

National Integrity Strategy (NIS) of Bangladesh: Measures Undertaken by the Public Institutions

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ABSTRACT

National Integrity Strategy (NIS) has been a comprehensive systematic approach for qualitatively assessing corruption and integrity across countries over the last three decades. Bangladesh developed the NIS to control corruption and ensure democratic governance along with the need to establish ethics and standards in public life. The purpose of this paper is to identify the various initiatives of the NIS undertaken by the government to combat corruption in a holistic manner. This paper seeks to find out the various strengths and weaknesses of the various state and non-state institutions. Methodologically, the paper is a content analysis involving literature review of vast secondary materials on the books, journals, and websites on NIS, especially to that of countries that have introduced NIS as a measure to fight corruption and promote integrity, which has been used, interpreted and reinterpreted to substantiate arguments. The findings of the study suggest that the government through NIS has addressed comprehensive and technical issues for the three branches of government by putting various institutional and administrative arrangements to promote integrity and reduce corruption. The study reveals there is a need for strong political commitment along with various administrative enforcement mechanisms to pave way for a just, free, and egalitarian society. The paper would add great new value by presenting the status of the various action plans of NIS and its challenges in facilitating corruption and integrity issues in the country.

Keywords: Bangladesh, National Integrity Strategy (NIS), Executive, Judiciary, Parliament

INTRODUCTION

Improving governance is necessary for sustaining economic growth given the vulnerability of growth in countries like Bangladesh (Khan, 2013). The rules and practices of governance shape the foundations of sustainable development and if these rules and practices are not effectively monitored and applied, the very basis of development is compromised (Pillay, 2004, p. 589). Efforts to promote governance are mostly hindered when resources of the country are not managed effectively which occurs when corruption is prevalent (Camerer, 1997). In a developing country like Bangladesh people expects the government to meet their needs in order to have a

better life but it is bitter truth that due to corruption people do not get their desired services (Islam and Mahmud, 2015). Like many other governments and civil society worldwide, tackling corruption has been one of the most intractable policy problems for Bangladesh. Corruption is not new, nor is it peculiar to any particular society or country and it takes place to a greater or lesser degree in all countries, irrespective of political and economic systems, whether developed or developing (Aminuzzaman and Khair, 2014). The causes of corruption are always contextual, rooted in a country's policies, bureaucratic traditions, political development, and social history (Aminuzzaman and Khair, 2014). The present government of Bangladesh, under the incumbent Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, concerns about ethics and focuses to control corruption, especially zero tolerance for corruption, a key policy as part of the 11th national election pledge implementation since 2018 (Bari and Naz, 2019); which is the main thrust for democratic governance and the management of public services. In 2007, the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) reported on the domestic institutions in Bangladesh that corruption thrives on systemic weaknesses (Hussmann, 2007). Thus, anti-corruption strategies can only be effective if the causes of corruption in various government institutions are proactively addressed by pushing the need for prevention and eradication with its detection and prosecution. Fostering integrity, ensuring moral commitment and character, and adhering to the quality of moral self-governance in public institutions have led to the adaptation of the 'National Integrity Strategy' (NIS) in Bangladesh. The NIS recognizes that the state's legal institutions require watchdogs within the general population to keep it accountable.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This study tries to find out the action plans which the various public institutions in Bangladesh have initiated based on the adoption of NIS. The study seeks to explore the integrity strategies and their capacity, performance, along institutional strengths and weaknesses to address and improve the overall integrity system of the country.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This study has been conducted by making use of secondary sources of data. The study is a content analysis involving a literature review of vast secondary materials on books, journals, and websites addressing the NIS. For this study, some theoretical conceptual works have been reviewed.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE STUDY

The term 'National Integrity Strategy' (NIS) was popularized internationally in the 1990s by Jeremy Pope, founding Director of Transparency International (Sampford, 2014). The National

Integrity Strategy (NIS) is the sum of all institutional structures, legal frameworks, and systematic processes to address governance deficits, corruption, and dysfunctional aspects of public institutions and watchdog bodies (Aminuzzaman and Khair, 2014). It encompasses the key institutions, sectors, or specific activities (the ‘pillars’) that contribute to integrity, transparency, and accountability in a society (O’uchi *et al.*, 2006). Values such as integrity make way for ensuring committed responsibility which fosters trust in the state and society. Integrity can be defined as the quality of moral self-governance at the individual and collective levels (Werhane and Freeman, 1999). It is a moral commitment and character where individuals adhere to anchoring principles and readiness to act ethically (ibid, 1999).

The literature on integrity frameworks has gained wider perspectives and moved from the domestic individual level to the global collective level (Westra, 2000). When integrity blooms in various political institutions, assisting in curbing abuse of authority, malfeasance, and misappropriation, then a healthy and robust National Integrity Strategy can be constituted. Public institutions promoting moral coherence and authenticity-based judgments, beliefs, expressions, and commitments based on reasoned principles would foster public participation through national solidarity against corruption which NIS aims at. Strengthening the NIS is about promoting better governance across all aspects of society. National Integrity Strategy (NIS) approach is locally-owned and policy-oriented (Brown and Heinrich, 2017). NIS attempts a holistic diagnostic of the anti-corruption system in a given country, combined with a multi-stakeholder consultation approach intended to maximize the advocacy and policy potential of that diagnostic (Ibid, 2017). Each of the identified institutions or actors is evaluated by in-country researchers using a set of indicators focusing on ‘(1) their overall capacity, (2) their internal governance systems and procedures, and (3) their role in the overall integrity system’ (Transparency International Bangladesh [TIB], 2011). NIS provides the signal to sectors and agencies that require priority action. NIS aims to achieve the integrity of a nation by enhancing awareness of government institutions as well as of the entire nation. The strategy envisages that the government will ensure by providing all necessary support so that the executive, legislature, and the judiciary functions as independent, transparent, efficient, and effective organs of the state. NIS foresees that the Parliament will emerge as a place for fair and rational debate for law-making and through the effective functioning of the Parliamentary Committee system demand greater accountability from the executive. NIS requires that the public servants working under the political executive are impartial, efficient, effective, and accountable. At the local level, NIS demands that the local governments are people-oriented, accountable, transparent, and independent.

NIS IN BANGLADESH: ACTION PLANS OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

The Government of Bangladesh has achieved tremendous progress over the last ten years as evidenced by several socio-economic indicators. It has maintained a steady GDP growth at

nearly 6 percent per annum along with a 73.8 percent literacy rate (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics [BBS], 2019). The government has been able to achieve this growth rate through promoting governance starting from central administration to peripheral administration. Despite having various developments in the good governance indicators, the government states that corruption is one of the shortcomings in Bangladesh (Cabinet Division, 2013). Bangladesh is also known for unequal power balance among the three branches of government, that is, legislature, the judiciary, and the public administration (executive) which has been damaging the national integrity of the country. With a score of 26, Bangladesh is one of the worst performers on the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) in the Asia Pacific region ranking 12th from the bottom (Transparency International [TI], 2020). Bangladesh shows slow progress in anti-corruption efforts, with various government commitments to reform not yet materializing effectively (ibid, 2020). 74 percent of the people in Bangladesh who used public services perceive corruption to be a big problem while 24 percent of them paid a bribe for public service provision (Global Corruption Barometer, 2020).

To ensure a holistic development approach and ensuring a higher level of governance, accountability, and integrity at all levels of the government, Bangladesh adopted the National Integrity Strategy in 2012. NIS in Bangladesh was formulated to prevent corruption and establish integrity in the State and society in Bangladesh (Cabinet Division, 2013). Citizens tend to trust public institutions that ensure the quality of government involving the impartial exercise of public power (Mahmud, 2021) which NIS aims to achieve. It was aimed at the capacity development of important institutions and organizations of the state, civil society, and the private sectors of the country. Various modes of action were adapted to put into effect the NIS through existing laws, rules, systems, and reforms and in some cases promulgation of new laws and rules. Bangladesh identified ten (10) state institutions and six (6) non-state institutions for improving governance, preventing corruption, and to enhance integrity in their respective jurisdictions which holistically would help in mobilizing the NIS of the country. The state institutions identified are (1) Executive organ and Public Administration, (2) Parliament, (3) Judiciary, (4) Election Commission, (5) Attorney-General, (6) Public Service Commission, (7) Comptroller and Auditor-General, (8) Ombudsman, (9) Anti-Corruption Commission, and (10) Local Government Institutions. Non-state organizations covered in this strategy are (1) political parties, (2) industrial and commercial organizations in the private sector, (3) NGOs and civil society, (4) family, (5) educational institutions, and (6) media. The action plans undertaken by the government for all the institutions involve various timeline periods of implementations starting from short-term (within one year), medium-term (within three years), and long-term (within five years) measures. Every action plan has various performance indicators which the institutions have to meet within the given time frame through certain agencies.

This paper investigates the status of implementation of the action plans initiated for three (3) state institutions, that is, the three organs of government: 1) Executive, 2) Legislature (Parliament), and 3) Judiciary. The study would also examine one (1) non-state institution, that is, educational institutions. The rationale for the selection of the above-mentioned three (3) state institutions lies in the very necessity for the introduction of the NIS where the three branches of government act a check and balance to protect citizens' freedom to promote a democratic society. Educational institutions create a conducive environment for individuals and families to realize opportunities within an ethical framework, which paved its way for this paper to assess the action plans.

State institutions

Executive

The Executive is the strongest branch of Government in Bangladesh, both in law and in practice too. The executive authority of the Republic under the Constitution of Bangladesh is exercised by or on the authority of the Prime Minister. The goal of NIS concerning executive organ and Public Administration is to make executive organ transparent and responsive to the demands and needs of people. Following the goal, various action plans have been adopted which are to be implemented in the short, medium, and long term. The progress of certain action plans are described below;

a) *Regular submission of income and asset statements to specified authorities*: This was a short-term action plan and it was made mandatory for disclosure of assets and liabilities or submission of asset statements for all government officials at the Ministry of Public Administration. It was found that 90 percent of the public officials made available their submission (Cabinet Division, 2013).

b) *Enactment of Whistle Blowers Protection Act*: Combating bureaucratic corruption is one of the challenges which the government of Bangladesh is facing over the last two to three decades. To face the challenge Ministry of Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs enacted the Whistle Blowers Protection Act 2011 as a short-term action plan. A whistleblower is someone who can disclose authentic information to the competent authority¹ if he/she believes that disclosing such

¹Competent Authority means the chief of any agency or chief or chief executive of divisional, regional, zila, upazila or union office of any department, directorate or office subordinate to it and the following persons or office bearers shall also be included, as: i) For persons holding constitutional posts, President; ii) For member of parliaments, Speaker; iii) For any member from judiciary, Register of Supreme Court; iv) If related to corruption, Anti Corruption Commission; v) If related to public money, Comptroller and Auditor General; and vi) For illegal and unethical deeds, Officer in Charge of respective police station (Available at https://www.mrdibd.org/downloads/Whistleblower_protection_act_2011_English.pdf, (accessed on 12/05/2020))

information will be for the public interest. Through this Act, no criminal or civil, or departmental proceedings can be initiated against the whistleblower for disclosing public-interest-related information to the authorities, and his or her identity will not be disclosed without his or her consent. The Act mentions that if the whistleblower is a government official, no action can be taken to punish them by sending them on forced retirement, or demoting them, or taking any departmental step to harass, which may damage their social dignity or cause torment.²

c) *Grievance Handling System*: Corruptions can be reduced when public officials carry out their duty following their job descriptions. In response to various public service reforms waving throughout the world, Bangladesh has not been far behind in improving the public service delivery to satisfy the needs of the people by making it faster, efficient, and responsive (Osman 2016, p. 110). It has been stated that there is a low level of satisfaction among the service beneficiaries in various public institutions as there is a gap between the formally prescribed time and the time actually taken for receiving the services (ibid, p.112). Thus as a part of a short-term action plan, the Cabinet Division ordered all local and central public institutions to set up a ‘Complaint Management System’ so that whenever service recipients are dissatisfied with service provisions, they can complain. Monthly progress reports are generated to record the status of grievance handling and are sent to the Cabinet Division.

d) *Introduction of E-governance at Public Service*: Rigid hierarchies, corruption, complicated procedures, sluggish decision making, and lack of accountability often characterize public administration in Bangladesh. To improve the condition, it requires appropriate measures for organizational and procedural reforms in the public administration. The government to bring about integrity in public administration initiated the adoption of technologies and new communication channels through inter-agency collaboration for electronic service delivery. The use of the computer for improving the basic functions of government organizations has been attempted seriously along with the launching of the official website was an essential criterion.

Through NIS, the executive organ and the public administration have made the public service to a great extent ends-oriented rather than means-oriented. Table 1 shows a comprehensive picture of the implementation progress of action plans concerning recommendations made for the executive organ and public administration.

Legislature (Parliament)

The Constitution of Bangladesh bestows the parliament with supreme powers in making laws and approving budgets. It is given wide-ranging authority to scrutinize the actions of the executive which remains accountable to the parliament. Notwithstanding these constitutional powers, in

²Available at: <https://www.thedailystar.net/news-detail-155610>, (accessed on 12/05/2020)

Table 1: Executive Organ and Public Administration: Implementation Progress of Action Plan

S. No.	Action Plans	Performance Indicator	Time-Frame	Responsibility of:	Implementation Status	
					Progress	Remarks
1.	Enactment of Whistle Blowers Protection Act	Law Published through Gazette: Whistle Blowers (Protection) Act 2011	Short-term	Ministry of Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs	Achieved	-
2.	Introduction of Participatory Appraisal system	Performance appraisal system on a pilot basis to appraise the role and function of public sector employees based on mutual agreement	Short-term	Ministry of Public Administration	In-Progress	Draft on performance based evaluation system is being prepared.
3.	Regular submission of income and asset statements to specified authorities	Report on asset and liability statements submitted	Short-term	Ministry of Public Administration	In-Progress	Many civil servants are yet to submit their income and asset statements and they have been given the notice to provide so.
4.	Establishment of information and communication technology (ICT) and infrastructure for the introduction of e-governance	a) ICT introduced and used in all Ministries/ Divisions; b) Volume and quality of public service increased and improved by ICT use	Short-term	Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (ICT)	Achieved	a) Separate website has been developed for every Ministry; e-mail ID has been created for all officers and information, reports, laws, rules and circulars are made available on website b) Volume and quality of public service is increasing and improving by use of ICT
5.	Grievance Handling System	Each public office has a grievance handling 'focal point' and it is known to publicly	Short-term	Cabinet Division, Office of Prime Minister	Achieved	Introduction of ICT-based system since 2011
6.	Establishment of a separate agency for investigation of cases	Law published in the official Gazette	Short-term	Ministry of Home Affairs	In-Progress	a) A separate office has been opened, called the 'Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has been set up. b) Every police station has a separate 'Investigation Officer' (IO).

Table 1 contd...

S. No.	Action Plans	Performance Indicator	Time-Frame	Responsibility of:	Implementation Status	
					Progress	Remarks
7	Enactment of Civil Service Act	Law Published through Gazette: Civil Service Act 2018	Medium-term	Ministry of Public Administration	Achieved	-
8.	Modernization of land management and implementation of the Land Use Plan	Digitized land Management and land survey system	Medium-term	Ministry of Land	Achieved	a) E-survey was adopted through the introduction of the Real-Time Kinematic (RTK) machine. b) E-mapping system introduced. c) E-mutation service introduced

Source: Author's own work

reality, the parliament's performance has fallen far short of its promise of being the central institution of democracy, expressing the will of the people, and making the government regularly accountable to that will (Aminuzzaman and Khair, 2014). NIS's goal concerning the Parliament is to make the parliamentary democratic system consolidated by reflecting the aspirations of the people through the enactment of laws and oversight functions. Given this goal NIS identified some short, medium, and long-term action plan for the Parliament, which has been described below;

a) Participation in the Parliamentary Standing Committee: All standing committees in the current Parliament (11th) have been formed during the first session. The study reveals that no Minister can chair any committee to avoid conflict of interest. Also, Members of Parliament involved with the export business cannot be a part of the committee if he/she has personal issues on that committee.

b) Answerability of the Executive Organ to the Parliament: On every session day, the first one hour is spent on questioning and ministerial responses. Also on Wednesdays during parliamentary sessions the first half an hour is spent on questioning and prime ministerial responses, then the next one hour is spent on questioning and ministerial responses. During question-answer sessions, allocation of reasonable time is made for all MPs including the MPs of the opposition under the Rules of Procedure of the Parliament.

The main objectives of Parliament through NIS are to ensure a system of democracy is the public representation, enactment of laws, and making the government accountable. Table 2 shows a comprehensive picture of the implementation progress of action plans concerning recommendations made for the legislature (Parliament).

Table 2: Parliament: Implementation Progress of Action Plan

S. No.	Action Plans	Performance Indicator	Time-Frame	Responsibility of:	Implementation Status	
					Progress	Remarks
1.	Taking steps to ensure regular participation of the MPs of the opposition in Parliamentary sessions	Legal reforms to ensure regular participation of MPs of the opposition in Parliament sessions; culture of regular participation developed	Continuous and long-term	Speaker; Leader of the House (Prime Minister)	Not Achieved	Culture of continuous non-participation of the opposition bench developed
2.	In accordance with Constitutional provisions and the Rules of Procedure of Parliament, holding of regular meetings of the 'Public Accounts Committee'	Meetings held as per provision	Continuous	Public Accounts Committee	Achieved	Meeting of the Public Accounts Committee held regularly
3.	Capacity enhancement of MPs & Officials of Parliament Secretariat in over seeing budgeting process and organization of Financial Oversight Committees' meetings	a) Budget Oversight Unit b) Operational in Parliament Secretariat; training courses/ workshops organized for MPs and Officials of Parliament Secretariat	Continuous	Parliament Secretariat	Achieved	a) Budget Analysis and Monitoring Unit is in operation. b) World Bank-supported Strengthening Parliamentary Oversight (SPO) Project and UNDP-supported Improving Democracy through Parliamentary Development (IPD) The project is operational in Parliament.
4.	Use of ICT in National Parliament and Parliamentary processes	E-Parliamentary system; availability of all laws, rules and circulars made on website and preserved in archives	Continuous	Parliament Secretariat	Achieved	a) Website developed and regularly updated, for instance, laws, rules, and circulars available on website. b) ICT training provided to all Parliament Members
5.	Provision for public access to information on assets owned by MPs	Asset statements of MPs to be made public	Continuous	Speaker	Achieved	Asset statement of MPs are available on the Parliament website

Source: Author's own work

Judiciary

Judiciary is traditionally seen as the defender for upholding the rule of law, restricting executive arbitrariness, and providing a non-partisan institutional capacity for practicing constitutional democracy. The issue of independence of the judiciary has received negligible recognition despite the formal separation of the judiciary from the executive in November 2007. The judiciary has increasingly been subjected to political manipulation under successive governments to the extent that its independence is found to be often compromised by controversial appointments, promotions, removals, and the conduct of judges (Aminuzzaman and Khair, 2014). With judicial independence being questioned, the NIS's goal concerning the judiciary is to establish it as a neutral, independent, and effective organ of the State. Given this goal NIS identified some short, medium, and long-term action plan for the Judiciary, which has been described below:

a) Introduction of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR): ADR is a general term encompassing techniques for resolving conflict outside of court using a neutral third party (Khair, 2004). The ADR system can help mitigate conflicts out of the court and provide benefits both to the judiciary by reducing the backlog of the case and the people by providing faster and acceptable results. In 2012, after the introduction of NIS, the government made provisions for out-of-court settlements through the system of ADR.

b) Formulation of a clear definition of "Contempt of Court": The parliament in 2013 passed a clear definition of the offense of contempt of court. In Bangladesh, eminent citizens face frequent contempt of court charges on trifle matters, and thus to reduce the time and burden of court with little value or importance, the Parliament formulated the law.

Table 3 shows a comprehensive picture of the implementation progress of action plans concerning recommendations made for the judiciary.

Non-State Institution

Educational Institutions

NIS's goal concerning *educational institutions* is to make educational institutions effective agents for the promotion of morality. Civic education and civic virtue in schools tend to sustain anti-corruption reforms. Donors are increasingly interested in funding programs for the improvement of civic education which will raise awareness against corruption and facilitate institutional reforms (Talukdar, 2009). There are different streams of education in Bangladesh, of which the most important ones are: mainstream vernacular education, English-medium education, and religious education. In all systems, moral education is imparted although variation in the curricula and approach on the concept of ethics and the modalities of supervision create

Table 3: Judiciary: Implementation Progress of Action Plan

S. No.	Action Plans	Performance Indicator	Time-Frame	Responsibility of:	Implementation Status	
					Progress	Remarks
1.	Organization of training programs and other activities for capacity development of judicial officers and strengthening of 'Judicial Administration Training Institute (JATI)'	Report on training and capacity development	Short-term and continuous	Judicial Administration Training Institute, Law and Justice Division	Achieved	JATI runs 60-day Basic Course for newly appointed Assistant Judges, 21-day Courses (and sometimes, 3-day short courses) for Senior Assistant Judges, Joint District Judges, and District Judges. Report on the performance of training programs is made available and their impact on Capacity development is significant
2.	Formulation of Act/ Rules/ Guidelines for appointment of Judges in the Supreme Court	Formulation of Act/ Rules/ Guidelines for appointment of Judges in the Supreme Court	Medium-term	Law and Justice Division	In-Progress	One of the priorities about NIS implementation as was to develop law/rules/ guidelines for the appointment of Judges in the Supreme Court
3.	Submission of Asset statements by judicial officers and employees to specified authorities annually, in accordance with relevant rules	Statements submitted and report prepared	Medium-term	Law and Justice Division	In-Progress	Regarding submission of asset statements, improvement is noticed in the case of higher courts only Implemented for lower court judges since 2008

Source: Author's own work

differences in the promotion of ethics among children. Given the NIS goal for educational institutions in the implementation of the NIS action plan related to educational institutions has been documented in Table 4.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF INSTITUTIONS

Based on the assessment of the institutions in terms of their role and initiatives taken, this study attempts to underscore the strengths and weaknesses of the above-discussed institutions in Table 5 to 8.

Table 4: Educational Institutions: Implementation Progress of Action Plan

S. No.	Action Plans	Performance Indicator	Time-Frame	Responsibility of:	Implementation Status	
					Progress	Remarks
1.	Strengthening the ethics education program in the primary and secondary level educational institutions	Program of teaching of ethics conducted regularly after the event of national anthem; Boy Scouts and Girl Guides programs implemented in all institutions	Medium-term	Ministry of Education; Ministry of Primary and Mass Education	In-Progress	Conducting an ethics teaching program after the event of the national anthem is evident at primary and secondary level educational institutions even in some English Medium schools. Primary schools follow the Cub Scout, secondary schools follow the Boy Scout and Girl Guide programs.
2.	Incorporation of curricula on ethics and morality in general education and establishment of appropriate education system	Curricula on this and religious education introduced in the syllabus of primary and high school levels	Medium-term Medium-term	Ministry of Education; Ministry of Primary and Mass Education	Achieved	Curricula on religious education and ethics have been introduced in the syllabus of primary and high school levels. Religious courses, however, focus on ethics and morality issues. English medium schools have also introduced ethics courses like moral science, comparative religious studies, or religious study.
3.	Supervision the activities of educational and religion-based institutions by local government (LG) representatives	Local Government (LG) representatives involved in supervision; Managing Committees formed with the neutral persons interested in education		Ministry of Education; Ministry of Primary and Mass Education	In-Progress	LG representatives and/or local stakeholders are involved in supervision at general educational and religion-based institutions. Managing Committees at primary level formed with neutral persons interested in education, whereas those at the secondary level are yet to reach at this stage. Some English-medium schools have formed Parents - Teachers Associations instead of Managing Committees, while others hold informal meetings with parents.

Source: Author's own work

Table 5: Strengths and weaknesses of the Executive branch

Strengths	Weaknesses
The budget has been increased in establishing various offices	Extensive authority creates scope for abuse.
Extensive authority has been granted by law to act independently	Executive dominates among the three branches of government with separation of power between and among branches are uneven
Parliamentary Standing Committees oversee the works of the executive	The partisan bias of the executive in the decision-making process Absence of implementation of accountability and transparency mechanism in decision making

Source: Author's own work

Table 6: Strengths and weaknesses of the legislative branch

Strengths	Weaknesses
Parliamentary Standing Committees active with members of the opposition party	Parliamentary Standing Committees do not have the enforcing authority of its recommendation over the executive.
Enactment of critical laws for reducing corruption and promoting integrity (e.g. Whistleblowers' Protection Act 2011; Money Laundering Prevention Act 2009)	The reluctance of MPs towards constructive criticism over debates and discussions motivated by party considerations.
Training programs for Members of Parliament (MPs) for enhancing the ability to formulate laws	Growing nexus between MPs and the business sector, leading to a conflict of interest in various standing committees.

Source: Author's own work

Table 7: Strengths and weaknesses of the Judicial branch

Strengths	Weaknesses
Infrastructure and capacity development (new court buildings in various districts)	No separate Secretariat for the Supreme Court, which is a necessity of ensuring Separation of Power for the three branches, where the other two branches have their separate secretariat
Application of ADR as a means of addressing the case backlog	The politicization of judges' appointments at the highest court, that is Supreme Court.
Judicial intervention through frequent 'constitutional writ' order to ensure justice to ensure the integrity	Interference of Ministry of Law despite separation from the Executive.

Source: Author's own work

Table 8: Strengths and weaknesses of the Educational Institutions

Strengths	Weaknesses
Establishment of Boys and Girls Scouts in every school irrespective of educational streams	Lack of infrastructural development (e.g. well-equipped classrooms)
Introduction of mandatory ethics and moral courses for every school.	Lack of training facilities for primary teachers
Expansion of stipend programs for girl students	Poor pay structure for primary and secondary school teachers causing reluctance from graduates with a good academic background to enter the primary and secondary schools.

Source: Author's own work

CONCLUSION

Overcoming the agonies of being the lowest scorer in the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) for five successive years during 2001-2005, Bangladesh has somewhat improved in recent years. However, the country has yet to perform better despite the Prime Minister's pledge of zero tolerance against corruption. Political influence and irregularities in purchasing in the public sector, money laundering along various forms of abuse of power contributing to the prevalence of high corruption in the country. Corruption has appeared as an important issue of public interest in Bangladesh, not because of the low ranking in the CPI of Transparency International, but more importantly because it disrupts the lives of the common marginalized people of the country. The institutions of democracy and specialized pillars of governance and accountability, which constitute the National Integrity Strategy (NIS), are crucial in maintaining integrity and accountability in government, non-government, and private sectors. This study tries to diagnose the progress which various institutions have made in accelerating the national integrity system in Bangladesh. The NIS tried to identify the government agencies which need to curb corruption and aims to promote integrity to perform effectively irrespective of political and economic change. This study tried to identify the various action plans and their updates which the various institutions initiated. This study reveals that effective measures have been taken to make the three branches of government accountable, however, implementation of the action plans remains a challenge. The institutions need to bring about more substantial reforms to ensure integrity which would result in a decrease in corruption which would improve the overall governance of the country. Institutions comprising the NIS should be at the forefront of the fight against corruption.

Effective corruption control is certainly possible in Bangladesh which requires several fundamental changes. Democracy needs to be institutionalized where the state apparatuses must not be used for personal or group gain at the cost of citizens and the state. It is important that political institutions such as the parliament, not only in paper but in practice, pledges to curb corruption

and promote the process of integrity. Curbing corruption requires ensuring justice and bringing all before the law irrespective of identity, status, and political or other linkages, which falls on the hands of the executive and judicial branch of the government. It is also important for the government for the creation of a conducive environment for participation of the civil society, NGOs, media, educational institutions, that is, the non-state institutions to raise and strengthen the demand for accountability and integrity. Finally, the state institutions which constitute the NIS must be transparent, efficient, accountable, and effective, both individually and collectively, in serving the public interest.

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