

# Trust in Governance in Bangladesh: Ideas, Issues and Solutions

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## Abstract

The era of globalization presents both opportunities and challenges to the field of public administration. Dealing with the myriads of anomalous situations including wars, transnational epidemics, terrorism, financial crises, serious security-related accidents and transportation casualties has become a very important part of the public administrators' daily work. The traditional practice of public administration is becoming more difficult due to scientific and technological improvements, as well as economic globalization that has been complicating socio-economic-political development, emerging issues are bringing about enormous transformations and challenges to government administration. Within the public administration of Bangladesh trust is increasingly becoming a crucial element of performance. Thus, trust in public administration leads to the discourse of trust in governance. This article, based on literatures on governance and trust in the system of governance, would look to analyze the state of trust in the governance system of Bangladesh. In that analysis we will discuss the pros and cons of present governance in Bangladesh. After such analysis we would like to draw the inference by delineating the potential process how trust can be successfully installed in governance system of the country.

## Keywords

Bangladesh, governance, public administration, trust

## I. Introduction

The issue of trust in governance is frequently considered as one of the most important and debated political issues in developing countries like Bangladesh. In

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Bangladesh it is usually believed that trust exists to a great extent among citizens; however, the interpersonal trust among the government employees and citizens is perceived to be low. The very trust of government in democracies is grounded in institutions that are constantly scrutinizing the performance of government actors and that permit punishment if necessary (Levi, 1998). Democratic institutions such as the parliament and election commission have enabled citizens to trust government. Such institutions make government more trustworthy to the citizens. A trusting and a trustworthy government are the sine qua non of contingent consent (Dunn, 1988; Pagden, 1988; Putnam, 1993) democracy, which may well be a prerequisite of an approximately trusting citizenry and of trustworthy government and is certainly essential for providing institutional protections to citizens. Trust is an important indicator for demonstrating how public organizations are running and how officials are managing public affairs. The concern for the study is that there has been decrease in trust or crisis of trust in the governance system of Bangladesh, which is causing organizational capacity to lose its efficiency and effectiveness in providing better services to the people. Bangladesh, where crisis of trust is evident in public and private sector, the government needs to establish mechanisms and institutional means and strategies to increase the propensity of trust both on the part of the public officials and citizens onto each other, that is, an *esprit de corps* is to be created. This would help to provide better services to the people and would help to bring integrity to the government for its effective functioning. Bangladesh lacks democratic political culture as the democratic norms and values have not been found sustaining into our society and polity. In this article we delineate that system of governance in Bangladesh we observe. We also offer a critical analysis of the governance system to unveil some important issues of trust in the present system. This article presents the rationale why trust is important in governance system of a country like Bangladesh. Having discussed the contemporary ideas about trust we have tried to measure where Bangladesh stands and what she can do to make a better one for the welfare of the people.

This article, before going into the analysis, provides some key conceptual underpinnings on concepts of trust and governance in the second section. Having conceptualized trust and governance state of governance in Bangladesh is discussed in the third section to see is there any trust in the system or not. In the fourth section, trust in governance of Bangladesh is seen from two angles, that is, political and administrative. Before concluding the discussion in the sixth section, some strategies are suggested in the fifth section about how trust can be installed in the system of governance in Bangladesh.

## **II. Trust and Governance: A Conceptual Blend**

Trust is an issue that has received attention in several branches of social science literature: psychology, sociology, political science, public administration, economics, anthropology and history (Gambetta, 1988; Lewicki & Bunker, 1996; Worchsel, 1979). Many scientists have paid attention to the problem of defining trust, but a comprehensive and universally approved definition has remained

elusive (Kramer, 1999). Blomqvist (1997) claims that universal definition of trust seems impossible because trust is always situation specific. Accordingly, trust is often a difficult phenomenon to articulate. This means that trusting people may not be able to explicitly specify their beliefs about the trusted persons. Often trust can only be estimated. Trust can also take place in many levels. It involves two persons among peer level (I trust my co-worker) or in vertical hierarchical system (I trust my boss) (Chang, Thomson, Dillon & Hussain, 2003). We broadly define trust as confidence in the goodwill of others not to cause harm to you when you are vulnerable to them (Ring & Ven, 1992). Trust in the work place is a multi-dimensional construct consisting of lateral and vertical dimension (McCauley & Kuhnert, 1992).

### ***Trust: Theoretical Development and Definition***

Early human relations theorists (e.g., McGregor, 1967) noted the importance of a supervisor's trust of subordinates. McGregor's Theory X manager believes that employees are not to be trusted while Theory Y involves delegation of decision-making authority to the subordinate. Theory Y argues that supervisors (superior) are the ones taking risks by increasing their dependence on others (subordinates). In contrast, this study investigates subordinate trust in the superior along with co-workers. Mayer, Davis and Schoorman's (1995) model of dyadic trust<sup>1</sup> proposes that risk-taking behaviour that is unique and identifiable to a particular relationship is likely to occur when dyadic trust is great. Mayer's often cited integrative model of organizational trust is based on three different factors of perceived trustworthiness.

One of the most widely cited definitions of trust is given by Mayer et al. (1995). They define trust as 'the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustier, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control the other party' (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 711). More systematic documentation of the determinants of trust in varying institutional and demographic context can help us understand the deep determinants of personal trust around the world (Asadullah, 2013).

Trust lies at the nexus and the praxis (theory and practice) of public administration and governance (Brillantes & Fernandez, 2011). Trust holds a central role in the re-examination and re-evaluation of the main categories and concepts of organization administration and governance (Porta, Silanes, Shleifer & Vishny, 1997). In developing countries like Bangladesh, public sectors are huge and have traditionally been playing instrumental role in providing basic services, such as, education, health, infrastructural facilities, and law and order maintenance, so trust in public institutions implies that citizens have positive expectations about members of such institutions and assume that if they follow procedures that will produce beneficial outcomes for themselves and for society at large. The key to governance is the establishment of a track record of reciprocity, which creates the expectation that desired behaviour will be rewarded, so the government must

create the condition for their own and others' behaviour that will lead trust to be the most cost-effective behaviour (Levi, 1998). The major sources of lack of trust in governance are promise breaking, incompetence and the antagonism of the government actors or the policy makers towards those they are supposed to serve. Thus trustworthiness of the public institutions is necessary to address what makes the public services more accountable and responsive to citizens and society in general. Increasing trust in government increases citizens' compliance to decision by public authorities. Such compliance makes process of governance easy as cooperation from citizens' increases, thereby decreasing social and economic costs of inducing compliance. According to Kim (2005), higher citizens' trust in public institutions ensures good governance and successful implementation of policies. A loss of trust can be devastating not only to morale and productivity, but also predictive of organizational performance and viability. For an effective and functioning governance process in a developing country like Bangladesh, it requires strong relationship between citizens and officials and trust is always the central figure in functioning relationship.

### *Faces of Trust*

Trust as a multifaceted concept refers to a basic consensus among members of a society on collective values, priorities and differences, and on the implicit acceptance of the society in which they live. It also refers to citizens' expectations of the type of government that they should have, how government should operate and interact with other social and economic institutions and citizenry, and the behaviour of political leaders, civil servants and citizens. The focus of trust may be at organizational, individual, generalized or behavioural. There are five faces of trust: benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty and openness (Hoy & Moran, 1999). Benevolence is characterized as kind feeling towards one another. It refers to the confidence that one's well-being or something one cares about will be protected by the trusted person or group. Reliability is the extent to which one can count on another to come through with what is needed (Hoy & Moran, 1999). There must be sense of predictability along with benevolence to ensure reliability. For competency to be ensured only good intension are not enough to ensure trustworthiness. One must have the ability, quality, skill and performance in fulfilling the expectations then the level of trust would improve. Honesty refers to a facet of moral character and connotes positive and virtuous attributes such as integrity, truthfulness and straightforwardness along with the absence of lying, cheating or theft. Openness in governance refers to as the transparency and in the development of legislation to facilitate access to information is an essential requirement for modernization of the public sector and for effective governance. Openness is one of the ways to ensure integrity in public life which also requires honesty. An integration of all the elements reflects the condition of trust in the governance system of a country. The issue of trust in various dimensions or faces is not relatively new, but it is a contemporary issue in the governance arena. The social bond at the interpersonal level in Bangladesh represents Geert Hofstede's

collectivists' society where people have extended families which are used as a protection in exchange for unquestioning loyalty. There are works on trust but they focus on the social and interpersonal trust. However, no real work has been carried out about the trust in the relationship between the mass people and those involved in governing the country or those being involved in running the public institutions.

### **III. State of Governance in Bangladesh: Does Trust Exist?**

In many ways, Bangladesh is reflection of mal-governance, where the government has failed to ensure better governance involving the crisis in public administration, including the agencies of law enforcement (Sobhan, 2010). Corruption is pervasive in public institutions. Such as according to a survey carried out by Transparency International, Bangladesh (TIB) 2010, nearly 72 per cent respondents were forced to pay bribe in public institutions. Lots of pilferage and larceny as well as responsibility lapses and negligence of official duties are prevalent (Zafarullah & Siddiquee, 2001). The country does not have a tradition of consensus building, political compromising and collective nation building, lacking in benevolence both in public administration and in political arena. The political and state institutions in Bangladesh are fragile in the absence of democratic political culture and the lack of any consensual model of democracy and the political intolerance reinforce this fragility (Rahman & Marjan, 2014). The public access to information is difficult, leading to poor transparency and openness. A number of accountability mechanisms such as the parliamentary committees are very much inactive as they do not have the authority to enforce any recommendations and the bureaucracy is very much reluctant in implementing those. Due to these administrative cultures Bangladesh serves the best case example of crisis of governance. The environment shapes the culture of trust or distrust of government and public institutions in general such as the environment of Bangladesh Public Administration is molded with the characteristics of 'centralization of power', 'red-tapism', 'tall-hierarchy', 'strict rules and regulations', etc. In a developing country like Bangladesh people expects the government to meet their needs so that they can lead a better life as the living standard of the people are not that high but it is bitter truth that due to bureaucratic procedure and corruption, people do not get their services and this is when the issue of trust and distrust comes on the government and on the public institutions which questions the openness and honesty of the state machineries. Although Bangladesh has improved in Human Development Index (HDI), ranking better than India and Pakistan positioning 142 (Human Development Report, 2014) but HDI involves three narrow dimensions, long and healthy life, access to knowledge and decent standard of living.<sup>2</sup> This is where the paradox of development comes as HDI does not take into account all the core values of development such as poverty alleviation, participation, empowerment, responsiveness. Human development is one of the elements through which development and good governance can be ensured but only improving the human development index would not lead to overall development of the country. There

is crisis of trust from the citizens in the whole governance system, that is, in the process of policy formulation and policy implementation, which jeopardizes the whole democratic system of the country. It denotes that trust is significant in terms of larger political system and public service delivery. Public service delivery and institutions responsible for that are very important aspect of governance mechanism in Bangladesh (Khan, 2013). Public service delivery is problematic due to corruption, inter-service conflict, improper career management and lack of communication between public servants and the people (Khan, 2013). Kim, Monem and Baniamin (2013) also pointed out that due to unethical practices of the public servants the entire public service delivery mechanism lost the trust of the people and also lost the trust of the stakeholders of public service system. They also pointed out that political mechanism and structure has been the major actor behind this failure of public service delivery system where both deliverers and receivers of the service do not trust the system. After a long drawn-out struggle for two decades, the people of Bangladesh were able to defeat the forces of autocracy and return to a much coveted parliamentary democracy in 1991 (Khan & Islam, 2014). It rejuvenated the aspirations and expectations of the people for good governance which could bring prosperity and development in their daily lives. The exhilaration withered away soon as the subsequent 'democratic' governments were found involved in misuse of public funds and contributed to mal-governance. Members of parliament (MPs) and the ministers have been found involved in corruption (Rahman, 2007; TIB, 2013). Bangladesh, where crisis of trust is evident, such as the system of caretaker government (through 13th amendment of the constitution) came due to distrust between the top two political parties due to brute vote rigging at one of the by-elections in 1994 in Bangladesh. As stated earlier that democratic institutions such as election commission plays a vital role in creating a trustworthy atmosphere among citizens and political parties for ensuring free-flow of democracy. But after Magura by-election held in 1994, the demand for a caretaker system surfaced, mainly because of the failure of the election commission.<sup>3</sup> The caretaker government system surfaced, that is, came into existence, as a form of system in which the country is ruled by a selected government for an interim period during the transition from one elected government to another, after the completion of tenure of the former. Crisis of trust on philosophical or normative level, towards the public institutions and upon the leadership may be a healthy situation for the democracy as weak or conditional trust is seen as necessary to promote transparency, responsiveness, accountability on the part of the institutions to strive for efficiency and provide better services to the people. Lack of trust takes place when the policy makers and parliamentarians fail to formulate the right policy for the people and due to the inefficiency and incompetency of those who fails to implement the ones that are pro-poor. Adversarial and negative approaches within parliament contribute to lack of trust (motives/intentions) and confidence (capabilities/efficiency) in politicians and political institutions such as the parliament. However, in Bangladesh experience, parliamentary government has not filled up the expectation of the mass people not only because of prolonged boycott by the main opposition parties over the years but also that the parliament has become a rubber-stamp body with no real

discussion of the critical issues of public policy and the executive branch (here the executive branch refers to as the permanent bureaucrats in Bangladesh, who have the technical expertise in policy formulation and are the main engine of implementing the policy, along with access to various information and is involved in budgetary procedures) continues to make major policy decisions without adequate input from the opposition.

Polarization in political culture caused the crisis of trust. Bangladesh's politics is very much polarized into two ideologically based preferences, on one side Bangladesh Awami-League led by the present Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina (daughter of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Father of Nation of Bangladesh) and on the other side Bangladesh Nationalist Party led by Begum Khaleda Zia (wife of former President of Bangladesh, Ziaur Rahman), and the crisis of trust exists between the two ideologies not because they are ideologically different but because the political people have grown ideologically distant from their origins, widening the gap between the citizens and government leading to mistrust and this is very much evident in the current political crisis in the country. A loss of trust and confidence makes it difficult for governments to mobilize support and gain legitimacy for their action. This exactly is being reflected in Bangladesh; especially the present government, like the previous government has failed to gain much trustworthiness due to situations such as Padma Bridge Graft<sup>4</sup> has raised questions of the integrity, honesty and competency of the government in fulfilling the needs of the people and there is need to construct mechanism to regain trust. As corruption is an important element in the governance mechanism, the level of trust depends on the state of corruption in the country. The Padma Bridge has become a glaring example of how corruption impedes the country's infrastructural development. The World Bank has claimed to have found credible evidence of a high-level corruption conspiracy among selected government officials involved in the Padma Bridge project. Allegations of corruption in this project have been circulating in both the domestic and international arena for some time now. Credible evidences were presented to the government. But in a misguided effort to protect a few, attempts were made to sweep the allegations under the rug or question the motivation of the whistleblowers. Instead of being proactive, the government was defensive, creating a doubt on the mind of the citizens on the trustworthiness from the part of the government, which came to the power with the 'Charter for Change',<sup>5</sup> where anti-corruption measure was given emphasis. The failure of incumbent government over the years to meet the requirements of trustworthiness is a problem for democracies as it may lead to nonproductive increase of government regulations which has been the characteristic of public administration of Bangladesh over the years (Khan, 2013; Khan & Islam, 2013).

#### **IV. Political and Administrative Trust in Governance: Required or Redundant?**

Political-administrative interaction shapes the public policy outcomes as both the political and administrative personnel (ministers and bureaucrats) are involved in

the formulation of policy and implementation of the policy by the latter. A positive political and administrative interface is required for effective governance, growth and development of the state (Nwasike, 2012). Political and administrative trust in the governance mechanism can be seen from two perspectives, that is, trust of people for political and administrative personnel and trust among the political and administrative personnel themselves.

Politicians and bureaucrats need to have trust, which requires benevolence in each other's actions in order to manage ministerial activities effectively. There is need of trust between individuals especially politicians and bureaucrats with the various government institutions and this call for need of institutional trust. The concept of institutional-based trust refers to the phenomenon that individuals or collective actors develop trust in the face of specific institutional arrangements (Bachman & Inkpen, 2013). According to Giddens (1984), institutions are structural arrangements represented by rules of behaviour to which individual and collective action is oriented. Institutions create a common platform for knowledge domains and the decisions of individuals and organization and thus there is need of trust between potential transaction partners, that is, between the service providers (politicians and bureaucrats) and service receivers (mass people). As Bangladesh is a high power-distance country (Hofstede, 1993) there is rigid hierarchy in the central and local administration, so the attitude of trustworthiness or untrustworthiness is always under the scrutiny and thus the approach of the ministers and bureaucrats portrays the knowledge, belief and understanding of each other. There is need of trustworthiness among the political and administrative personnel as they both need to tune efficiently in order to provide goods and service to the people. Public administration involves a cooperative effort between politicians and administrative personnel. As the ministers are the political head of a ministry, having direct control over the bureaucrats, it is important for them to maintain the integrity and reliability of the government machineries. On the other hand, the bureaucrats through their experience and expertise develops and implements public policies. If there is untrustworthiness among any personnel, such as secretary hiding or withholding important information from the minister will make it harder for the ministers to reach the desired goal. Therefore, for functional cooperation between the minister and permanent secretary (bureaucrats), trust means that the minister has to adopt an attitude of tolerating the permanent secretary to whom he/she is vulnerable since it may be a costly relationship if not managed properly (Baier, 1986). It is important that the relationship among the ministers and administrative personnel reflects benevolence (confidence on each other's actions), honesty (both would depict authenticity of information), openness (transparency in the information shared among each other), reliability (behaviour of both the minister and bureaucrats reflect impartiality) and competency (perform as expected and according to standards). When there is no vulnerability, there is no need for trust, thus the mechanisms (benevolence, honesty, openness, reliability and competency) of trust fosters cooperation and resolves conflicts and improves the social network of relationship and builds consensus among the individuals, institutions and common people which is required for efficient allocation of goods and services. Through meeting the tools of trust, both political and administrative

personnel will enhance the government's capacity to become trustworthiness among the mass people to serve public interest.

Trust from the part of the citizens upon the political and administrative personnel also reflects the state of governance in the country. Trust of citizens on government depends upon the services provided by the government. If the services provided are satisfactory and are provided in the most competent and open way, then the trust among citizens looks to exist and enhances the legitimacy of the rule of the government. Citizens may be satisfied with the presence of a particular service or the availability of certain services that meet their needs and wants. At the same time, they may also be satisfied with information concerning services, the accessibility and friendliness of the service providers they meet, the competence of service personnel, the fairness, effectiveness and efficiency of the services, or other factors (Christensen & Lægreid, 2002). It is important that people are satisfied as that would not only help to bring about social and economic stability in the country but will also bring about efficiency among the citizens which would improve their performance capacity.

## **V. Installing Trust in Governance System of Bangladesh: Ways and Strategies**

The decline of public trust offers tough political challenges to politicians, public administrators and citizens because it draws serious questions of political processes and the legitimacy of government. Thus it is very important to install trust in the governance mechanism. There are six strategies or means of restoring or installing trust in the governance mechanism which are discussed below:

### ***Administrative Reform***

The need of reform in public administration in Bangladesh has become a continuing imperative. Reforms make the public services more accountable, transparent and efficient in the most effective way. Administrative reforms must be an answer to restoring trust and in building integrity in public service. Restoring trust through administrative reform must be brought about through *institutional reform*. Institutional reform includes reform in *processes and procedures and improvement of structures*.

### ***Institutional Level Reform***

*Reform at institutional level involves two types of initiatives:*

1. Creation of governmental or constitutional institutions  
Example: Ombudsman, Article 77
2. Strengthening of existing governmental or constitutional institutions, that is, reform in the process, procedure and structure  
Example: Anti-Corruption Act, Section 3(2), 25 and 29

We discuss about the conditions, the way they work in two subsections below.

### **Creation of Governmental or Constitutional Institution**

It is very important that the government creates various constitutional and governmental institutions in order to improve their democratic legitimacy. Such as in the constitution of Bangladesh there is provision of ombudsman. Article 77 of the Constitution of Bangladesh provides that parliament may by law establish the office of ombudsman. Once established the ombudsman shall have the power to investigate any action taken by a ministry, a public officer or a statutory authority and such other powers and functions as may be prescribed by parliament. The institution of ombudsman can oversee the bureaucratic excesses and administrative grievances of the public. If the ombudsman system is institutionalized there would be less sycophancy and with better management public offices would be able to carry out its activities in more responsive manner which would help to restore trust from the part of the people into the governance mechanism. Decision making in the public sector lacks transparency as secrecy is jealously guarded with certain rules like the Official Secrets Act, 1923 and Government Servants (Conduct) Rules, 1979 (Khan, 2007). If there is an office and proper functioning of a duly appointed ombudsman by the parliament, then the accountability and transparency in the government bureaucracy, those mainly involved in resource allocation, is likely to be well ensured and public administration will be more effective. In order to establish a functioning office of the ombudsman it is necessary to have strong political commitment of every political parties and political organizations. Apart from the political commitment a conscious and adaptive public administration would ensure the helpful condition to have an effective ombudsman. Adaptability of public administration has often been questioned due to the prevalence of colonial type of bureaucracy and anti-change mindset of the incumbents within the bureaucratic organizations. Thus, without political commitment and adaptive nature of public administration it is quite unlikely that ombudsman can work properly in Bangladesh. Given effective functioning of judiciary, parliament and auditor general, the ombudsman can play a catalytic role in ensuring social and political accountability of the public institutions and functionaries, which would help government to install trust.

### **Strengthening the Existing Governmental and Constitutional Institutions**

Here it would be seen that that how the existing governmental and constitutional institutions can help to restore trust in the governance mechanism by bringing reform in the process, procedure and structure of those organizations. Here we would look at the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and in its Act, and the reforms that needs to be initiated to bring back trust of the people both onto the ACC and on the governance system in the holistic manner. Section 25 of the ACC Act involves prior approval for taking up cases of corruption against government officials by the ACC from the Prime Minister's Office, which curtails the authority of the ACC in taking quick action. However if there is 'procedural reform' in this Section of the Act, that is, if they carry out investigation without obligations then ACC would be able to take stern actions against the corrupt government officials

and the common people would be more active and aware of the corruptions and would report to the ACC. The ACC then institutionally would have no external obligations in investigating upon the alleged public officials and the level of trust would increase on the part of the people towards the governance system.

In order to ensure accountability of the ACC there can be provision of 'Corruption Ombudsman', which would scrutinize the work of the ACC, which would help to restore the trust as people would have confidence that ACC actions are strictly scrutinized and they are not doing things that goes against public interest. Also there can be provision of independent 'Judicial Committee', that would ensure that ACC carries their duty efficiently with all the accountable and transparent means.

### *Reforming Mindset and Behaviour*

One of the most challenging imperatives in restoring trust in the government is reforming the behaviour and mindsets of the people. Reforming mindsets refers to the molding of the individual and collective perspectives or paradigms of public officials in line with the demand of the changing context. It is also called reforming the 'culture'. There are two ways of reforming mindsets:

1. Individual mindsets, example: civil servants mindset
2. Collective mindsets, example: police administration

#### *Individual Mindset Reform*

Individual mindsets include desirable work behaviour, positive thinking and attitude, emotional intelligence (self- and social awareness—matured behaviour), and moral intelligence (integrity, honesty, compassion and forgiveness). The personal values help an individual in setting personal goals and daily conduct and conforming ethical code both at personal and organizational levels (Pant, 2007) and this would help to restore trust as this would allow individuals especially in the public sector to provide goods and services efficiently and effectively. In Bangladesh, the civil servants face difficulties in their job as political affiliation is given more priority in promotion and transfer. This needs to be reformed, that is, the mindset have to reformed among the decision makers, which would allow the bureaucrats at the local level to perform better as they would solely be involved in providing efficient services. Now this can be encouraged when the recruitment in the civil service is done in a free and fair manner. Defective recruitment procedure and the politicization of the civil service may be largely responsible for the lack of good governance in Bangladesh (Jahan, 2006). Fair and competitive recruitment would attract meritorious candidates and when the process of fairness and impartiality is sustained, the civil servants would be much more professional and the bureaucracy would be ready to face the challenges of globalization and would be able to provide quality services to the people.

### ***Collective Mindset Reform***

Collective mindsets should be the development of model work culture that manifests and fosters the type of organizational values and behaviour performance by maintaining high ethical and moral standards and public image.

### ***Leadership***

Trust and leadership are two sides of the same coin. Trust and transparency are always linked together. Without transparency, people do not believe what their leaders say (Bennis, Goleman & O'Toole, 2008, p. viii). Leadership can restore trust in government in various ways:

#### ***Focus on 'Performance'***

Leadership is important in restoring trust in government if the focus is on performance and not on the individual perspective. To achieve the success in reforming public administration, the dynamism of leadership has to be transmitted to the reform process which would help to restore trust of the people on the governance system. Then people would be able to have confidence upon their leader to bring about change in their lives and provide the necessary services to them in order to improve their living conditions. Recently Bangladesh government is considering to replace the traditional system of evaluating the civil servants, that is, Annual Confidential Report (ACR). ACR would be replaced by Performance Based Report (PBR). In PBR government is considering to introduce the mechanism of Management by Objective (MBO) and 360 Degree Feedback. Through these mechanisms the performance would be measured more critically and it will help the civil servants to be more client focused and quality-oriented incumbents.

#### ***Resources Mobilized Efficiently***

Effective leaders are able to mobilize collaborative forces of the public and private; and coordinate from the national to the local. If the resources are mobilized in the most efficient way then the common people would get the desired output and the service delivery would be done in the most efficient and transparent way.

#### ***Efficient Tackling of Corruption***

Innovative leadership is crucial in reforming public administration and tackling corruption. It is very important that leaders perform by tackling corruption as it not only allows for effective allocation of resources of the poor but also helps to ensure transparency and accountability in the country whereby the people would be able to trust their leader in carrying out the development works and expedite the economic growth and ensure that good governance prevails in the country.

### *Citizen or Public Participation and Engagement*

Citizen or public participation tends to enhance public trust. The general normative argument is that better-informed citizens can actively and constructively contribute to decision making such as on policy issues.

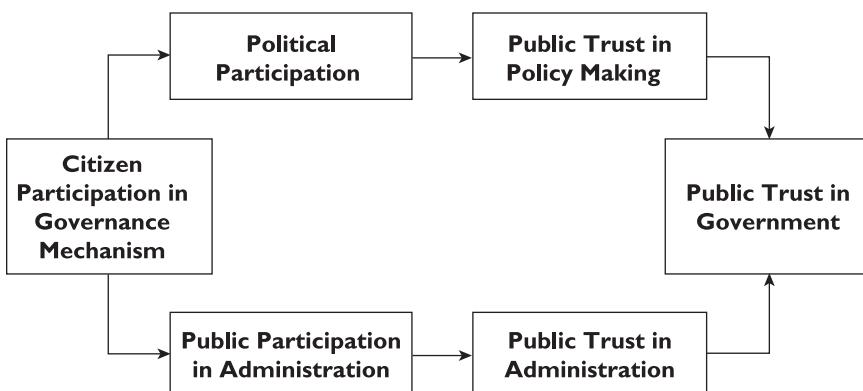
The citizen or the public participation can be seen from two perspectives:

1. Political participation
2. Administrative participation

A comprehensive model of citizen/public participation and its relationship to public trust in relation to political and administrative participation is shown in Figure 1.

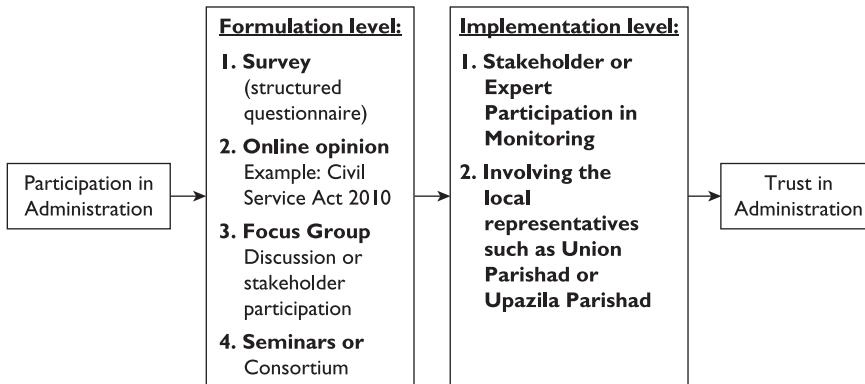
*Political Participation:* Political participation is public involvement in expressing preferences for a broad spectrum of important national, regional or local policies, mainly during the process of selecting political representatives and voting. If the voting is carried out with utmost free-fair and in a neutral manner then the people would be able to elect their own representative who would meet their actual need and this would restore trust in the governance system and into the democratic system as voting is one of the basic democratic procedure of country.

*Participation in Administration:* Participation in administration is public involvement in administrative process and in administrative decision making. There are few ways through which citizens can participate in various administrative works and one such way which is emerging in Bangladesh is participatory budgeting. Participatory budgeting is promising as a pioneering urban management practice with tremendous potential to boost up the principle of good governance (Hossain, Begum, Alam & Islam, 2014). At the various municipality (local government unit) levels throughout Bangladesh, public opinion is taken prior to the national budget, in order to incorporate the development projects needed



**Figure 1. A Model of Public Participation and Its Relationship to Public Trust**

**Source:** Wang and Wart (2007).



**Figure 2.** Participation in Administration Involving the Formulation and Implementation Level

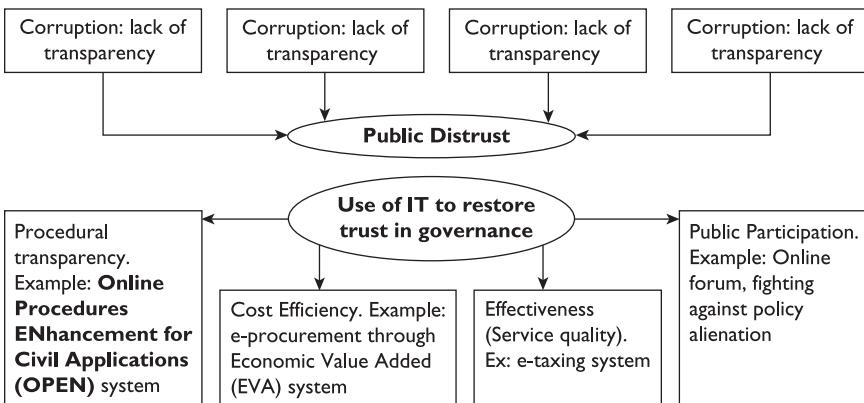
**Source:** Authors' own work.

for the localities which leads to more accountable and transparent budget for the local people.

Only when the citizens are involved in the *formulation* and *implementation* process in the most effective way, participation in the administration can be ensured. As stated earlier that Bangladesh public administration bears colonial legacy thus the decision makers tend to *manipulate* decision making (formulation and in implementation) process without much involvement of the people. One of the ways through which citizens can be actively involved in implementation is through local government unit. However there is merely devolution of power at the local government institutions. But things are changing such as in the Local Government (Pourashava) Act 2009, there is provision of participation by the citizens and communities through the Town-Level Coordination Committee and the Ward-Level Coordination Committee, and these committees are involved in formulation of projects, although they are rarely taken into account. At implementing various projects the Ministry of Local Government Rural Development and Cooperatives becomes the sole authority without much involvement of stakeholders and citizens as there is no financial authority given to the local government units. How participation in administration would ensure trust in the administration is shown in Figure 2.

## E-Government

E-government or use of information technology (IT) can provide potentially useful tools to governments to help them to restore/install public trust by enhancing transparency, cost efficiency, effectiveness and in policy participation. However, more than anything else, it is the mindset of government officials that poses the biggest bottleneck to e-government (Chowdhury & Satter, 2012). It may be argued that online governmental transparency is dubious because it is maintained by the government themselves. Information can be added or removed from the



**Figure 3.** Potential Prospects of Information Technology to Restore Trust

**Source:** Moon (2003).

public eye and monitoring and ensuring accountability may be difficult so the government personnel must have honest mindset and work at the most fair way to establish a democratic and a transparent government.

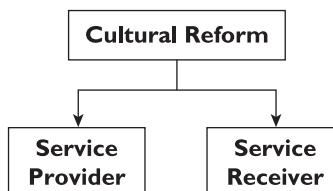
How e-government can restore trust is shown in Figure 3.

### *Cultural Reform*

Cultural reform can be seen from two perspectives: service deliverer and service provider (Figure 4).

As Bangladesh is a *collective* society there is need of benevolence from the service providers, which is lacking in recent times, that is, there is need of the mentality of 'sacrificing' both from the service deliverers and service receiver in order to ensure *sound governance*, where the governance means a 'participatory process of governing the social, economic and political affairs of a country through structures and values that mirror the society', which eventually would help citizens to trust the governance mechanism of the country.

Such as in any public office while giving service, if the lunch time intervenes and still there are five citizens yet to be given the services and if the service provider sacrifices his/her 15 minutes of lunch time then the person would be able



**Figure 4.** Types of Cultural Reform

**Source:** Authors.

to provide the service to the service receiver without making them wait for one hour. This would cause the citizens to build trust on the organization and would be attracted to the organization and would regard highly of the organization. However, this is not taking place in the government institutions, not only that there is lack of benevolence among the personnel but no real competition and motivation for providing quality and efficient services to people. Politicization has grasped the bureaucracy. Various surveys indicate that citizens consider the public service as 'over centralized, inefficient, overpaid, coercive, unethical and rent-seeking' (Zafarullah, 1998). Thus the citizens' perception of the public servants and the quality of the service they provide is negative. Thus all these requires change in the individual and collective mindset both from the person and from the organization so that there is no unnecessary harassment, procrastination in deciding simple problems and discourteous arrogant behaviour, keeping customers waiting for hours which would create a positive perception on the government service providers and there is need for these kind of mindset which, cannot be pressurized as this would not bring effective result but rather these needs to be internalized among ourselves and thus this would help to restore trust on the government.

## **VI. Conclusion**

Government is largely a function of trust and social capital. The relationship between government and its citizens has been edgy, which is largely because the citizens feel as though government officials misuse their powers for their self-interest and also the citizens feel disconnected from government. The government service delivery is perceived to be inadequate. With the hope of reversing these perceptions, we have recommended some reforms to install trust in the governance system of Bangladesh. Like administrative strategies that target skeptical/pessimistic citizens, strategies for which emphasis is placed on publicizing the benefits of government, improving service delivery, and giving individuals a means of influencing public policy and government decision making. Internet-based applications or e-democracy may prove ideal in this regard, as such innovations can help nurture a governmental landscape in which information is readily available, people feel more connected to government, and citizens are better able to participate in political processes. These changes may reduce distrust towards government and install faith in our political institutions and elected officials.

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## **Notes**

1. Other researchers term it as interpersonal trust
2. Sustaining human progress: Reducing vulnerabilities and building resilience. Explanatory note on the 2014 HDR composite resources. Retrieved 3 April 2015, from [http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr\\_theme/country-notes/BGD.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/BGD.pdf)

3. Retrieved 6 May 2014, from [http://www.daily-sun.com/index.php?view=details&archieve=yes&arch\\_date=12-09-2013&type=One-election-but-many-questions&pub\\_no=613&cat\\_id=2&menu\\_id=5&news\\_type\\_id=1&index=0](http://www.daily-sun.com/index.php?view=details&archieve=yes&arch_date=12-09-2013&type=One-election-but-many-questions&pub_no=613&cat_id=2&menu_id=5&news_type_id=1&index=0)
4. Padma Bridge Graft is the allegation which was brought by World Bank, while funding for the biggest physical infrastructure, that is, Padma Bridge. Retrieved 7 May 2014, from <http://news.priyo.com/2013/04/18/padma-bridge-graft-world-bank-expels-snc-lavalin-1-72986.html>
5. Charter for Change was the election manifesto of the Bangladesh Awami League which formed the government in 2009 after national election in 2008. Retrieved 7 May 2014, from <http://bdnews24.com/politics/2008/12/12/hasina-unveils-23-point-charter-for-change>

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