

## SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY OF BUREAUCRACY IN BANGLADESH

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Good governance and rule of law in the developing world are affected by the threat of corruption, biased attitude of politicians and incompetent bureaucracy. It happens due to insufficient level of accountability in the public services. In general, accountability refers to the concept of answerability to the controlling authority who may be the employer or the representative of them. Thus public servants in Bangladesh are accountable to their controlling authorities. In democratic governance, public servants are the servants of the State, which is owned by citizens. So public servants should be accountable to both the controlling authorities and the people. Unfortunately history witnessed that bureaucrats of this Sub Continent were unfamiliar with the concept of considering citizens as stakeholders. They were always trained to be loyal to the employers and neglect citizen's welfare and participation.

Globalization has been successful in promoting awareness among the citizens about their rights. It emphasizes on satisfaction of the citizen and hammers governments to enhance citizen's participation in the governance system and highlight their views in policy formulation. 'Social accountability' thus emerged as a concept in the social research sector. The World Bank has defined Social Accountability as "an approach towards building accountability that relies on civic engagement, i.e. in which it is ordinary citizens and/or civil society organizations who participate directly or indirectly in exacting accountability". The main thrust should be on citizen participation in governance, which would reflect the accountability of the public servants to the society.

Bangladesh has been identified as a country of weak governance. Low level of citizen involvement in the governance system has been pointed as the root cause of such weakness. Citizens in the country are also becoming aware of their rights and demands. As a result Governments are trying to enhance practices of social accountability in Bangladesh. Practicing participatory budgeting, participatory planning in the Union Parishad level, approval of Right to Information Ordinance 2008, Making Government websites accessible to the citizens are some positive indication of ensuring social accountability of bureaucracy in Bangladesh. But these initiatives are not sufficient enough. The present study investigates the position of bureaucracy in Bangladesh from social accountability perspective, its challenges in the global arena and whether social accountability in Bangladesh is increasing or not using both secondary data and as a civil servant my practical experiences has been incorporated here.