

The Politics of Civil Society and Good Governance in Bangladesh: A Theoretical and Empirical Inquiry

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ABSTRACT

This study deals with the civil society, good governance and people's responsive to the government. Civil society is an organization that is not affiliated to any political party and always works for the welfare of the people. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are important in promoting good governance in Bangladesh by increasing transparency, accountability, and citizen participation. The background of civil society in Bangladesh is not very old. Various levels of civil society participation can be observed in different contexts and programs in post-independence. This research has analyzed the activities of civil society in Bangladesh, its current status, and what challenges civil society faces in establishing good governance, and way forward to deal with these challenges. This study also shows how the state of society can be improved by taking various measures at the government level. Also analyzing case studies, interviews and secondary data, the research highlights how CSOs advocate for policy reforms, monitor government actions and empower marginalized populations to voice their concerns. The research findings emphasize the need for stronger collaboration among CSOs, government agencies, NGO's and international partners to create an enabling environment for sustainable governance. The study concludes that the empowerment of civil society is essential to develop democratic principles, ensure accountability and achieve inclusive development in Bangladesh.

Keywords: Civil Society, Good Governance, Bangladesh.

JEL Classification: H83, 0, L31

INTRODUCTION

Bangladesh is a populous country located in the South Asian region. It has seen multifaceted political and socio-economic changes since independence in 1971. The current era has witnessed significant progress as well as ongoing difficulties, thus emphasizing the utmost importance of striving for effective governance within the country (Transparency International Bangladesh, 2020). The presence of corruption, lack of transparency and political instability has presented considerable obstacles to the progress of the nation and the welfare of its people (The Asia Foundation, 2018). Within this specific framework, civil society organizations have emerged as important catalysts for transformation, taking a central position both in advocating for and actively contributing to the advancement of effective government. This research undertakes a qualitative investigation to explain the complex dynamics of civil society's contribution to promoting good governance in Bangladesh as well as to understand the factors influencing their effectiveness in this pursuit. Bangladesh's post-independence history has been marked by a remarkable display of stability and a process of transformation. After a long and arduous struggle for self-determination, the country faced the daunting challenge of building a coherent and functional state. Throughout its history, Bangladesh has made significant progress in all areas of development, including

education, health care and poverty alleviation (Bank, 2020). Nevertheless, the nation-building process is not free from challenges that often arise. Achieving effective governance remains an important obstacle for Bangladesh. The concept of good governance encompasses basic concepts including transparency, accountability, involvement and loyalty.

Civil society in Bangladesh includes non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based groups, and grassroots movements that work to amplify the voices of marginalized populations. These organizations play an important role in tackling issues such as corruption, human rights abuse and social inequality. Civil society works in an effort to influence government policy-making and promote citizen participation. Previous research has highlighted the positive impact of civil society on good governance. However, there is a lack of comprehensive research that examines the specific processes through which civil society contributes to improving the quality of governance in countries. This research aims to explore the strategies employed by civil society organizations to increase transparency, encourage citizen participation and advocate for policy reforms and fill this gap by exploring how active and passive civil society is in establishing good governance in Bangladesh. Civil society in Bangladesh is currently facing multiple challenges. Political pressure, repression, and lack of creativity hamper their activities. In many cases organizations face constraints, which impair their effectiveness. Besides, lack of money is also a big problem. Reliance on international donors calls into question their transparency and effectiveness. As a result, in recent years, it is seen that civil society is losing its popularity day by day in establishing effective governance in the context of Bangladesh.

Background of the Study

Civil society in Bangladesh has a remarkable history in the development of good governance in the socio-economic, political and historical context of the country. After independence in 1971, Bangladesh faced numerous challenges including political instability, poverty and social inequality. In this context, civil society organizations (CSOs), including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations and advocacy groups, have emerged as important actors in addressing these issues. They have been instrumental in advocating for human rights, promoting social justice and increasing government accountability. The 1990s marked a turning point for civil society in Bangladesh. This is because increased political liberalization allows civil society to be more actively involved in governance and development processes (Rahman, 2008). They mobilize citizens to participate in democratic practices and facilitate dialogue between government and the public, thereby increasing transparency and accountability. Despite facing various challenges, including political repression and restrictive regulations, civil society has demonstrated resilience and adaptability. These organizations especially continue their efforts to fight corruption, reform policies and empower marginalized communities. This results in a strong participatory governance structure (Rahman, 2011). Today, civil society continues to be an important force in Bangladesh, promoting good governance and striving to ensure that citizens' voices are heard in decision-making processes that affect their lives (Hossain, 2008).

Objectives

This study has been made of the following objectives:

- To analyze the involvement of civil society organizations in governance issues of Bangladesh.
- To explore the ways to engage citizens and civil society in governance process of Bangladesh.
- To propose some measures to be undertaken in an effort to improve the governance situation of Bangladesh.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ipshita Basu, Joe Devine, and Geof Wood (2017) described in their book 'Politics and Governance in Bangladesh: Uncertain Landscapes' about the paradox of Bangladesh's governance: notable economic progress amidst a weak governance framework. It focuses on issues like political settlement, elite dynamics, and civil society's role in local political change. Divided into four thematic sections, the book blends theoretical insights

with empirical analysis, making it an essential resource for understanding governance and political dynamics in South Asia.

Tasnim, F. (2022) 'Civil Society in Bangladesh: Vibrant but Not Vigilant' offers an in-depth analysis of the role of civil society organizations (CSOs) in Bangladesh, especially in their contribution to development and democracy. The book critically examines the paradox of vibrant CSOs failing to consolidate democracy, highlighting challenges such as clientelism, corruption, and weak state monitoring. Combining case studies and empirical data, it provides insights into the limitations of CSOs in fostering governance.

Jahan, R. (2020) explored on her book 'Civil Society and Democratic Consolidation in Bangladesh' about the role of civil society in strengthening democratic values and promoting good governance in Bangladesh. It examines how civil society organizations (CSOs) have contributed to democratic processes, held governments accountable and influenced policy decisions while also discussing the challenges they face such as political polarization and limited freedoms under authoritarian tendencies. In her various writings, she has highlighted that while civil society in Bangladesh has been instrumental in advocating democratic rights and promoting political accountability, it is also hampered by political interference, lack of funding and repression by authoritarian regimes. She emphasizes the need for strong institutional frameworks and support for civil society to ensure its effectiveness in promoting good governance and inclusion.

Rahman, M. M. (2008) 'Civil Society and Governance in Bangladesh: A Critical Review of the Role of NGOs' International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing. This literature review critically assesses the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) within civil society in Bangladesh. It examines how these organizations contribute to the promotion of good governance through advocacy, capacity building and service delivery. The paper highlights the dual role of NGOs as watchdogs and service providers, emphasizing their impact on local governance, accountability and community empowerment. Additionally, it addresses challenges such as government restrictions and funding constraints that NGOs face in effectively contributing to governance.

Rahman, K. (2012) 'Civil Society, Governance and Development: The Bangladesh Experience' Journal of South Asian Development. This study explores the interrelationship between civil society, governance and development in Bangladesh. It argues that civil society plays crucial role in promoting good governance by holding government institutions accountable and advocating for social justice. The paper discusses the contribution of various civil society actors in areas such as education, health and rural development, emphasizing their role in implementing development programs and policies. Moreover, it addresses the challenges posed by political instability and authoritarian rule.

Zaman, S., and Hossain, A. (2020), examines the emergence of digital civil society in Bangladesh and its role in promoting good governance in 'Digital Civil Society and Good Governance in Bangladesh: Opportunities and Challenges' Journal of Governance and Development. This study examines. The authors discuss how social media and digital platforms have enabled civil society organizations to mobilize citizens, advocate for transparency, and hold governments accountable. The paper highlights case studies of digital campaigns that have successfully engaged the public on governance issues. However, it also addresses challenges such as the digital divide, misinformation and government censorship that threaten the viability of digital civil society initiatives.

METHODOLOGY

This study draws through a qualitative data collection strategy using inductive reasoning. The relevant data were gathered both from primary and secondary sources. Survey method has been used to collect primary sources of data by using a systematic questionnaire. To collect secondary sources of data, various books, journals, articles and papers related to the current research topic have been collected and observed and extracted the appropriate references at the required places. Various civil society organizations, research reports, interviews with policy makers and media reports were analyzed for data collection. Also, some case studies are included to understand the relationship between good governance and civil society activities.

Conceptual Clarity: Civil Society and Good Governance

Civil Society

Civil society is an important element for good governance and decentralization, an element that is responsible to hold those in power accountable and promoting democracy. Simply put, civil society is not dependent on any institution of the state, the private sector and the sphere of civil society, capable of stimulating resistance and change in undemocratic regimes. Patrick Chabal, in reference to African civil society, defines it as a vast body of constantly changing groups and individuals (who have acquired some sense of their externality and opposition to the state). It should be notified that, although civil society is an agent of change, it is not mandatory opposed to the state, especially if the latter practices good governance. Civil society is the sphere of organized social life that is voluntary, self-producing, self-supporting, and autonomous from the state, and bound by legal or shared norms. Civil society is a place where citizens can engage each other in the personal conversations and discussions that are the essence of not only community building but democracy itself.

Although the concept of civil society evolve in the context of political thought, its roots date back at least as far as ancient Rome. To the Roman statesman Cicero (106 BCE to 42 BCE), the term 'societas civilis' referred to a political community consisting of multiple cities that were governed by the rule of law and typified by a degree of urban sophistication. Such communities were meant in contrast to uncivilized or uncivilized tribal settlements. During the Enlightenment of the 17th century, European writers such as Thomas Hobbes and John Locke mentioned social and moral sources of legitimacy to the state or government with the concept of civil society. On the other hand, the idea widely held in ancient Greece that societies could be characterized by the character of their political constitution and institutions, Hobbes and Locke claimed that society was conceived before the establishment of political authority as an extension of their 'social contract'. Between these two views, the 18th-century Scottish economist Adam Smith put forward the idea that civil society arose out of the development of an independent commercial system. Within this order, Smith claimed, extended a chain of interdependence between mainly self-seeking individuals and an independent "public sphere," in which the common interests of society as a whole could be pursued. From Smith's writings, the idea is that people have their own opinions on matters of common concern, and that such "public opinion" shared in visible forums such as newspapers, coffeehouses, and political rallies can influence elected policymakers. By the 1980s, the importance of social society as originally envisioned by Adam Smith became popular in political and economic discourse as it identified with non-state movements that rejected authoritarian rule, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe and Latin America.

English and German versions of civil society have been particularly influential in shaping the thinking of Western theorists since the late 20th century. After being rarely discussed in the 1920s to 1960s, civil society became commonplace in political thought in the 1980s. The concept played a key role in the idealization of civil society that emerged in Eastern European intellectual circles after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. A web of autonomous associations that were independent of the state and that bound citizens together over common concerns or as a necessary means of achieving economic prosperity and civil liberties in Western democracies. In the 1990s, in particular, many writers, politicians and public authorities were interested in finding solutions to the various problems faced by developing countries that held civil society as a kind of panacea. Relatedly, the term has become a conceptual cornerstone of academic thinking about democratic transitions and a familiar part of the discourse of global institutions, leading non- governmental organizations and Western governments. Over time the ideological character and political implications of such ideas became increasingly apparent (Kastrati, 2016).

Civil Society: A Conceptual Voyage

The term civil society is a famous and articulated word, and originates from Aristotle's expression *Koinonia Politike*, which means a network described by a mutual understanding and shared values based on civil law (Nezhina, 2017). The idea of civil society is generally defined as space and buffer between the state and market where individuals publicly debate with political and national issues related to the interest of common people. There are lots of definition of civil society and there is no universally accepted definition. According to Veneklasen, 'Civil society is a sphere of social interaction between the household (family) and the state which

is manifested in the norms of community cooperative, structures of voluntary association and networks of public communication norms are values of trust, reciprocity, tolerance, and inclusion, which are critical to cooperation and community problem solving, structure of association refers to the full range of informal and formal organization through which citizens pursue common interests' (Veneklasen 2003). Civil society, according to Harry Blair (2000), 'the collective of those social organizations that enjoy autonomy from the state, and have as one important goal, among others, to influence the state, one behalf of their members'. Connor has also expressed a similar view, 'civil society is composed of autonomous associations which develop a dense, diverse and pluralistic network. As it develops, civil society will consist of a range of local groups, specialized organizations and linkages between them to amplify the corrective voices of civil society as a partner in governance and the market' (Connor, 1999). The World Bank defined from a different aspect, according to the bank, 'Civil Society Organizations (hereafter CSOs) refers to a wide area of organizations: community groups of people, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), labor units, indigenous association, charitable funds, faith-based organizations, professional groups, and foundations' (The World Bank 2010). Some cardinal features of civil societies have been identified by reviewing various definitions:

1. Separated form but the linkage between the state and the market;
2. Formed by the group of people who have common desire, interests and values like tolerance, inclusion, essence of cooperation and equality;
3. Non-political and non-bureaucratic;
4. Non-governmental and non-profit organization but act for the welfare of common people; and finally,
5. Developed by an autonomous process that cannot easily be controlled from outside.

Civil Society under Authoritarianism

Civil society operates in an authoritarian setting for a particular issue. A focus on a Tocquevillian definition of civil society has led to what Carothers calls a "gross oversimplification of the makeup and roles of civil society in other countries [outside the United States] around the world. There is no query that civil society operates differently under authoritarianism than it does under democratic form of government. Under the liberalized autocracies of the Middle East, civil society is simply not autonomous. The robust security apparatuses, corporatist nature of the regimes, and co-optation of the civil society sphere by the state are just some of the obstacles that prevent civil society from operating independently of the regime (Yerkes, 2010).

Since the ending of the Cold War, authoritarian leaders in the Arab world have supposed to mounting pressures from both internal and external actors to democratize by adopting a variety of liberalization initiatives, including implementing electoral democracy, opening up the space for civil society and granting new civil liberties such as women and minorities. During the past five years alone, regimes across the region instituted remarkable acts that appeared to set the Middle East on a course toward electoral democracy. Several states held historic elections, Saudi Arabia held its first municipal elections in 50 years, also Bahrain its first parliamentary elections in 30 years, Egypt its first ever competitive presidential elections, and opposition parties made great gains in elections in Iraq, the Palestinian Authority, Lebanon and Egypt— while Qatar adopted its first written constitution. As Robert Bianchi, writing in the 1980s, described the situation in one Arab state, "Fearful of the social and political unrest leads the opposition choice", Egypt's rulers have tried to promote a live-and-let live attitude among antagonistic interests and ideologies without relinquishing power to any of them (Yerkes, 2010).

Effectiveness of Major Civil Society Organizations in Bangladesh

Thousands of civil society organizations are registered in Bangladesh under various subjects, mainly working on microcredit, primary education, health and sanitation, public policy, good governance etc. Some of the major civil society organizations in Bangladesh that promote democratic governance are-

1. Center for Public Policy Dialogue (CPD): It was established in 1993 to contribute to national policy development dialogue. CPD works on governance and development including organizing multi-stakeholder consultations, conducting research on national and interest issues, influencing policy-making processes in Bangladesh.

2. Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB): It is a non-governmental, non-partisan organization that started in 1996 as a social movement against corruption and raising its voice to demand transparency, accountability and good governance.
3. Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA): It started its mission in 1991 as an advocacy group of young lawyers working on strategies and tactics with the legal system for environmental protection and ensuring a beautiful environmental and ecological order for all.
4. Shushanoner Jonno Nagorik (SUJAN): It works to make citizens aware of their rights and duties, equality, justice and ensure democratic practices in all spheres of society.
5. NGO's: Miltin (Bernard and Helmich, 1998), in his article, gives examples of civil society as different forms of organization, including: non-governmental organizations, non-profit organizations, informal organizations solving public problems, interest and self-help groups. NGOs can be defined as voluntary organizations that often act on behalf of others.
6. BRAC: BRAC is one of the largest NGOs in the world. It works in poverty alleviation, education, healthcare, and social development.
7. Grameen Bank: Nobel Laureate Dr. Founded by Muhammad Yunus, this organization ensures financial security of the poor through microcredit.
8. Gonoshattha Kendra: An ancient organization working to ensure health care.
9. SDI (Society for Development Initiatives): An NGO working for development and poverty alleviation.

These organizations have enriched the civil society of Bangladesh and are contributing to solving various social and economic problems (Barikdar, 2023).

Governance and Good Governance

Generally, governance refers to the system or process of the government and the way of ruling of government activities and good governance refers to properly managed socio-economic and political order and public participation and accountable administration at both the macro and micro levels of a state. Governance is the process by which a social system (family, tribe, formal or informal organization, across a region or region) interacts through laws, rules, power or language in an organized society. This is done by a state government, by a market or by a network. It is decision-making among actors involved in a collective problem that leads to the creation, reinforcement, or reproduction of social norms and institutions (Barikdar, 2023). On the other hand, Good governance is the process of applying the capabilities necessary for a balanced system of social and economic governance of a country for overall development. It is the product of a state system in which there will be a relationship between the governed and the governed, democracy, rule of law, maximum transparency of expression and accountability. That is, good governance refers to a system of governance in which fair, just, transparent, and accountable administration is ensured. In this regime, law, morality, and social justice are established, where the rights of all citizens are protected and opportunities are created for all. The aim of good governance is the development of the country, the provision of social services, and the improvement of the quality of life of the people.

Actors of Good Governance



[Made By Author, Information Collected from ‘Good Governance Theory and Practice, Dr. Md. Mostafizur Rahman, February 2014’]

1. **Participation:** To ensure good governance, opportunities for active participation in policy- making and decision-making should be provided to all stakeholders. It reflects the different opinions and needs of the people.
2. **Rule of Law:** The main purpose of rule of law is to enforce and protect law equally for all, ensure human rights and establish justice.
3. **Transparency:** Transparency is ensured by making information available to the people about the decision-making process and government activities. It increases public confidence and they can give opinions based on correct information.
4. **Consensus-based:** Good governance takes decisions through a collective consensus, protecting the interests of all parties, so that the needs of the larger population are met.
5. **Accountability:** Government officials and institutions have to ensure accountability for their work to the public. It increases their accountability to the public.
6. **Effectiveness and efficiency:** Effective and efficient governance is about meeting the needs of the people at the right time and ensuring proper utilization of resources.
7. **Equity and Inclusion:** Good governance ensures that all citizens have equal opportunities and that no group or group is excluded but also included in the society.
8. **Responsiveness:** Responsiveness to the present and future needs of the people and rapid adaptation to changing circumstances is an important feature of good governance.

Relationship between Civil Society and Good Governance

Civil society and good governance are closely related, as they complement each other. Civil society articulates the voice of the common people and works to ensure justice, transparency and accountability in the political, social and economic structures of a state. On the other hand, good governance is an administrative system based on principles and where the best interests of the people are protected. A key element of good governance is accountability, civil society works towards that end. Various civil society organizations and organizations monitor administrative activities and demand accountability from the government on behalf of the people. For example: anti-corruption movement, review of government commitments and project implementation, etc. Transparency is necessary to ensure good governance. It works for transparency and plays a role in ensuring access to information for people. For example: mass media, NGOs, and social organizations make people aware and disseminate information about the activities of the state. Civil society works for the establishment of justice and protection of human rights, which is an essential aspect of good governance. It carry out various activities to protect the rights of neglected and oppressed people and strive for justice and bridging between the government and the people and brings out the views of the general public in the formulation of various policies. Civil society thus ensures inclusive participation in good governance, where the voice of the people is valued. The main objective of good governance is to ensure overall development of the people and Civil society works to promote environmental awareness, health awareness and education, which are important for sustainable development.

The Politics of Civil Society and Democratic Governance in Bangladesh

A strong civil society is a prerequisite for a stable democracy. Bangladesh is world renowned for its strong civil society. Civil society in Bangladesh has been playing a significant role in strengthening democratic governance in the following ways: (I) Advocating for democratic change: Civil society is about keeping a watchful eye on the activities of government officials and working for democratic change. It express public interest in government and shape public opinion on issues related to the socio-economic and economic life of the people. At present civil society is active in socio-economic development of the country and nurturing the newly established democracy in the country. (II) Strengthening the Electoral System: Civil society also plays a role in strengthening the electoral system and political culture in Bangladesh. They contribute to voter education and citizen mobilization. For example, in 2006–2008, the role of civil society was most constructive in the revival of electoral democracy in Bangladesh, from the start of the first electoral campaign for the abandoned 2007, 9th parliamentary elections to its successful conduct in 2008. (III) Public Awareness: Public awareness is important

for democratic governance and democratic consolidation. Civil society plays a role in making people aware of electoral and other issues. For example, The Susan and The Daily Star jointly launched a campaign for political reform in Bangladesh in September, 2004. (IV) Democratization and Decentralization: To effectively carry out their tasks related to decentralization and democratization, CSOs need capacity for fundraising and financial management, data collection and research techniques as well as networking to develop communication skills and coordinated advocacy. For example, The Center for Public Policy Dialogue (CPD) creates an interface between stakeholders and government to help civil society segments become better informed and network. It is a way of making the government accountable to civil society and civil society accountable to the government. (V) Accountability and Transparency: Civil society makes the people aware of the policies and programs adopted by the government and thus the government does not dare to take any decision that goes against the interest of the common man. For example, on 20 March 2006, the Center for Policy Dialogue (CPD) organized a national policy dialogue for the National Elections-2007, which sought to promote civil society accountability and provide better services to the public. (VI) Quality of life of the people: Civil society plays a role in improving the quality of life of the people of Bangladesh by undertaking income generation programs and other activities. For example, Grameen Bank, Asha, Prashika are examples of NGOs working in poverty alleviation through microcredit, skill development and employment generation in Bangladesh.

Activity of the Politics of Civil Society in Bangladesh

The role of civil society organizations in Bangladesh is very important for the socio-economic development and establishment of good governance in the country. They work to raise awareness among people, which plays an important role in solving various problems of the society. These organizations are actively working on issues like child labor, child marriage, violence against women, and environmental pollution. They make tireless efforts to solve local problems, especially the drinking water crisis of people in remote areas, sanitation problems, and help farmers develop. Civil society organizations project a positive image of Bangladesh at the international level and attract development cooperation. They support research and evidence-based policy formulation and complement government development plans. Their contribution to empowering women, creating employment, and creating awareness about rights, especially at the grassroots level, is outstanding. These organizations work to promote peace and tolerance while respecting religious and cultural diversity. To counter the effects of climate change, they take effective initiatives to increase environmental awareness as well as renewable energy and disaster response. During calamities, they quickly conduct relief operations and stand by the affected people through rehabilitation. The role of civil society organizations in education and skill development is noteworthy, where they re-educate dropouts as well as empower the youth through technical training.

In the absence of civil society organizations, the socio-economic development of the country is severely disrupted. Initiatives to raise public awareness and solve various social problems are absent. In particular, people in remote areas remain outside the reach of government services and local problems become more difficult to solve. Absence of civil society in disaster management, women's rights, child protection, and environmental protection can stall a country's development. Increases corruption and social inequality. Therefore, if there is no civil society organization, socio-economic development and building a justice-based society in Bangladesh becomes a big challenge (UNDP, 2020).

Challenges of Civil Society Organizations in the Governance System in Bangladesh

Civil society organizations are not fully independent and impartial in the governance system of Bangladesh. Because they face various challenges while working for the development and establishment of good governance in the country. These challenges are mainly related to political, administrative, financial, and social structures. Civil society organizations in Bangladesh are largely dependent on foreign funding. But the Foreign Donations Control Act passed by the Bangladesh government in 2016 limited the activities of CSOs. This reduces their independence and hinders fundraising. Besides, the registration process of civil society organizations is complex and time-consuming. It takes a long time to get government approval. On the other hand, excessive surveillance and administrative barriers by the government stifle the activities of the organizations. Activities of civil society organizations are often subject to political influence. They are barred if they work against party interests. Instances of restricting the activities of civil society organizations can be observed at various times by the former Awami League government of Bangladesh. Because many times the government sees civil society activities as

a platform for their criticism, thereby putting pressure on them. Also, the lack of effective dialogue between government and civil society organizations prevents them from being included in the decision-making process. Bangladesh's lack of adequate domestic financing and dependence on foreign funding hamper civil society activities. The government's strict control over the use of foreign funds hampers their operations. Lack of awareness among people and skeptical attitude towards the purpose of CSOs are major challenges for CSOs. On the other hand, working on women's empowerment, human rights protection, or religious tolerance has to face opposition from conservative sections of society. Sometimes the work of civil society organizations is not properly accepted in the social and cultural context of Bangladesh. Activists of civil society organizations engaged in human rights or anti-corruption activities are often subjected to threats, harassment and even physical attacks. Their activities are monitored by government or other agencies, especially through digital means. As a result, they were forced to retreat due to fear of a security crisis. Some civil society organizations fail to maintain transparency in their activities, which reduces their credibility. Many organizations fail to carry out sustainability activities due to lack of institutional capacity. Most of the time misinformation or negative propaganda is spread about civil society activities. As a result, various controversies arise about them. Sometimes there is an attempt to suppress critical statements or reports of organizations. Civil society organizations often face cyber threats when using digital platforms. On the other hand, many organizations at the rural level are lagging behind in using modern technology. Due to which they are not able to properly participate in the governance system (Nafis, 2016).

Ways to Engage Citizens and Civil Society in Good Governance of Bangladesh

Involving citizens and civil society organizations in good governance programs in Bangladesh is a complex and multifaceted process. The main objective of good governance is to establish equality, accountability and effective policies in the society. Various effective methods can be adopted for this purpose, which are explained through practical examples. Awareness raising and ensuring information flow: Awareness raising and ensuring information flow is very important. If the flow of information is ensured, people can be informed about the activities of good governance. Right to Information Act should be implemented effectively. Making information about government projects and budget available online and open to all citizens. For example, the 'Information for All' project in Bangladesh is notable. Through this project, people are given access to government information, which contributes to increasing their awareness. Besides, the use of social media and mass media creates awareness among people about the importance of good governance. Also Public hearings or budget meetings can be organized at the local level to create opportunities for public participation. Recently, Khulna City Corporation has ensured citizens' participation in local budget formulation. It gave citizens an opportunity to raise their problems directly and formulate plans for solutions. Capacity Building and Gathering Public Opinion: Capacity building of civil society is also an important aspect. Various organizations such as "Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB)" have carried out anti-corruption campaigns by building their capacity. Through training programs and various researches, these organizations have played an effective role in data collection and public awareness. Technology can be used to gather public opinion and intent. Creation of Citizen Grievance System, where common people can report their grievances online or directly. Apart from this, every year report on the progress of good governance program is published and distributed to the public. Currently "Entry Inspector Mobile App" has been launched in Bangladesh, through which people can directly submit their experiences or complaints. It makes the governance process more effective and participatory. Building a Platform on Good Governance Partnerships: A platform can be built on good governance partnerships. For example, various infrastructure development projects are being undertaken in Bangladesh using the "Public-Private Partnership (PPP)" model. Through this model, public and private institutions are working together, which has strengthened the partnership for good governance. And involvement of youth is very important in establishing good governance. An organization called "Youth Alliance for Sustainable Development" in Bangladesh has engaged young people for environmental protection and good governance. Innovative thinking and technological skills of the youth can solve many problems of the society. Public Participation in Policy and Legislation: Various advisory committees can be formed to ensure public participation in policy and legislation. In this case, the opinions of farmers and civil society are taken in formulating policies related to land development at the local level, which makes the policies practical and acceptable. One of the ways to involve citizens in good governance activities is to share experiences of successful models of good governance at the local and international level, inspiring others by citing examples of good governance projects already completed. The success of women empowerment in rural areas has been highlighted

through the "Durbar" project in Bangladesh. It can be a source of inspiration for other regions (Islam, N. & Mahjabeen, Z., 2003).

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

This study has been able to explore how civil society contributes to the establishment and development of democracy in Bangladesh. Civil society organizations have been intimately involved in the government system of Bangladesh since its inception. As a result, civil society had to come forward with different issues in Bangladesh at different times. Civil society promote the political role by engaging activities such as protection of women's rights, prevention of corruption, eradication of poverty, establishment of transparency and accountability, awareness raising etc. Based on my hypothesis of this research, the possible outcomes are explored: The involvement of civil society in the governance system of Bangladesh is very important. Civil society faces multidimensional problems in participating in the governance system of Bangladesh. To involve citizens and civil society in Bangladesh's good governance programs, there is a need to increase awareness, create opportunities for public participation and ensure accountability of government activities. Also, civil society should be given the opportunity to participate in the policy making process of the country otherwise it is not possible to establish good governance. Civil society can play the role in establishing good governance. But the civil society of Bangladesh cannot work independently. Because it faces multi-dimensional challenges. Collaborative efforts and activities between the government and civil society organizations and NGOs play an effective role in establishing good governance in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh has faced various challenges in the way of good governance. As the civil society creates awareness among the people, protest against corruption and maladministration and help in establishing good governance. Based on the findings of this research, the following policy and institutional measures can be adopted on an urgent basis in an effort to overcome these pervasive challenges and thereby improve the governance situation in Bangladesh in an effort to establish good governance.

1. Civil society should be non-partisan and non-political to establish good governance in the country.
2. Government should cooperate the functional activities.
3. Foreign dependence should be reduced, and the government should implement a policy of financing civil society.
4. Civil Society shall organize events for the public so that they may be interested in participating in Civil Society Organizations.
5. Bangladesh government should take necessary steps to improve both political and institutional governance for sustainable development.
6. Raising awareness among people through civil society.
7. Organize training of citizens on good governance issues.
8. Ensuring active participation of civil society in anti-corruption activities.
9. Taking advice from civil society in policy-making.
10. Strengthening the role of civil society in the development of local government system.
11. Conduct civil society monitoring activities on human rights violations.
12. Providing support to civil society to protect media freedom.
13. Civil society monitoring of Election Commission activities.
14. Awareness program through civil society to protect environment.
15. Civil society cooperation to ensure good governance in education and health sectors.
16. Role of civil society in providing legal aid to protect people's rights.
17. Providing training to civil society in the use of information technology to prevent corruption.
18. Advocacy activities of civil society in protection of women and children rights.
19. Coordination of civil society and government in policy-making and implementation.
20. Civil society initiatives to involve the youth in establishing good governance.

The role of civil society in establishing good governance in Bangladesh is very important as it plays an instrumental role in ensuring transparency, accountability and participatory governance at various levels of society. This study analyzes the activities of civil society and the level of participation in their efforts to establish good governance. The objective of the study was to determine the role of civil society, analyze the impact of

their activities and find ways of their involvement in the development of good governance. Studies have shown that active participation of civil society is essential for establishing good governance. However, in the current context, the activities of civil society in Bangladesh are gradually decreasing. Political influence and administrative complexity on the one hand, lack of awareness and institutional weakness on the other hand have limited the activities of civil society. It is disrupting the process of establishing good governance and standing in the way of social progress. The findings of the study show that civil society can play an effective role through NGO-based activities in implementing the concept of good governance. In particular, their involvement in sectors such as poverty alleviation, education, health care, and environmental protection can assist governments. But this requires an effective partnership between the state and civil society. Establishing good governance in Bangladesh requires an inclusive framework, where civil society, the government and the general public work together. To achieve this the state needs to create a supportive environment, where civil society can conduct its activities freely. In addition, policy formulation and implementation is needed to raise awareness among people and empower civil society. Therefore, the essence of the study is that the role of civil society in establishing good governance is essential, and by ensuring their active participation, it is possible to build a well-governed and progressive Bangladesh. In this regard, joint efforts of government, civil society and people are essential, which will help ensure transparency, justice and sustainable development in the society.

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