

**Review Article**

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# Challenges and Problems in Implementing Policy in Bangladesh

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A policy is a set of ideas or plans that serves as the foundation for making decisions, particularly in politics, economics, or business for the betterment of the general public which ultimately decides and defines the future and development of a country. There are numerous public or national policies in Bangladesh that play a vital part in improving basic human needs issues. Most policies in Bangladesh were strongly implemented after the independence. But it is often thought that national or public policies for the greater welfare of people don't get much attention due to various factors and causes. Considering this matter, the present review study was conducted with the objective to identifying the key factors and obstacles that impede the formulation and execution of policies in the context of Bangladesh. Reviewing from different organizations and newspaper report from website, journal article and books some key points regarding hindrance of policy execution were identified as lack of accountability, transparency, corruption, and the ineffectiveness of public administration. Despite challenges in policy formation and its application some apparent recommendations were observed to make the policy process easier, such as prioritizing problems based on study and reports, analyzing global and national policy options, ensuring participation of stakeholders, evaluation of policy implementation, problems, scopes and taking required actions. The above review present various aspects of public policy creation, evaluation and execution in Bangladesh; if such points are considered during the policy cycle hopefully a better and effective outcome will be observed in every sector of the country by which all civilians will be benefited.

**Keywords:** Policy, Implementation, Challenges, Bangladesh, Development**Introduction**

Policy plays crucial roles in directing decision-making and planning actions in various facets of a country. Typically, policy implies principles that determine actions/decisions or a course of actions. It is true that policies can take many different shapes, including public, private, organizational, group-based, or even personal. Public policy, however, is related to a government's

guiding principles and/or a set of initiatives that are specifically directed at serving the needs of the general populace. In the interest of the people, various nations, including Bangladesh, create public or national policies that lay out what should be done and what should be accomplished in a variety of public spheres, involving education, science, technology and relationships internationally [1]. However, the way a public policy is created and implemented has a

significant impact on its outcomes. In general, domestic and foreign policy are two different types of public policy that can influence one another. The dynamic, intricate, and interactive process of creating public policy typically consists of several typical stages, like identifying issues or establishing an agenda, formulation, adoption, implementation, and evaluation. But only a strong national policy and its appropriate execution can achieve policy goals and bring about the desired improvements in any expected area of public attention. Obviously, many different parties as well as organizations (governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, interest groups, and the others), procedures, and strategies collaborate in the public or national policy framework [2].

In Bangladesh, there are numerous national or public policies that play a major part in directing actions and operations based on policy goals and objectives. These areas of public concern include education, economic development, environment, human resource development, foreign relations, and many others. Bangladesh's national policies historically began soon after the liberation and gradually broadened their scope to include a variety of topics as new conditions and difficulties on both a national and global scale arose [3]. In fact, there are various kinds of significant issues at almost every point in the policy cycle. It is important to take special note of issues with developing policy agendas or identifying policy issues that need to be addressed. Setting an agenda is undoubtedly a crucial task because it tends to reflect the greatest demands or issues facing the public, and because it frequently involves a variety of stakeholders, like politicians, the media and NGOs, and interest groups. Inadequate reflection of the larger social context, long-term visions, prioritized national needs, etc. leads to setting the agenda that mainly involves top-down approaches from political leaders, policy makers, and development actors (who frequently prioritize party interests over public interests). As a result, national policy agendas frequently fail to reflect the nation's or the people's real and foremost concerns. The creation of a national policy, which entails the development of alternative policy options or policy proposals, the selection of the most effective option(s), and the formulation of policies with the best options, is undoubtedly more stringent, necessitates lengthy discussions among various stakeholders based on the nature of the policy issues, and needs a significant amount of time. Typically, the policy turns out to be better if analysis of the policy is better. However, there are many interesting criticisms of this stage for instance- lack of communication with stakeholders, including pertinent experts (even though a panel for policy development is formed); evaluation of potential policies and selecting the appropriate options; the importance of evidence-based policy making approaches and reflections on broadness of focus; supremacy of political intends and bureaucrats' desires; and the substantial control of policy transfers [4].

Therefore, national policies that have been created and revised frequently are not considered the best options for resolving concerns raised by the public. The poor execution of national policies is unquestionably an important matter. There are undoubtedly many issues and difficulties with enacting policies in Bangladesh, including the need for economic, informational, material, and

other resources as well as technical, human, and additional assets. When formulating policies, policymakers frequently pay minimal thought to the issue of policy deployment, as well as the challenges and intricacies involved with doing so. Consequently, national policies frequently become idealistic and impractical and give rise to divergent opinions about how best to carry out multiple choices for policy. Further major deficiencies include inadequate resource management and mobilization, collaboration between and complying from various stakeholders, capacity and knowledge gaps among execution officials, involvement from grassroots in application, and oversight of execution by implementing committee and/or other assigned authorities [5]. Assessment of policies is unquestionably just as crucial as setting the course, composition, and deployment. A key phase of the policy cycle, policy appraisal is particularly important for understanding policy accomplishments, gaining knowledge for future policy development, modification of current policies, and successful implementation. Yet, due to a number of restrictions and difficulties, including lack of interest, an inadequate understanding of its significance, a shortage of time, sufficient funding, a lack of an advisory committee, and a lack of instruments for measuring, particularly when the policy instrument is vague and institutional bias is high, policy evaluation is, in fact, more stressed in Bangladesh.

These factors make it clear that advancements in the development and execution of policies through lessons learned fall short of demands. National policies and a country's overall context are unquestionably interdependent. Public policies in economically advanced nations differ from those in developing countries due to societal differences. While uncertain sociopolitical and poor economic circumstances frequently have an impact on government policies in developing and less developed nations, countries with more resources typically seek improved choices all through the course of a policy cycle [6].

## Methodology

This review is both descriptive and suggestive in type. Secondary resources for this study include books, newspapers, reports and periodicals from both national and international levels. For research, Internet sources were mostly used. The results of the research are written using qualitative instead of quantitative pattern.

## Results and Discussion

Policy development and suitable design of framework is a must for any kind of developmental process. Bangladesh has received significant assistance from an organized policy plan supported by massive public expenditures on infrastructure in rural areas, human capital, and technological advances. This country has developed and carried out several policies for the transformation of various industries through rapid technological advancement in an effort to reduce poverty and improve the standard of living for its growing population [7]. The process of development began in the early years of the 1960s, and these policies were gradually implemented beginning in the 1990s. All policies doesn't apply or

work alike due to the application in the field condition. Conversely, there are some field situations faced during implementation of work where there's no policy made. These phenomena affect the development of a country. Therefore, there's a lot of problems,

limitations, and challenges too for effective policy implementation. Some prime challenges and problems have been discussed below for policy adoption in Bangladesh (Figure 1).



## Dearth Accountability

One of the most important requirements for greater efficacy in the application of policy is accountability. Accountability makes it possible to gauge how well policies are working. Each policy has objectives that must be achieved. Accountability and responsibility for policies are somewhat related. Administrative accountability emphasizes success. It tries to make sure that the organization's goals are optimized along with the use of the available resources. Accountability is another powerful tool in the fight against corruption in government institutions [8]. An unaccountable bureaucracy is a disgrace to democratic systems, and in general, this unaccountable system aids in the bureaucracy's monopolization, whereby they establish and carry out nearly all public policies. Being held responsible for one's acts and omissions is a fundamental democratic principle. It is well managed to prevent it from going too far and threatening democracy as a whole [9]. Although in theory public bureaucracy is required to be liable at all levels while maintaining monetary probity, in Bangladesh the system of public administration is unable to guarantee accountability for the execution of policies due to the following reasons:

### *Institutional Weakness*

There are numerous institutional structures in place for ensuring accountability in the administrative processes. These involve order, range of control, direction, and unity of command, but all these means for attaining administrative power have limitations in Bangladesh, making obstacles to public service efficiency.

Parliament, parliamentary committees, and so on are not doing a good job of preventing the bureaucracy [10].

### *Poor Auditing and Accounting Systems*

There is an old adage that says, "public money is no money." If the government audit and accounts department cannot play a crucial part in an unaccountable bureaucracy, a lot of public money is taken up through illegal means. The CAG in Bangladesh is legally allowed to investigate every record provided by public bureaus in order to maintain financial accountability; however, the method of convicting those accused is very multifaceted, lengthy, and hard. In Bangladesh, most recognized deviations are finally managed and influenced by illicit means.

### *Ineffective Participation in Management*

Participatory governance represents one of the most effective forms of making decisions, but certain officials are against it because of an arbitrary attitude. This could aid in the misuse of the public's assets [11].

### *Lacking Robust Civil Society*

The civil society safeguards the overall public's interests and serves as a check on government. It contributes to the humanization of government policies and attempts to foster a policy argument in order to protect the interests of society. The function of civil society in ensuring accountability in the civil service is essential in a society of diversity. However, in a country such as Bangladesh, it has yet to play its righteous and unbiased role.

### ***Insignificant Departmental Action***

If anyone infringes the rules of service and gets charged with misconduct or misuse of resources, there is an approach of departmental punishment in place. However, due to flawed inquiries or negligence by authorities, this system of accountability is not working, posing an obstacle for better functioning of Bangladesh's public administration.

### ***Poor administrative tribunal***

In order to provide justice to civil servants, administrative tribunals were established; however, because of their cumbersome procedures, no one has dared to use them to seek redress from this department.

### ***Sluggish warning and control system***

The authorities may choose this approach for amending the convicted civil officer if he/she engaged in any unethical behavior, but Bangladesh's public service structure makes it less effective.

### ***Political Institutional Weakness***

The political system is the foundation for bureaucracy everywhere in the world. Because of the fragile political institutions here, there is no qualitatively bureaucratic oversight. As a result of this, the country's public administration is acting independently. In Bangladesh, the system of administration is more advanced than the political structure, which is not what democratic government is all about.

### **Transparency issues**

Maintaining a transparent administration and ensuring that everyone has similar access to information about governmental operations is crucial for overcoming the challenges of policy solicitation and improving the performance of the civil service. It seems hardly logical to maintain a restriction on getting details on the functions of the public agencies given that they are funded by the taxes of the people. However, in Bangladesh, the Government Servants Conduct Rules (GSCR) of 1979 and Acts of 1923 obligate the civil servant to an ongoing pledge of confidentiality. For instance, paragraph 19 of the GSCR even forbids government employees from communicating any information that they come into possession while performing their official duties, whether it came from official sources or not, "to government servants belonging to sister organizations, to non-official persons, or to the press, directly or indirectly" [12]. Inevitably, a remarkable amount of activities continues to take place in Bangladesh outside of the attention of the general public. This recurring trend is perhaps partially a holdover from the time of colonialism, when official captivities differed from those of the general public [12]. Today, a lot of countries understand that concealment undermines democracy and negatively affects decision-making efficiency and quality. Making decisions in public is more likely to result in economically sound choices. Resulting, lot of countries have altered their legal systems to foster more transparent governance. As an example, the official secrets act in New Zealand mandates that nothing is confidential unless specifically stated to be so [13].

Above all, improved government-private sector interaction would result from more transparency. The fundamental tenet for interactions between the private and public sectors must be that taxpayers have a right to know about the progress and regress of the government works [12].

### **Large-scale Corruption**

Abuse of resources is a persistent issue for policymakers in public-sector management positions. A substantial amount of the resources intended for the poor had been taken off and wasted by individuals with positions of power and authority, the very people intended to rescue the poor from their clutches. Official inquiries on abuse and corruption have been compromised, and distrust has supplanted optimism and morality in society [14]. yearly, vast sums of money are gobbled up by government officials in the manner of leasing trying, bribery, and unethical behaviors that cause problems for citizens. In Bangladesh, corruption is a major issue that threatens good governance. Mullan [15] stated corrupt official as "a public official is corrupt if he accepts money or money's worth for doing something that he is under duty to do any-way, that he is under duty not to do or to exercise a legitimate discretion for improper reasons".

### **Ineffectiveness in government administration**

The effectiveness in Bangladeshi bureaucracy is problematic. Large-scale government organizations throughout the country are mostly unresponsive and monolithic. The procedure for making decisions is extremely slow and hierarchical. Insufficient efficiency has a wide range of root causes. The following list includes several of the reasons of low effectiveness and productivity.

#### ***Ineffective staff management structure***

The human resources system consists of hiring, choosing, promoting, transferring, training, evaluating efficiency, setting pay, and career development, among other things. Many components of public management of staff in Bangladesh's civil service are not operating effectively, which directly contributes to the subpar performance in applying policies.

#### ***Morale is inadequate***

Most government employees have poor morale because of inappropriate pay structure, absurd transfer and promotion policy. Consequently, their efficiency is likely to be inferior, affecting policy implementation.

#### ***Poor performance***

Unaccountability, incapacity, obstinacy, tough rigidity, and an absence of transparency all contribute to poor performance. Additionally, backstabbing, abuse of authority, corruption, favoritism, nepotism, fractional practices, and delayed action are pervasive in the implementation of policy.

#### ***Infractions of the laws***

There are frequent violations of jurisdiction in all tiers of administration, involving secretariat administration [16]. A file

has to go a great distance in order to be completed, sanctioned, or decided, which incites the deepest resentment in the hearts of ordinary people. The majority files are kept concealed or stay so without the use of speed money or other forms of bribery by sly staff. These actions have a direct effect on how policies are implemented.

#### ***Conflict between generalists and specialists***

Extremism between various groups, such as generalists versus specialists, freedom fighters versus non-freedom fighters, B.Sc. engineers versus diploma engineers, CSP versus BCS, direct officers versus promoted officers, administration cadre versus other cadres, and cadre versus non-cadre officers, are different despicable malicious practice in Bangladeshi policy implementation [13]. Conflicts are detrimental for fostering “teamwork” among civil servants and are waste of time for any work.

#### ***Abuse of authority and position***

Some academics claim that the standard of the workforce in the public sector is declining as a result of the slow degradation of the educational system and its standards of excellence, which will impede the implementation of policy in the future.

#### ***Unprofessional behavior***

Most civil service employees lack ethical behavior. Being a professional enable one to be responsible and effective.

#### ***Over-centralization***

It takes an extended period to arrive at a decision because there is insufficient decentralized governance and delegation of official authority. Delays like this in decision-making also require additional public funding. Centralization promotes poor and inefficient administration, which delays the implementation of policies.

#### ***Lack of skilled personnel***

There is a shortage of highly skilled civil officers today. It is clear that the CSP officers were of a higher caliber than the BCS officers employed today. According to certain academics, the standards of the workforce in the public sector is declining as a result of the academic system's and its standards' impairment over time [8]. One of the reasons for inefficiency is a shortage of competent and skilled civil officers.

#### ***Quota system***

A quota system is ineffective in the modern age of competition to guarantee quality service. Poor quality candidates are hired into the civil service as a result of the policy of quotas, which provides another cause for the ineffectiveness of the civil service.

#### ***Domination of a single cadre***

In all strata the administrative cadres are getting prerogatives over other cadres. They are occupied in some of professional position, where they are not performing well. Domination of a single cadre created intra and inter cadre conflicts.

#### ***Poor MIS***

An effective Management Information System (MIS) must be maintained to ensure much better service and effectiveness in the public administrative system, but civil service employees in Bangladesh are lacking access to such facilities.

#### ***Unworthy handling of finances***

The absence of efficient budgetary, taxation, and customs systems may result in an adverse effect on the efficiency of the public policy system.

#### ***Rules and regulations based on processes***

Majority of legal requirements are process-based rather than result-oriented. Therefore, it causes policy action to be delayed and stimulates corruption.

#### ***Outdated and obsolete laws***

Bangladesh has not yet undergone any reforms to its laws. Most of the laws, rules, and regulations are no longer relevant and ineffective. These are making it difficult for the process of implementing policy to run smoothly.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Bangladesh, a country with limited resources, has few options for creating and carrying out policies effectively at the field level. To make appropriate policies, ensure expected implementation, and bring about expected social changes, certain successful approaches are however required. Several actions could be taken in this regard—

- i. Identifying policy issues based on visions and rigorous research,
- ii. Alternative policies are analyzed from a global, regional, and national context,
- iii. Hearings with various stakeholders during the policy-making process,
- iv. Policy formulation should take into account future goals of the country,
- v. The categorization of possible policies to be implemented based on overall development perspective,
- vi. Comprehensiveness of all demographic groups' interests,
- vii. Grassroots participation in the execution process as required, and
- viii. A greater focus should be placed on the formation of policy assessment committees.

Despite of many limitations Bangladesh certainly seems to be more capable of allocating different resources to policy making, implementation, etc. year after year as a result of increased developments in a variety of areas. However, greater focus should be placed on securing the human, financial, and other resources that are required. At the same time, it is crucial to distribute financial

and other resources appropriately in order to create effective national policies and carry them out as intended. It is believed that a bold policy agenda, well-developed public policies, and their appropriate executions can bring about Bangladesh's anticipated economic, political, and other developments in the twenty-first century.

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