

Anti-Corruption Reform and Governance Effectiveness in Bangladesh: Assessing Institutional Capacity, Accountability, and Public Trust

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Abstract

Corruption remains one of the most persistent obstacles to effective governance and sustainable development in developing countries. In Bangladesh, successive governments have introduced a range of anti-corruption reforms, including institutional strengthening, digital governance initiatives, transparency mechanisms, and accountability frameworks aimed at improving public sector performance. Despite these efforts, concerns regarding bureaucratic inefficiency, political influence, and institutional constraints continue to challenge reform effectiveness. This study examines the extent to which anti-corruption reforms have contributed to governance effectiveness in Bangladesh and identifies the factors that facilitate or hinder successful implementation.

Drawing on institutional theory and contemporary public administration literature, the research adopts a qualitative case study approach to analyse major anti-corruption reform initiatives in Bangladesh. Data are collected through an extensive review of government reports, policy documents, reports from oversight institutions, and scholarly literature. The study evaluates reform outcomes across three key dimensions: institutional accountability, administrative transparency, and citizen trust in public institutions.

The findings suggest that anti-corruption reforms have generated measurable improvements in transparency and administrative processes, particularly through the adoption of digital governance tools and enhanced monitoring mechanisms. However, the effectiveness of these reforms remains constrained by limited institutional autonomy, uneven enforcement practices, political interference, and capacity deficits within public agencies. The study further demonstrates that sustainable anti-corruption outcomes depend not only on formal regulatory frameworks but also on strengthening institutional integrity, promoting citizen participation, and ensuring independent oversight.

By providing a critical assessment of Bangladesh's anti-corruption reform experience, this paper contributes to ongoing debates on governance reform in developing countries. The study proposes a

governance-centred framework for evaluating anti-corruption initiatives and offers policy recommendations for building accountable, transparent, and resilient public institutions. The findings have broader implications for policymakers and scholars seeking to understand the relationship between anti-corruption reform and governance effectiveness in emerging democracies.

Keywords: Anti-Corruption Reform; Bangladesh; Public Administration; Governance Effectiveness; Accountability; Transparency; Institutional Capacity; Public Trust

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