Public administration and good governance in Bangladesh

Background of public administration in Bangladesh

- Bangladesh bears a colonial legacy in its entire public administration system.
- Bangladesh was part of the British Empire for almost two hundred years. In 1947 Pakistani rulers replaced the British and dominated the area then known as East Pakistan until a bitter war in 1971.
- A colonial imprint persists in Bangladesh especially in political and administrative arrangements.

- The British tradition helped the bureaucracy to become an essential tool of governance where as it is accused of following the Pakistani tradition of involvement in power politics.
- The political system of Bangladesh has survived a series of transitions.

Legal Structure of Administration of Bangladesh:

- As per the constitution of the republic it comprises three basic organs:
  1. Legislative Branch
  2. Executive Branch
  3. Judicial Branch.

- In the constitution of Bangladesh, the article of 48 to 58 about executive branch, article 65 to 93 about legislature branch, article 94 to 116 judiciary branches and article 59 to 60 about local government are discussed clearly.

Legislative branch

- The Parliament of Bangladesh (known as the House of the Nation) is vested with the legislative powers of the Republic.
- Unicameral National Parliament or Jatiya Sangsad; 300 seats elected by popular vote from single territorial constituencies and 45 reservad for female members serve five-year terms.
- Parliament is the apex institution in Bangladesh's accountability system.

- It is Parliament that empowers the government and gives it its legitimacy also it is through Parliament that the enfranchised citizens determine who is to rule.

Executive branch

- Prime Minister as Chief Executive and a President as the Head of State with very circumscribed powers.
- The president's duties are normally ceremonial.
- Cabinet selected by the prime minister and appointed by the president President elected by National Parliament for a five-year term.

- The Prime Minister appoints and heads a Cabinet of Ministers which is collectively responsible to Parliament.
- The Executive is organized on the basis of Ministries and, within Ministries, by Divisions.

Judiciary branch

- The Constitution provides for the separation of powers with an independent judiciary, though up to now the administration of the lower judiciary has been in the hands of the Ministry of Law.
- It is stated the article no 22 at Bangladesh constitution judiciary branch is separated from executive and legislative branch that is important for establishing good governence.
- The Bangladesh judicial system comprises four judicial institutions:
- a) The Supreme Court,
- b) The Subordinate Courts,
- c) The Magistracy, and
- d) The Administrative Tribunals.

Administrational hierarchy of Bangladesh

- 1.Central Administration:
- central secretariat at the national level consisting of the ministries and divisions to provide policies and to perform clearinghouse functions.

- 2.Field administration:
- a)Division level
- b)District level
- c)Upazilla level
- d)Local government

How to improve public administration of Bangladesh

- **Citizen-Oriented Services:**Under constant pressure from development partners, the government is trying to emulate business ethics such as effectiveness, decentralization, competition, efficiency, value-for-money, and partnership in public services.
- **Innovation in the Bangladesh Civil Service:**Public Administration Reform Commission (PARC), proposed the preparation of performance standards and a citizen's charter for three ministries and five important organizations; and the creation of three public service commissions—one for general services, another for technical services and a third for education services.

- **Transparent and neutral recruitment system:**According to the current recruitment policy, there are three means of recruitment: direct recruitment—open competitive examinations; promotion and transfer; and direct lateral recruitment. Class I Officers are recruited directly by the PSC through an open competitive examination into 28 cadres and other government services.

- **Introduction of E-governance:**A Ministry of Science and Technology was created. Websites containing important information for several ministries were launched. Ministry of Finance developed software for budget planning, sensitivity and impact analysis. Ministry of Communication created a database containing information about contractors and tenders. It also created a project monitoring system for tracking project progress.

- **Implementation of political commitment:**The commitment of political leadership is a driving force behind implementation of administrative reform effortsTherefore, in the Bangladesh context political commitment is circumscribed by clientele's politics, which is responsible for distracting the political leadership from embarking on comprehensive reform programs.

- **Increase capacity of Government:** Administrative reforms need concerted efforts on the part of the government in power. Unless it can demonstrate its capacity, its reform agenda is bound to fail to deliver the desired results.
- **Bureaucratic resistance:**There is a common perception that civil servants all over the world are more or less apathetic to the needs of the people and that they are even unwilling to listen to them. The situation is no different in Bangladesh; indeed, it may be even worse because an inadequate, faulty recruitment procedure can place a non-qualified person in a formalized organization; and because politicization—the priority of party loyalty—can amplify the pressures a bureaucrat already feels.

- **The role of International donor agency:**Being an aid-dependent country, Bangladesh has always remained susceptible to the pressures of the international donor agencies in formulating and reformulating its reform agenda. The decision makers of the developed world hold the lifeline of any regime in Bangladesh in their hands and can create havoc in the life of a country in a way that was inconceivable two decades ago. So the government should be careful about this.
- **Good governance:**Corruption everywhere may be largely responsible for the lack of “good enough governance” in Bangladesh. It is the time to eradicate corruption and ensure good governance in every sector in Bangladesh.