of judiciary has been upheld and a bill is underway in the parliament to ensure its full independence.

**Financial Management as a Tool for Accountability:** The need for open and rigorous systems of financial management and procurement, accounting and auditing are necessary to ensure accountability. Accountability is the heart of Good governance and has to do with holding governments responsible for their actions. The comptroller and Auditor general(CAG) and his staff emphasized the need for creating and activating a committee of the parliament to which the report of the comptroller and Auditor general could be presented. A critical systemic

issue is that, while the office of the Auditor general is created through the constitution and is supposed to be autonomous, in practice the Auditor general is accountable to the secretary, finance.

The selection of organizations for audit by the CAG is done based on random sampling among public organizations. Hence the turn of audit for a particular minister, department or undertaking comes only after several years and there are some whose turn does not commence at all. The CAG carries out conventional audits whose focus is more on verification of transactions rather than performance. Audit is carried out by the civil servants (mostly with general educational background) belonging to audit and accounts cadre of Bangladesh civil service. The CAG is suffering from backlog of its functions.

Good governance indicates effective, continuous and lasting phenomenon. Under the reforms agenda on CAG office, financial management reforms programme(FMRP) project component-1 and component-5(2003-2008)under the management of finance ministry is working in full swing. Funded jointly by DFID-Royal Netherlands government and government of Bangladesh (GOB), the project aims at improving the auditing capability of the CAG office and enhancing human resource development of the audit manpower through upgrading the training capacity of FIMA. The parliament, the judiciary, the executive through public service and the comptroller and Auditor general (CAG) known as the supreme audit institutions (SAI), among others, promote good governance. CAG' S audit reports are mainly used by the Public Accounts committee(PAC) of the parliament where thread bare discussions on the audit paras are held in the presence of CAG and the secretary concerned who is also the principal accounting officer(PAO) of his ministry or division. PAC is the sole arbiter in recommending the final settlement of audit paras to the parliament. The committee after its formation in the present parliament has been very active and strenuous in resolving audit paras.

**Openness and Availability of Information:** The free flow of information is crucial for accountability. Transparency is built on the free flow of information. In Bangladesh the press is enjoying adequate freedom with the establishment of parliamentary democracy. We have also anti-hopping law under the official secrecy Act 1935; a bureaucrat may conceal any sort of information. Unfortunately in Bangladesh a large number of activities remain outside public scrutiny. However, secrecy not only reduces the efficiency and quality of decision making, it also compromises democracy.

**Electronic Media is Critical to Good Governance:** A picture of political coverage of the ruling party and the opposition party during the last three months from January to March 2004 will be evident as given below:  
B.T.V- state owned television gave maximum priority to the government party that was 38.29% of total news time where as the opposition received 0.25% of total news time in its 8:00 P.M news. Prime minister Begum Khaleda Zia alone received 12.63% of its total news time.Out of the ruling party's coverage Prime minister received 32.97% during the last three months.

**Political Parties:** The past one and 30years of strong executive rule and authoritarian regime also witnessed relentless assaults unleashed against political parties to factionalize, weaken or hinder their growth.On the other side, a fear that opposition forces in Bangladesh may become dysfunctional and violent and the party in power intolerant and repressive resulting in a crisis of governance.

**A Road to Good Governance:** In contemporary Bangladesh anyone who criticizes the government or indeed the opposition is branded as a political and even personal enemy. This uninterrupted tradition of official hostility to criticism has, however, been of little service to the government since it has proved to be seriously detrimental to Good governance in Bangladesh. Successive governments have convinced themselves that those who criticize any failings of policy or aspect of governance are hostiles, even enemies and probably in collusion with their political opponents. The concept of this objective criticism thus appears to have become unacceptable within the prevailing culture and those criticized are always inclined to pose the question, what is the intent? This question implies that the critic is either motivated by some private agenda-searching for career advancement, patronage or publicity, or is in league with ones political opponents or is trying to undermine some particular person for personal and/or political reasons. Everyone knows that to create a congenial environment an all-out concerted effort of both the government and the opposition parties is a must.

In Bangladesh, it is designed to conceal information rather than share it. This lack of transparency in governance does not limit itself official dealings with the public but is even more prevalent within the government. Years of concealing information has meant that mechanisms of information gathering, storage and retrieval have fallen into disuse so that any effort to access information devolves into a major administrative exercise. In the absence of any system of bottom up reporting from the field and top-down supervision, systems of accountability within a ministry remain virtually non-existent. As a result, there is no basis on which to hold anyone accountable if anything goes

wrong within any part of the government. Our crisis of governance is thus inherent in the system of non-accountable administration. Such a milieu of information blackout and lack of accountability is aggravated by the fact that ministers and also secretaries rarely visit the field to elicit first hand information. Rare field visits tend to degenerate into ceremonial exercises carefully managed to conceal damaging information that reflects poorly on the local or project officials. Such management of information is, in many cases, designed to conceal serious inefficiencies as well as corrupt practices of people along the administrative chain.

Within such an administrative culture of concealment, if a government is genuinely committed to good governance, any person who brings to light particular wrongdoings within the government is doing them an enormous favour. Such critics may help to reveal information, which has been kept concealed from the policy makers either by motivated intent or more often because the system is, itself, designed to conceal such information.

If however, Ministers really want to improve the quality of governance within their domain they should move to view their critics as their allies in the pursuit of good governance. To this end every minister should employ a full time special assistant whose job would be to go through the newspapers, including those in conspicuous opposition to the government, and to keep track of seminars where papers are presented.

With a view to take note of comments of the limitation of governance in particular areas. Obviously some of these criticisms will be uninformed, misinformed weakly argued and even downright tendentious, often with political motive. But even such criticisms may carry a kernel of truth worth retrieving.

Even patently motivated and malicious criticism, originating from known political enemies, should not be dismissed since such criticisms need not always be incorrect. More to the point, even malafide criticism can serve to alert a government to issues that are agitating the minds of their opponents since such issues could escalate into a political mobilization against the government. Such issues need to be confronted at an early stage where it is presented as an argument on paper, either through remedial governance or by political debate.

Such efforts, including criticism of official actions, should be encouraged and even rewarded. It would, for example, suggest that every month a prize be given-perhaps a mobile telephone-to the person writing the best investigative report in any newspaper during that period. This could be judged by an independent panel to ensure objectivity. Ministers should invite their academic critics to share their information and analysis with them so as to test the validity of their facts and the logic of their criticism. In such an environment a government widens its knowledge base, often beneficially, because it obtains information not at its disposal and may even derive useful ideas about corrective action. Even where no such positive outcomes emerges from such exchanges, a government which exposes itself to public debate, generates confidence in its openness and builds an image of being receptive to outside ideas. Each minister should thus hold periodic exchanges with a cross section of their critics rather than to limit themselves to token exchanges with their political friends and personal admirers.

All these observations should apply particularly to the highest office of the Prime Minister and also the leader of the opposition.

Looking at the behaviour of Bangladesh politicians, it seems that they consider the country as just a piece of land. They forget that all their activities are being reported in the world media and people are watching. They have constantly failed to understand the question of survival in politics does not depend on patronizing criminals. The fundamental aim of politics is to serve the people, not to victimize them.

It is time for our leaders to break out of this protective encirclement and throw open their windows to the world by exposing themselves to independent opinion, including encounters with their harshest critics. Our leaders should publicly face such critics and challenge them either by a superior-truth or assimilate their criticisms by putting it to positive use in improving the quality of governance. Acknowledging error is no sign of weakness but a measure of political strength and maturity.

Such a self-exposure to criticism by our leaders, thus, presumes that they recognize that their critics could also be their friends and play a politically beneficial role in our system of governance. It is only in such an open environment of receptivity to criticism that good governance and political statesmanship in Bangladesh may be expected to flourish.

We believe in the light to development within the Human rights regime. Therefore, an independent commission on Human rights is going to be established in Bangladesh. The government has also taken initiative to create the office of Ombudsman to ensure transparency and accountability in the government. In the context of social development, education and health care have received priority attention. The role and involvement of the civil society have been extensive in our development and democratization efforts. We, however, recognize that a lot more remains to be done.

**What can be done to have Good governance?:** Following are some of the approaches that could be addressed at various levels to create a condition of humane and responsive governance in Bangladesh:

1. Improving the management of public delivery system, reforming public sector institutions and administrative procedures to reach the poor and the disadvantaged;

2. Sustainable improvements in livelihoods and basic services for the poor and those vulnerable to poverty;
3. Ensuring better law and order system to protect life and security of the people.
4. Creating a system of governance that is transparent and responsive;
5. Mapping governance needs of the poor;
6. Improved realization of human rights and improvement in the positions of women and disadvantaged in the society;
7. Improving public sector financial accountability;
8. Enhancing the business and regulatory environment;
9. Promoting fairness and justice within the organization of civil society;
10. Working for the promotion and protection of civil and human rights;
11. Helping the country put International human rights agreements into practice;

The key ingredient for installing Good governance is political will. Unfortunately there is no evidence that any of the political parties in Bangladesh seems to champion the cause and concern of good governance.

## **Conclusion**

I would like to conclude by recognizing that improving Governance is challenging because there are powerful vested interests which benefit from the status quo and resist change. Courageous political leadership and vigilant citizens who demand change are essential. Good governance initiatives need to recognize the importance of a conducive political economy and domestic ownership to sustainable reforms. Bangladesh achieved nothing because of political instability. The people of Bangladesh, nevertheless, shows a remarkable resilience in the face of adversities, often live on hopes. No wonder that a successful transition to a democratic government on the threshold of third decade of the nation's existence in 1991. In this situation the spirit of the concept of Good governance is essential for Bangladesh. Good governance is a fragile plant that will need sustained nourishing. It will require a fundamental change in mentality and social expectations that will change only gradually.

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