

Enhancing Public Service Ethics in Bangladesh: Dilemmas and Deterrents*

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<Abstract>

There may be many factors that diminish or destroy trust in governmental institutions. However, none may destroy trust easier or faster than unethical behavior or blatant corruption by public officials. Bangladesh is rated as one of the most corrupt countries in the world by different organizations. One of the most fundamental obstacles to building trust in Bangladesh is the pervasive nature of corruption at many levels. A glance at the newspapers or a glimpse of the news

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on the television shows that corruption issues continue to figure on the public agenda on a regular basis. Almost all the organs of the government are in the death grip of corruption and now seem to be approaching a stage where it might be impossible to be saved from total collapse. Many people feel helpless to address the problem of corruption and are gradually losing faith on the government. There are a number of the push factors (political pressure, corruption of the superiors, flawed recruitment process, insufficient allocation, poor remuneration, personnel systems, probe bodies, politicization, and education of the children) and the pull factors (culture of impunity, personal greed, mutual corruption pressure, systematic corruption, and complicated and cumbersome pressure in government offices) which are working as the key catalysts to the proliferation of corruption in Bangladesh. Many of the anti-corruption measures in Bangladesh do not get success, as the only initiatives taken to address the problem are through legal instruments.

Key Words: ethics, public service, corruption, Bangladesh

I. Introduction

A democracy, it is often argued, cannot survive without substantial citizen trust and confidence in those who hold positions of authority in governmental bodies. Thus behaviors or acts by public officials that diminish citizen trust and confidence are direct threats to democratic government. There may be many factors that diminish or destroy trust in governmental institutions. However, none may destroy trust easier or faster than unethical behavior or blatant corruption by public officials (Menzel, 1995). There is a perception that standards of ethics in the civil service are in decline. This raises questions about the costs of misconduct on the part of those who have been entrusted with guarding

public interest and resources(UN, 2000).

Bangladesh is rated as one of the most corrupt countries in the world by various organizations. Earlier, Transparency International (TI) rated Bangladesh as one of the most corrupt countries in the world for five consecutive years. Up till now, the magnitude of corruption seems not to have changed that much. One of the most fundamental obstacles to building trust in government in Bangladesh is the pervasive nature of corruption at many levels: parliament, elections, and the delivery of core public services(Knox, 2009). It is said that corruption is as old as human history, but that is not the problem in Bangladesh; if corruption is old, it is also getting bold. A glance at the newspapers or a glimpse of the news on the television shows that corruption issues continue to figure on the public agenda on a regular basis. It is doing the same thing to Bangladesh as does a bug to timber. It eats the vitals from within and makes it a hollow shell ready to crumble. Many people have generally accepted corruption as a 'given' and have no alternative but to comply to receive the services. *Ghoosh*(bribe), *Tadbir*(patronage or persuasion), *Baksis*(tips/incentive money), *Tenderbaji*(manipulation in tender process), Gift, Percentage (especially in various projects) have become a common day practice of getting services from any public office. In Bangladesh, there are frequent incidences of additional payment to a public servant for the realizing of a right which by law is available to an individual or a business subject, corruption for the purpose of acquisition of a right which, according to the law or a sub-law act, one does not have and corruption for readjusting or interpretation of laws or acts in line with interests of the corruptor. Most interestingly, there are also perceptions among some people that corruption is a necessary evil or something not proper but can be useful; and some of the people see in corruption a means for a faster and a more successful solution to certain problems.

Almost all the organs of the government in Bangladesh have been in

the in the death grip of this vicious bug for a long time and now seem to be approaching a stage where it might be impossible to be saved from total collapse. Increasingly the judiciary, the executive and the legislature are building nexus to commit different types of corruption. Most alarmingly, the judiciary is losing its independence and the executive is gradually exerting its influence over the judiciary. Many people feel helpless to address the problem of corruption and are gradually losing faith in the democratic system. To address this problem the government of Bangladesh, civil societies, NGOs and the development partners have already taken many initiatives. However, such initiatives are yet to show any significant success. So, it is necessary to understand the reasons for the failure of these initiatives. It is said that these initiatives are not taken based on understanding the realities of Bangladesh. For this it is necessary to understand the logic behind the problem as well as the reasons for the failure of the measures taken. When people can understand the logic of the problem then people will be in a better position to take effective policy measures and strategic intervention against the problem. This paper tries to delve into the factors associated with the corrupt practices in the public service of Bangladesh. For this, at first the conceptual perspective of ethics will be reviewed, followed by the discussion of corruption in Bangladesh. Then the study will identify the key factors of corruption and the logic that operates behind those factors. The paper concludes with some policy recommendations mainly derived from the identified factors of corruption in Bangladesh.

II. Ethics and Public Administration: Conceptual Perspective

The term “ethics” comes from the Greek word *ethos*, which means “character” and ethics deals with the moral behavior in humans and how one should act. In general, ethics in public service can be defined as a set of principles to guide conduct (Lawton, 1998) or moral standards in public service (Chapman, 1993; Larbi, 2001). Chapman also argued that “ethics ... may encompass what government ought or ought not to do in a given circumstances.” Deviation from normal standards of ethics takes various forms of corruption in the civil service. Corruption (i.e., the abuse of public power for private gains) undermines the legitimacy and effectiveness of government, discourages investment, reduces tax revenues, limits economic growth, and lowers the quality of infrastructure and public services (Ades and Di Tella, 1994; Knack and Keefer, 1995; Mauro, 1995, 1997; Wei, 1997; World Bank, 1997). Corruption reduces the effectiveness of foreign aid-funded projects (Doig and McIvor, 1999; IMF, 1995; Isham, et al., 1995). Corruption is particularly problematic for developing and transition economies (Johnston, 1998; Shen and Williamson, 2005). Most of the problems in public administration in different countries emanate from corruption. It corrodes the fabric of a society and destroys the functioning of vital organs of a State. Frisch (1994) captured this succinctly: “. . . corruption kills the development spirit – nothing is as destructive to a society as the rush to quick and easy money which makes fools of those who can work honestly and constructively”. So the public administration literature has called for improved ethics within the field and sets improving the ethical level in the civil service at the top of the reform agenda.

The corruption of an organization has both attitudinal and structural

determinants. The corruption level of an organization depends on both the level of individual employee's ethics as well as the ethical level of that specific organization. Although, an organization is the collection of individuals, an organization also has its own distinct circumstances or culture apart from the individual. 'Individual Ethics' means the values that an employee poses personally as the guidance of his own life. In this context, corruption is related with individual's actions and those sorts of actions are known as 'behavioral corruption.' 'Organizational Ethics' means the ethical climate that persists in an organization as a whole to regulate that specific organization. Here corruption describes an organization that deviates from standard behaviors. Thus we can get two key variables for an organization's ethics: the 'Level of Individual Ethics' and the 'Level of Organizational Ethics'. By combining these two variables together, we can constitute an *'Ethical Grid'* for an organization. The attributes of these variables have different levels of effect on the controlling of corruption in an organization.

personal ethics act as the driving force for corruption but a stronger level of organizational mechanisms helps to curb the corruption. Here an individual tries to seek opportunities for corruption because of his nature. However, by a stronger accountability and punishment system with a transparent working procedure such a tendency can easily be addressed. In 'Quadrant 3', IE is high but OE is low. This means a favorable condition for corruption prevails in the organization. These conditions lure the employee to get involved in corruption. This is a situation where an employee can easily get away with minimal punishment after committing unethical activities. People with higher ethics feel isolated in the organization. In 'Quadrant 4' both IE and OE are high which helps to create a corruption free organization. Here, most of the individuals pose a higher level of ethical standard and if there is any deviation by anybody then that is addressed by the organization. As a result, the respective organization remains corruption free compared with other organizations.

Individuals influence, and in turn are influenced by, the organizations in which they work. The aforementioned four scenarios are also applicable for civil service organizations. The ethical standard of the civil service is mainly influenced by the ethical standard of individual civil servants and the organizational arrangements which develop and maintain the ethical level of the organization as a whole. The ethical character of an individual may be unpredictable and tenuous, but a weak ethical basis of an individual can be overcome and his ethics become meaningful and directional, when a particular setting and structural pressures converge. The organizational settings and arrangements that regulate the ethical standard can be leveled as 'Ethics Infrastructure'. Based on the experience of the member countries, the OECD has identified three functional aspects of the ethics infrastructure in the civil service and these aspects are "*guidance, management and control*",

which together embrace the eight key elements of the ethics infrastructure. “*Guidance*” refers to political commitment, workable codes of conduct, and professional socialization mechanisms. “*Management*” relates to the existence of an ethics coordinating body and supportive public service conditions. “*Control*” comprises an effective legal framework, efficient accountability mechanisms, and an active civil society providing public scrutiny (Synnerstrom, 1999).

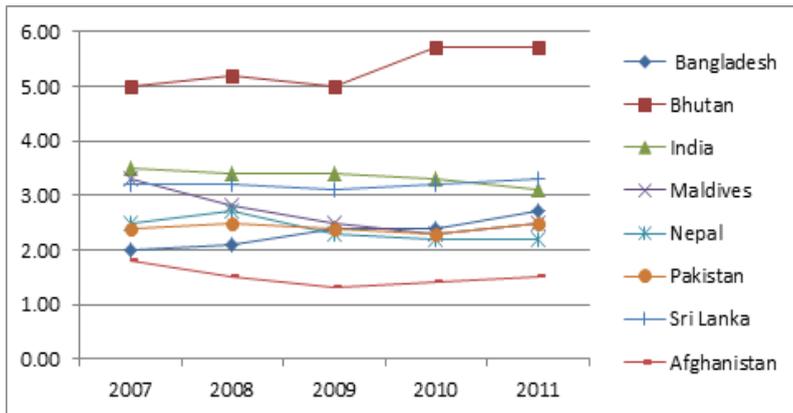
III. Corruption in Bangladesh

Transparency International (TI) reports the corruption perceptions index, measuring the perceived levels of public sector corruption in almost all countries and territories around the world. Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index 2012 shows that corruption continues to ravage societies around the world. Two thirds of the 176 countries ranked in the 2012 index score below 50, on a scale from 0 (perceived to be highly corrupt) to 100 (perceived to be very clean), showing that public institutions need to be more transparent, and powerful officials more accountable (TI, 2012). Transparency International (TI) puts the South Asian countries as the corruption prone countries.

Transparency International carried out a public opinion poll in South Asia in 2011 and it shows that most of the South Asian countries’ scores are below or around 3 which means the entire region is severely affected by the problem of corruption (See <Figure 2>). The Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) measures the perceived levels of public sector corruption in many countries and territories around the world. Only Bhutan has a comparatively better score compared with other countries. South Asians regularly have to pay bribes when dealing with their public

institutions, be it to speed up paperwork, avoid problems with authorities such as the police, or to simply access basic services. A new survey of six South Asian countries (Bangladesh, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) published by Transparency International, found that more than one in three people who deal with public services said they pay bribes. Political parties and the police are the most corrupt institutions in all six countries according to the survey, followed closely by the parliament and public officials. Officials entrusted to oversee deals related to buying, selling, inheriting and renting land were the next likely to demand a bribe. According to the survey, the country most plagued by bribery is Bangladesh where 66 percent report paying bribes to public institutions, followed by India and Pakistan, with 54 percent and 49 percent respectively, mostly just to gain access to services that people should already be entitled to(TI, 2011).

<Figure 2> Corruption Trend in South Asia

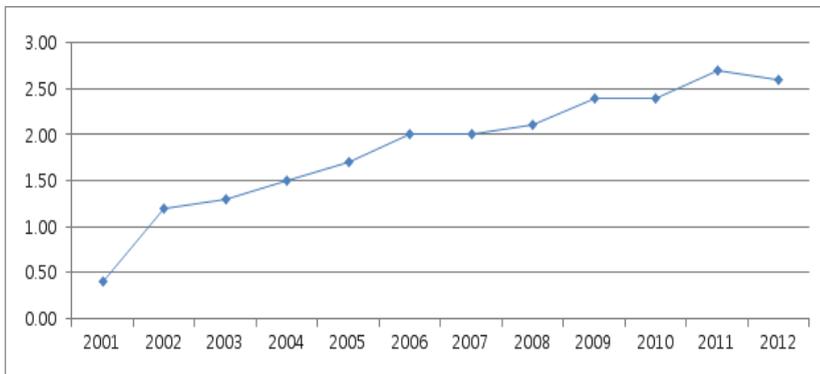


Source: CPI can be seen at TI's website (<http://cpi.transparency.org>).

Transparency International (TI) ranked Bangladesh as the most corrupt country in the world for five consecutive years(2001-2005).

Though in the recent past, the position of Bangladesh has slightly improved in respect of its corruption ranking but there is debate about the reduction of the magnitude of corruption and its negative impacts. It is estimated that about 2–3 percent of Bangladesh economy, which is around \$1.5 billion annually, is lost to corruption.

<Figure 3> Corruption Trend in Bangladesh

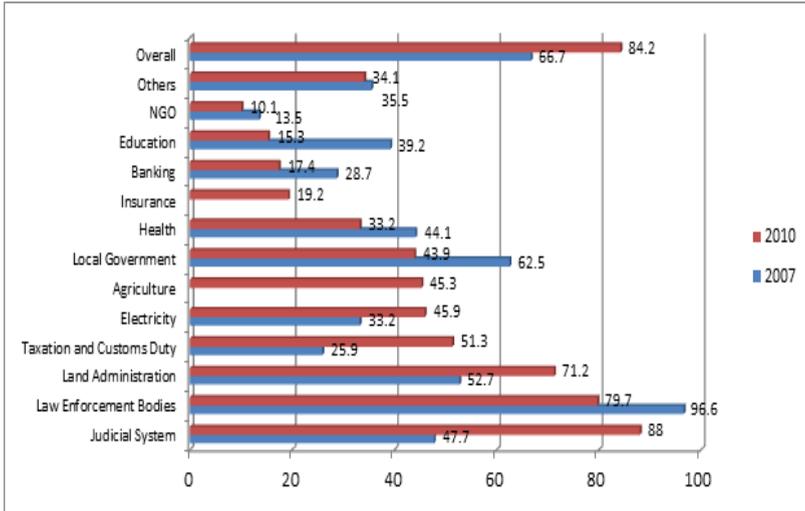


Source: TI's Website (<http://cpi.transparency.org>).

The National Household Survey on Corruption in Bangladesh, 2010, by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) revealed that 88 percent of the surveyed households who had interactions with the judicial system were victims of corruption in the form of bribery and other forms of abuse of power. This was followed by victims of corruption relating to the law enforcement agencies (79.7%), land administration (71.2%) and taxation (51.3%). The other service sectors affected by corruption were agriculture, local government, health, banking, education, insurance and NGOs. Overall, 88 percent of the surveyed people experienced corruption in one or more service sector at the delivery end. The survey showed a significant rise of the incidence of corruption in 2010 over the results of the similar survey by TIB in 2007, when the ratio of people

experiencing corruption was 66.7 percent(TIB, 2010).

<Figure 4> Percentage of Surveyed Households who Experienced Corruption



Source: TIB(2010).

The survey by the World Economic Forum also predicts that corruption will pose a major threat to the government of Bangladesh in the coming years. According to the Global Competitiveness Report(WEF, 2011), the Bangladesh's Global Competitiveness Index was low, ranking the 108th due to inadequate infrastructure, inefficient bureaucracy and corruption. Bangladesh's GCI score has increased by 2.5 percent, but the country lost a place further on the ladder in the survey of 142 countries, while other countries have advanced. The survey finds that an inadequate supply of infrastructure remained at the top as the most problematic factor, while corruption came second and inefficient government bureaucracy came third(Monem and Baniamin, 2013).

IV. Key Factors of Ethical Grid: Push and Pull Factors

The civil servants of Bangladesh can be divided into three streams on the basis of orientation to corruption. Stream 1: not corrupt; Stream 2: transitional- not thoroughly corrupt, depending on various situations; engaged with corrupt activities and again withdrawing himself and thus the 'to and fro' game continues; and Stream 3: corrupt- use power, authority and connections for illegal purposes for personal interests. 'Stream 2' is the most vulnerable and their ethical standards are dependent on the environmental factors of the organization they work for. They may switch to 'Stream 3' if favorable conditions prevail in the organization. It is apparent that at the beginning, most of the civil servants in Bangladesh belong to Stream 1 and 2. But unfortunately, because of a number of pull and push factors, increasingly people are pushed to corruption and at the same time a favorable condition within the civil service is being created for 'Stream 2'. The 'push factors' are those factors which compel an individual to get involved in corruption while the 'pull factors' are those factors which can create a supportive environment to attract or provoke an individual to get involve with the corrupt practices. It is to be noted that 'Stream 3' is also expanding alarmingly and the job of the people belonging to 'Stream 1' is becoming difficult.

<Table 1> Position of Bangladesh Civil Service in the Ethical Grid

Factors of Ethical Grid	Situation of Bangladesh
Individual Ethics (IE)	Individual ethics is diminishing and increasingly people are moving to 'Stream 3' i.e. becoming involved in corrupt practices.
Organizational Ethics (OE)	Culture of impunity creates low level of organizational ethics.

Source: Authors.

Thus the diminishing individual ethics and lower level of organization ethics of the civil service of Bangladesh positioned it in the 3rd quadrant of the 'Ethical Grid' and is increasingly pushing towards 1st quadrant. Religion is generally perceived as the most important and strong source of ethical and moral learning for any individual. One of the main teachings of all of the religions is to achieve higher level of morality and ethical standards in the conduct of life. A pertinent question therefore is: can religious teachings and more precisely can teachings of Islam help combating corruption? Along this line, Lewis(2006) argued that "...from an Islamic perspective there is a significant moral and ethical dimension that should influence human behavior in the fight against corruption" (Lewis, 2006). But the case of Bangladesh offers a very limited support to this proposition considering the fact of unbridled petty and state level corruption in Bangladesh. The scale, incidence and volume of corruption in Bangladesh demonstrate that such religious teachings did not have significant impact on curbing corruption. Based on a time series data involving a number of countries, Sommer and his associates offer a fascinating explanation as to the relationship between religion and corruption when they argued that "...as far as corruption is concerned, the effects of religion are conditional on the institutional framework in

place. Religion as such does not have the power to purge the political system of corruption. Yet, with the appropriate institutional platform, religion may be instrumental in the eradication of corruption". Therefore, it is important to note that religion alone cannot curb corruption if not supported by right kind of nature of state, appropriate systems of economy, degree of economic openness, existence and proper functioning of other institutions of the state. In the absence of a systematic study on the issue it can, however, be argued that Islam as a religion is better positioned to handle the 'pull' factors of corruption to an extent in the context of Bangladesh, but often it is seen to be not as much effective especially when the 'push' factors tend to dominate given the prevailing politico-economic realities in the country. So for better understanding the dynamics of corruption in Bangladesh, it is important that we identify and discuss these 'pull' and 'push' factors at length.

4.1 Push Factors

Political Pressure

In a democratic process, politicians are the head of the government. They have an important role in defining the nature of the government. In Bangladesh, there are many instances of illegitimate political interference to influence the normal course of administrative procedures. In these cases, civil servants have very few options but to comply with the political directives. Politicians often use the threat of transfers and punitive postings to bend the officers and make them comply with unethical and illegal orders. Under such a condition many civil servants have a tendency to create a nexus with the politicians for their personal interest. Many of them think that as they do not have any option to prevent the politicians then it is better to take a share of the benefits. Thus the bureaucracy constructed by the colonial rulers and often

referred to as the “steel frame” has now turned into “rubber frame”.

Corruption of the Superiors

In many occasions, junior bureaucrats have to accept the corrupt activities of their seniors. Sometimes the seniors get into corruption by themselves or due to nexus with the politicians. They force their juniors to comply with the illegal activities. For example, in tendering procedures, in many cases the senior bureaucrats have some kind of understanding with the bidders (due to political pressure or for personal benefit). Then they force their junior to sign respective documents or to play supportive roles. Gradually these practices develop logic among the junior bureaucrats, who reason, why not do the same thing for their own benefit when they have to take to the same risk? Thus the practices of senior civil servants create a ‘demonstrative effect’ to the juniors.

Flawed Recruitment Process

The people, who have to spend money to get a job, will have a natural tendency to be corrupt to recover the invested money. There is a growing negative perception on the Public Service Commission (PSC), which is a central recruiting organization of Bangladesh. Gradually there are an increasing number of the members of PSC who are politically recruited and who have the agenda to serve the respective regime. Many of them are accused of recruiting people in exchange of money or considering political ideology overlooking the merit of the candidates. These people, who obtain jobs through this illegal process, have a natural tendency to become involved in illicit activities.

Insufficient Allocation

To perform a job, there should be sufficient resources or money, but

in many cases, there is not enough allocation in the public offices. As a result, one has to manage money from different sources. This may happen in various forms like creating false vouchers or collecting funds from local elites/businessmen. These actions have become a culture in many organizations. Senior officials remain silent in these cases or even give instruction to do so as there is no alternative. For example, for the investigation of a case, a police officer is often not provided sufficient money, so he has a tendency to take money from the ordinary people. This practice leads to habitual corruption and harassment of the general population.

Poor Remuneration

Pay is a significant feature of human resources management, and adequate pay is crucial to sustaining motivation, performance and integrity of public servants. Many of the problems of Bangladesh's dysfunctional bureaucracy can be linked to poor pay – the result of a persistent erosion and compression of salaries (World Bank, 1996). Some of the non-survey evidence is indicative: bureaucrats in the top management level in Bangladesh earn one-seventh of their counterparts in the private sector (HDC, 1999). Similarly Choudhury (1999) also support that the salaries in the private sector remain four to six times above the public sector for mid-to-senior level officials in the private sector. Since 1971, the extent of the fall in wages in real terms has been dramatic: 87 percent at the highest level and 43 percent at the lowest level (World Bank, 1996). Now, the situation is getting worse rather than better. The private sector's salary has increased many-fold which is creating a 'demonstrative effect' on the civil servants to maintain a living standard equivalent to those working in the private sector. In most of the cases, it is said that the corruption in Bangladesh is 'need based' rather than 'greed based' especially at the lower echelon. It appears that there

is gradual acceptance of 'petty' corruption by which lower level administrators supplement their income. Ahmad in his study found that the extent of income from 'corrupt' practices varied on average from 10% to 500% of basic income depending on position, level of authority and nature of decisions involved. Thus, corruption in Bangladesh tends to flourish when poorly paid public officials have a lot of discretion to perform monopoly functions with limited accountability. The American economist Robert Klitgaard(1991) summarized the factors encouraging corruption: $C = M + D - A$, in which "C" stands for corruption, "M" for monopoly, "D" for discretion, and "A" for accountability. The formula refers mostly to conditions in bribe-receiving countries. This paper revises the Klitgaard's corruption formula in adding a few more variables including transparency, ethics and salary: $\text{Corruption} = \text{Monopoly} + \text{Discretion} - \text{Accountability} - \text{Transparency} - \text{Ethics} - \text{Compensation}$ (public sector salaries and benefits).

Personnel Systems

The quality of the bureaucracy is highly related with the personnel matters like- promotion, training, posting etc. In a country where nepotism and patronage are rampant, or government posts are sold explicitly or implicitly, bureaucrats will be less competent and less well-motivated because, success depends on advantages gained by the connections or by bribing superiors rather than merit, and will be very vulnerable to corruption. In either case, a bureaucrat may need illegal practices to earn money or to establish connections with the influential people. A phone call or a recommendation from an influential political leader works like a magic. So, there is a growing tendency to establish connections with the influential political leaders by valuable gifts or by serving their interests. Generally the civil servants serve the interest of those politicians by granting a tender in favor of them, allocating various

projects or by providing special privileges undermining the legal procedures.

Probe Bodies

In Bangladesh, there are wide allegations against the member of the probe bodies to get involved into corruption as well. In many public organizations, there is a growing culture that they keep some extra money for the person who will come to audit their department. For this extra money, at least one has to manage this through corrupt practices. Thus the process is creating a circulation of corrupt practices. The person who is not corrupt also get trapped under such culture and pushed to get involved with this malpractices, otherwise he/she will be in further difficulties. To overcome this, the demand sides need to be addressed. It can be done through two approaches, they should be given at least a satisfactory level of remuneration and, at the same time, the institutional mechanics need to be strengthened so that such practices can easily be addressed.

Politicization

Before the start of the democratic regime in 1991, all the bureaucrats were mostly aligned with the ruling government. Though in principle, civil servants are supposed to serve impartially but in practice, especially in the upper level and in some key strategic places, the civil servants are more politically aligned. However, after the introduction of democracy, this trend has created a major problem. Due to the continuous changes of power every five years, the jobs of the civil servants have become volatile. Those who are posted in key posts of the government are faced with different kinds of harassment with the change of power like forced retirement, harassment or just kept inactive

as an Officer on Special Duty (OSD). This is pushing these people to make as much money as possible within the five years tenure which is unfortunately increasing and pushing the respective people to be corrupted.

Education of the Children

Outside the divisional cities there is very limited provision for quality education for children. Most of the civil servants keep their families in the capital Dhaka for the purpose of ensuring a quality education for their children. On the other hand, they have to stay in their working places and at the weekend or during the holidays they come to visit their families. This trend leads to maintaining two different family household costs along with traveling to and from the working places be with one's family. This causes an unnecessary increase of expenditure for civil servants; with a limited amount of income such expenditure is almost impossible to bear.

4.2 Pull Factors

Culture of Impunity

Usually, unethical conduct – be it bribery, theft, nepotism, embezzlement, abuse of power, etc. – consists in a violation of law, that is putting someone above or beyond the law. Thus, consistent and fair enforcement of law should be the first priority to ensure a corruption free civil service. However, in Bangladesh, a *culture of impunity* has developed where many in power do not expect to be held accountable for their actions. Even when appropriate laws and institutions are in place; their proper functioning is often hampered by lack of political will or due to power or money. There is hardly any evidence of exemplary

punishment for corruption except some during the last Caretaker Government(2006-2008). However, later on, many of such cases were appealed in the higher court and ultimately almost all of them came out without conviction. This culture lures other civil servants to get involved in corruption.

Personal Greed

There is a growing perception that the moral standard of the citizens are declining day by day. People are increasingly moving toward consumerism. Such consumerism is pushing everyone to become involved with corrupt practices to support their growing needs. Bureaucrats use their position as a platform to avail themselves of extra privileges to continue their 'rat race' with others.

Mutual Corruption Pressure

Corruption is an exchange process and it includes both the giving, and the taking of a bribe. In general, the corruption pressure between the service seekers and the public servants is often more implied than direct. Only in a small number of cases public servants overtly sought for cash, gifts, or favors, but in a greater number of cases they demonstrated that they expect something like that. In most of the cases, the service seekers personally have initiated behavior that can be considered corruption, i.e., that they exerted pressure aimed at corrupting. Corruption being performed by service seekers, therefore, is not so much a result of overt imposition, but of willing acceptance, motivated by an understanding that this is the most efficient way for accomplishing their interests and needs.

Systematic Corruption

Lower level employees are often used as the collectors of illegal money from various sources. The price of the weight of an individual position in the hierarchy is not measured only by the salary, but also by the possibility of the illegal collection for services. This of course increases their attractiveness, on one hand, and discretion, on the other. For getting a posting in those lucrative places, one has to spend a huge amount of money or to use connections with the political leaders, senior officials or any other influential people. There are many posts in different departments like police, tax, customs, roads and highway, land, and others; where getting a posting is treated as investment for making illegal money. In many cases, the share of this extra money reaches up to the top most position of the bureaucratic ladder. Thus corruption becomes institutionalized which lures a member of the bureaucracy to be part of that nexus.

Complicated and Cumbersome Procedures in Government Offices

It is alleged that the working of certain government organizations like the Customs and Excise, Land Administration, Police, Taxation, and others, is complicated and cumbersome. Sometimes corrupt civil servants make the situation more complex with bad intentions. Such activities delay the entire work and cause harassment to the service recipients. This has encouraged the growth of dishonest practices like the system of 'speedy money' or '*Dalal*' (broker).

V. Discussion for Policy Implications

Prompted by the concern over the damaging effects of corruption in

many countries, the international agencies and the development partners have significantly stretched their policy frontiers by endorsing “good governance” as a core element of their development strategies. However, such strategies and policies are yet to show significant impact in many countries. To address an acute problem like corruption, a comprehensive strategy considering all the related factors is required (Monem and Baniamin, 2013). The pull and push factors discussed in this study may help us take policy measures to solve the problem of corruption in Bangladesh, because these factors can provide a deep insight into the logic of corruption in Bangladesh. They illustrate the logic which induces or forces one into corruption.

The existence of push factors compared with pull factors is more significant for corruption in Bangladesh. Among the push factors, the degree of influence of political pressure and the corruption of the superior authorities are very high. In grand corruption, the politicians (mainly from the ruling party) are involved in most of the cases. Bureaucrats come as their allied agents and form a nexus between them. To reduce the corruption in the civil services, this nexus needs to be broken. One of the main reasons for political grand corruption is the huge expenditure in the election. The Election Commission can play an important role to reduce the election expenditure. If this expenditure cannot be reduced, there is little chance that corruption will be reduced, because all the politicians must want to have their invested money back. With the limited scope of legal sources of income as a politician, the only prominent option they have left to earn is through corrupt practices. However, the corrupt activities are not limited only to the amount of money originally invested. They earn as much money as possible. At the top, in Bangladesh, the political parties have to maintain full-time political workers and *Mastan* (musclemen who are used to commit crimes) who can only be maintained by large scale corruption; often

carried out with bureaucratic support and participation.

There is no doubt, the leaders at the top of an organization shape the manner in which they operate. Leaders create and sustain a culture that focuses on the centrality of ethical behavior. They set the tone, establish the rules, and set an example of an organization's expectations. When a top leader engages in unethical behavior or fails to demonstrate by example that ethical practices are the norm, this attitude permeates every corner of the organization(Martinez, 2009).

At a personal level, the personnel matters play a significant role as the push factors of corruption. No institution can be expected to perform with professionalism in the absence of qualified and motivated personnel. One of the most alarming tendencies in the Bangladesh civil service is that it recruits civil servants through corrupt practices. If one has to pay to get a job in the civil service, then there are higher probabilities that the person will also get involved with the corrupt practices. There are beliefs, widely held among many people that many civil servants also get the job because of their political connections. When one gets the job based on his or her political identity, then they are under pressure to serve that political party. As a result, the recruitment of the civil service needs to be corruption free and for this the Public Service Commission, which is mainly entrusted with the duty to recruit the civil servants, needs to be strengthened and corruption free. The allegations associated with The Public Service Commission in Bangladesh need to be addressed so that they can work independently and effectively. Besides this, the posting and the promotion system need to be transparent so that the competent and meritorious candidates can be placed in the right places. The higher authorities have used these two factors to push the civil servants to become involved into corruption. Increasingly many lucrative postings are decided based on the proximity with the higher authorities. In many cases this proximity is gained through providing bribes and with

the promise of future *reciprocity*. The promotion of mid-level to higher-level bureaucrats is increasingly becoming controversial as those are deviating from the merit principles, and the personal identity and relationships are becoming increasingly important. A public service whose members are appointed and promoted based on merit will be far less susceptible to corruption than one based predominantly on political and personal connections. Therefore, the institutional arrangements for selecting, recruiting, promoting and dismissing public servants are central to the proper functioning of the public sector.

The salary level of a civil servant is an important factor in determining the degree of ethical standard. Civil servants normally aspire to achieve a 'fair' income like any rational human. The incentives for public servants to reject corruption and work efficiently are much higher if the system of remuneration is satisfactory. If fair wages are paid, government officials may willingly forgo opportunities for corruption, especially in the context of strong internal and external control systems that are operational and effective (Rahman, 2001). Shapiro and Stiglitz (1984) through their "shirking model" interpret the interrelation among a list of factors related with expected income of a civil servant:

$$EI = (1 - P(C)) (CB + WG) + P(C)(WP - f)$$

Where,

EI = Expected Income

P = Probability of Detection followed by Punishment

C = Number of Corrupt Acts

WG and WP = Wages in Government and Private Sector, respectively

B = Level of Bribe

f = Other Penalties, such as fine or jail terms.

For this reason pay reform has been an important issue in public service management throughout the world. A poor level of salary is often used as the justification for corrupt practices by the civil servants in Bangladesh. The civil servants are ill-paid compared with the private sector. Even the level of pension that is awarded is not sufficient to lead a minimum standard of life. This insecurity also motivates some of the civil servants to become involved in corrupt practices. It therefore follows that, sufficient salary and sufficient security needs to be given during employment and after the retirement so that a civil servant can lead a decent life.

Unfortunately, just providing a higher level of salary is not sufficient as an anti-corruption measure. There are people who have endless demands. To control those people, strong organizational mechanisms are necessary. To control both the political and bureaucratic corruption, there is a need for strong an Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) as well as strong internal mechanisms. The ACC needs to be made independent, effective and efficient capable of investigating corruption cases properly. The selection of the chairman and the members of ACC are very important. Their recruitment procedures may provide a signal to other officials about the intentions of the commission, i.e. whether they really want to curb corruption or just want to use another instrument of the government to squeeze the opposition parties. ACC should provide some exemplary punishment to demonstrate they are serious. They should work independently and not just harass the opposition party members.

One of the key instruments that civil servants use for corrupt practices is the complicated procedures of the government offices. These procedures need to be evaluated and simplified. It is necessary to simplify the administrative procedures. Introduction of e-governance may also help to reduce delay (address inefficiency), will reduce discretion (address corruption) and facilitate monitoring (control).

To expose the corrupt practices to the public can be another effective instrument. This is seen as an effective instrument for both the push and pull factor of corruption. To make the administrative procedure transparent, all the information needs to be open to everybody. For this, proper implementation of the Freedom of Information Act(FOIA) 2009 is necessary. To bring transparency, the activities of the various watchdog organizations like media, civil society etc. need to be increased. To bring transparency in the procurement process the Public Procurement Rules, 2008 need to be strictly followed. Initiatives should be taken to find the loopholes in the existing Financial and Procurement Rules. Just framing rules will not be enough; effective institutional arrangements should be in place to implement the rules(Monem and Baniamin, 2013). The list of possible measures and tools for curbing or restricting corruption is long; the aforementioned suggestions (non-exhaustive) which are mainly generated from the logic of fighting corruption in Bangladesh may provide an effective guideline for the sustainable solution of this problem.

VI. Conclusions

Bangladesh is struggling to rise above the curse of poverty, inequality and overall from the situation of underdevelopment. However, corruption is blighting its prospects for economic growth, undermining the rule of law and damaging the legitimacy of the political process(Knox, 2009).The annual growth rate of the economy has remained around six percent for the last few years. It was estimated that about 1.4 percent of annual GDP and 8.4 percent of the annual national budget was lost to bribery (petty corruption) in the service sector(TIB, 2010). Thus, corruption is considered as one of the major impediments for the

development of the country.

Based on the aforementioned discussion, it is evident that a number of push and pull factors are responsible for the corruption in Bangladesh. Between these two factors, the corruption (need based corruption) which is triggered by the logic of push factors is comparatively difficult to control. Because these push factors have emerged from the logic of urgency. If the logic of urgency persists for a long time, the problem of corruption is gradually embedded throughout the bureaucracy as well as in the society. It happens due to an increasing level of social acceptance of corruption. To stop these types of corruption, it is necessary to stop the logic of the push factors. The anti-corruption measures like enforcement of law, or the fear of punishment or the measures of investigation may not work here properly, because, under such an environment, enforcement of such measures are also very difficult. The push factor may extend up to the probe bodies to neutralize their attempts. Such neutralization may be caused by the use of money or by the use of political/administrative power. For these reasons, there are many rules and policies for controlling corruption in Bangladesh but most of them are ineffective. If anybody or any organization wants to take any measures against any corrupt person, their efforts are in vain. A corrupt person may buy a person easily (because of poor salary or dependency due to posting, promotion etc.) or can create pressure, or even can threaten him, and the organization or the state may not provide sufficient protection. On the other hand, the personnel of the probe bodies also have the same need of money as other civil servants as their remuneration is also unsatisfactory. Their organizational power becomes the instrument to earn money through more corruption rather than to stop corruption and is also used to justify the corrupt practices because of political or administrative pressures. Thus the probe bodies can also become weak due to pull and push factors. From the ethical grid

(<Figure 1>), we can see that under the poor organizational mechanism, the people with high ethics also get isolated or are even sometimes forced to become involved with corrupt practices. Thus such an environment continuously pushes to develop a situation which exists in Quadrant 1 of the <Figure 1>. In the situation like Quadrant 1 where the organizational mechanisms are weak, measures like enforcing laws may not be successful. To control 'greed based' and other pull factor based corruption, the enforcement of laws and the fear of punishment may work. In Bangladesh, many of the anti-corruption measures are not successful, as the only measures taken to address the problem are through legal instruments. This approach is mainly effective to address the pull factors but may not be effective for the push factors. The push factors which can be considered as the dominant reason for the corruption in Bangladesh, need to be controlled, at least up to a level of tolerance. Otherwise, the anti-corruption drives which are mainly based on a legal approach may not be successful.

The immediate past military-backed caretaker government made an attempt to fight against corruption and had some initial success also. The activities of that government made a sensation and hope for the nation but it did not last long. It took many positive steps, corruption of government servants/relevant authorities were reduced. Moreover most of the allegations it made against influential people were thought to be true or partly true by the people of Bangladesh. A total of 452 people sought clemency from the Truth and Accountability Commission (TAC) under the voluntary disclosure of information ordinance. Among them, 270 people were listed by the ACC as graft suspects. As many as 351 civil servants went to the TAC. Sadly, as time passes it has become clear that it too is not free from improper influence. Some of its actions were usual, some were in good faith and some actions were to control politics and politicians. This double standard policy has allowed scope

for the corrupt people to claim themselves innocent. The failure to ensure the due judicial process tarnished the image of the then Government's commitment to the rule of law, and more importantly, it turned out to be counter-productive to the cause of anti-corruption in general and came as a challenge to the image of the ACC in particular (Iftekharuzzaman, 2010). For a sustainable solution of the problem of corruption in Bangladesh, it is necessary to understand the problem more precisely. The factors which are identified in this article may add some valuable insights in the discourse of corruption in Bangladesh and may usher in ways to find better and sustainable solutions.

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<국문요약>

방글라데시의 공직윤리 향상에 대한 연구: 딜레마와 억제책

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정부기관의 신뢰를 훼손시키는 데는 여러 가지 요인이 있다. 그 중에서 공무원에 의한 비윤리적인 행동과 빈번한 부패만큼 쉽게 그리고 빨리 신뢰를 훼손시키는 요인은 없을 것이다. 여러 나라 중에서 방글라데시는 상당히 부패한 나라 중의 하나로 평가 받고 있다. 방글라데시의 정부신뢰를 회복하는 것이 매우 중요한데, 그러한 노력을 어렵게 하는 가장 근본적인 장애물 중의 하나가 다양한 계층에서 발생하고 있는 만연한 부패양상이다. 방글라데시의 신문이나 텔레비전 뉴스를 보면 부패문제가 지속적으로 보도되고 있는 것을 볼 수 있다. 정부의 대부분 기관들이 부패로부터 자유로울 수 없는 상황이며, 이러한 상황이 지속되면 향후에는 이를 제거하기가 어려운 상황에 봉착할지도 모른다. 많은 사람들이 부패상황이 심각하다고 생각하다 보니 부패문제 자체를 거론하는 것이 이제는 불필요하다고 느낄 정도이고, 이에 따라 정부의 신뢰는 점차 추락하고 있는 실정에 있다. 방글라데시의 공직부패 변성에 주요 자극으로 작용하고 있는 요인들이 있다. 부패발생의 하방요인(push factors)으로는 정치적 압력, 상관의 부패, 공무원 채용절차의 흥결, 불충분한 분배구조, 낮은 보수, 비합리적인 인사제도, 약한 감시체제, 정치화, 아동교육 부족 등을 들 수 있다. 그리고 부패발생의 상방요인(pull factors)으로는 처벌받지 않는 문화, 개인적 탐욕, 상호부패압력, 제도적 부패, 복잡하고 번거로운 정부의 절차 등을 들 수 있다. 방글라데시에서 부패방지 대책들이 큰 성공을 거두지 못하고 있는데, 그 이유는 법적 도구를 통해 주로 문제를 해결하고자하기 때문인데 다양한 접근방법이 필요하다.

주제어: 윤리, 부패, 공공서비스, 방글라데시

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