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National News Parliamentary Standing Committees fails to function

Due to political influence and conflict of interest among the members, Parliamentary Standing Committees was unable to work effectively to ensure accountability in the ministry's activities. A research study conducted by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) titled "Effectiveness of Parliamentary Standing Committees of Bangladesh: Problems and Way Forward" has found this. The study was released on 9 August 2015 at a press conference held at TIB office, Dhanmondi, Dhaka.

The study was presented by Juliet Rossette, Programme Manager and Fatema Afroz, Deputy Programme Manager, research and policy division of TIB. M Hafizuddin Khan, Member, Board of Trustee's and Dr. Iftekharuzzaman, Executive Director of TIB were also present in the programme.

The study was done based on the activities of eleven standing committees between January 2009 to April 2015 on the same number of ministries of the ninth and tenth parliament. The list of committees are on education, health, LGRD, road and transport, labour and employment, industries, housing and public works, shipping, jute and textile, Chittagong Hill Tracts ministries and the committee on public accounts.

According to the study, while forming the parliamentary committee's quality, competence, experience and conflict of interest of lawmakers are not considered. The ruling party chief interferes in the process of committee formation and also in the process of the selection of the committee chief.

The study shows that at least 19 MPs in these JS bodies have conflict of interest with their committees. There are allegations that these MPs have influenced the committee decision to serve their personal and business interest. Sometimes ministers, who are members of the committees on their ministries, interfere in the activities of the parliamentary committees.

On the positive initiative of the 10th parliament, the study found that representation of opposition MPs in the JS body increased by four percent compared with the last parliament. Three standing committees held meetings as per the rules of procedure.

The study made an 11-point recommendations, including empowering the JS bodies with legal power to ensure presence of any individual before them to testify; making 50 percent of the chiefs of JS committees from the opposition bench; drop lawmakers from JS bodies those have conflict of interest and live telecast of the JS committee meetings except those on national security.



TIB makes seven point recommendations to prevent public exam questions leak

Involvement of a section of government officials for preparing, printing and distribution public exam question papers; policymakers' denial of the leak; lack of any instance of punishment, long and manual process in the preparation and distribution and inadequate monitoring are the main reasons behind the public exam question papers leakage, found after a study was conducted by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB). Releasing the report at a press conference at its Dhanmondi office in the capital on 05 August 2015, the study titled "Question Leak in Public Examinations: Process, Reasons and Way out" was done between January and July this year.

In four years since 2012, as many as 63 question papers of primary terminal, JSC, SSC and HSC exams were leaked out. Of those, questions of all papers of primary terminal and junior school certificate exams held in last year and the previous year were leaked. The leaked question papers are being spread by some leaders of the ruling party's student wing, coaching centers, guidebook traders, people in photocopy shops, guardians, students and their relatives. Leaked questions are sold for between TK 20 and 20,000, according to the study.

The findings of the study were presented by Rumana Sharmeen and Nihar Ranjan Ray, Deputy Programme Manager, Research and Policy (R&P) Division of TIB. Neena Shamsun Nahar, DPM of R&P was also involved with the study. Executive Director, Dr. Iftekharuzzaman; Deputy Executive Director, Dr. Sumaiya Khair and Director, Research & Policy, Mohammad Rafiqul Hassan were present at the press conference.

According to the report, National Academy for Primary Education, Directorate of Primary Education, Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, BG Press and district and Upazila administrations are the government bodies whose officials are involved in the leak. Questions can be leaked during preparation or moderation. The same moderator remains in the post for years. Besides, there is no specific guideline for appointing question paper formulators and moderators.

TIB made seven recommendations, including reinstating the 10-year jail sentence in the Public Examinations (Offences, Amendment) Act-1992 instead of the current four-year sentence, digitizing the entire process from question formulation to distribution, reducing the number of steps involved in the process, publishing the probe report on question leak and withdrawing the MCQ system gradually.

TIB presents 12 points to ensure governance in land sector

Weaknesses of existing law, manual record management and lack of accountability in land administration, proper budgetary allocation, skilled manpower, effective trainings, office logistics and proper equipment are the key reasons behind graft in land sector, have been revealed through a research study of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB). The report titled 'Land Management and Services: Challenge of Good Governance and Way Forward' was released at a press conference on 23 August 2015 at its head office in Dhaka.

Wahid Alam, Senior Programme Manager; Niharranjan Ray, Deputy Programme Manager; Nazmul Huda Mina, Assistant Programme Manager; Research and Policy Division of TIB presented the findings of the research. Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman; Deputy Executive Director Dr. Sumaiya Khair and Rafiqul Hassan, Director, Research and Policy of TIB were also present at the press conference.

According to the study, massive corruption prevails in the land offices and people have to pay bribes to get different types of services such as; TK 100 to TK 10,000 for land development taxes, TK 5,000 to TK 2 lakhs for mutation, TK 1,000 to TK 50,000 for land registration and Tk 10, 000 to TK 20 lakhs for lease of a haat or bazaar. Sometimes influential political leaders make underhand's dealings with land officials to record keas land, vested and abandoned properties.

Report also revealed that the government in the last five years has taken some positive initiatives. In recent years govt. has been seriously considering digitization of land sector.

The study recommended, the government should form a single institution to provide all the land related services; long-term plan for digitization; special bench to settle land related disputes; payment through bank, organizing land-fair and rational fees for the services.

CCC News**Political tolerance, transparency and accountability
needed to strengthen democracy**

CCC Chapainawabganj and CCC Rajshahi Metropolitan arranged an opinion sharing meeting titled 'Anti-corruption Social Movement at local level: Opportunity and Challenges' where civil society members, district level government and non-government officials were participated. Executive Director of TIB Dr. Iftekharuzzaman was also present as key speaker. The meetings were organized with a view to strengthen good governance and amplify anti-corruption social movement engaging multi-level stakeholders and cross section people of the society. Among others, representatives of political parties, journalists, teachers, indigenous people and members of CCC, Swajan, YES and YES Friends were attended the meeting.

Chapainawabganj: 'Patriotism, political tolerance, transparency and accountability are essential for democracy' said Dr. Iftekharuzzaman in a meeting organized by CCC, Chapainawabganj on 10 August 2015. He said that participation of all sphere of people irrespective of different political views and opinion is needed for social movement against corruption. He requested all to go ahead to fight against corruption inspired by the father of the nation. The meeting was presided over by CCC President Selina Begum while Mohammad Jahangir Kabir, Deputy Commissioner of Chapainawabganj was present as a chief guest. The chief guest stated that political willingness is important to establish good governance. Similarly, joint effort of administration and citizens is also important. He requested the administration along with all service providing organizations to discharge their responsibilities cordially. In the open discussion session, Dr Iftekharuzzaman answered to the questions raised by the participants. The meeting was moderated by CCC member Saiful Islam Reza.

Rajshahi: 'Political willingness is needed to fight against corruption. TIB is working for creating awareness about right to information. Civil society members, different organizations and the young people should come forward in this respect along with government' said Dr. Iftekharuzzaman, Executive Director, TIB. This meeting was organized by CCC, Rajshahi Metropolitan on 11 August 2015. The meeting was presided over by CCC President, Professor Dr. Chowdhury Sarwar Jahan while Mohammad Mezbah Uddin Chowdhury, Deputy Commissioner of Rajshahi was present as chief guest. Dr. Iftekharuzzaman said, checking corruption in Bangladesh as fast as in Singapore or Hang Kong may be difficult but we need to ensure our best efforts and should work together. Deputy Commissioner said, through institutional integrity it is possible to protect corruption effectively. We should create such a mechanism that would work automatically and would ensure services as per the policy and entitlements. Chairman of Rajshahi Education Board, Professor Dr. Md. Abul Hayat said that combined effort is needed to protect corruption effectively. In an open discussion session Dr. Zaman addressed the questions raised by the participants.

The meeting was moderated by CCC Vice-President Akbarul Hasan Millat.

Head Teachers and SMC Presidents vow to improve the quality of primary education

A set of recommendations were made by the Head Teachers and SMC presidents of 160 government primary schools under Jhalakati Upazila to be implemented both at the local and national level to improve transparency, accountability and quality of education. The recommendations were presented in the program titled 'Measures to be taken at the local level to improve transparency and accountability in primary education sector' organized by CCC Jhalakati at the district Shilpakala Academy held on 12 August 2015. The meeting was presided over by CCC President Professor Gulnagar Begum and moderated by CCC member Kamrunnesa Azad while Deputy Commissioner of Jhalakati, Rabindrashree Barua was present as chief guest. Chief Guest told that government is working for the improvement of quality of education. He emphasized on the ethical aspects of education as well as the concerned person. CCC member Rabeya Kabir presented the key note paper. Relevant representatives from different organizations and officials were participated in the meeting.

In the open discussion, participants discussed about the access to information at the Upazila Education Office & Government Primary School, transparency in preparing the stipend recipients list, awareness of the guardians, active SMC & ensuring active participation of women SMC members in the meeting, reducing dropout rate, increasing presence of the students, roles & responsibilities of teachers etc. District Primary Education Officer, Nikhil Chandra Halder assured to take necessary measures to solve the problems which are possible at the local level and promised to submit the list of identified problems to the national level. Upazila Education Officer, Jafar Ahmed recognized the CCC activities for the improvement of primary education. He requested to the Head Teachers and SMC Presidents to replicate the activities of CCCs. The significant recommendations are: revise the examination fee, improve the teaching method, initiate School Feeding Program, increase the timing of school etc. The participants also recommended to solve the infrastructural problems, arrange training for the SMC on their roles and responsibilities, and taking initiatives to make public all relevant information of the school proactively.

Cycle Rally to create awareness against corruption

'Invincible youth will resist corruption' with this slogan YES Group of CCC, Nilphamari organized a bi-cycle rally on 26 August 2015 to heighten campaign against corruption. The rally was started from Shadinota Smriti Amlan premises and encircled the main roads of the city and ended at Shantinagar. As a part of the campaign, participants circulated leaflets on Right to Information Act. Holding national flag, the participants chanted various anti-corruption slogans. The rally was inaugurated by the Dr. Mojibul Hasan Chowdhury, General Secretary of Shadinota Chikitsak Parishad Nilphamari District and CCC Members Azma Ahsan, Nurunnabi and Aktarul Alam Razu.

A good number of YES and YES Friends member were joined in the rally.

Ensure quality health services

Deputy Commissioner of Kurigram assured that measures will be undertaken to deploy necessary human resources to the Kurigram Sadar Hospital while he was speaking as a chief guest in a sharing meeting with service providers and service recipients was held on 29 August 2015. He said that they will try their level best to make this institution as a model hospital. CCC Kurigram organized this meeting with an aim to ensure proper services of the hospital and create transparency & accountability.

CCC, President A T M Enamul Haque Chowdhury presided over the meeting while Deputy Commissioner of Kurigram Md Nurul Amin was present as the chief guest and ADC (Revenue) of Kurigram Aktar Hossain Azad and Civil Surgeon Dr. Md. Jainal Abedin was special guest. Civil Surgeon stated that hospital services have been improved and the authority is trying to provide better services. He expressed that with the efforts of all it would be possible to ensure better services.

Convener of CCC's health related sub-committee AKM Samiul Haque Nantu delivered welcome speech. In the open discussion, different important issues regarding hospital services were raised by the participants of which timely attendance of the doctors, manpower shortage and presence of doctors at the emergency unit, discharging the duty of nurses, distribution of medicines, food distribution in the hospital, cleanliness of the hospital etc. Civil Surgeon, Deputy Civil Surgeon Dr. Md. Anwarul Haque RMO of Sadar Hospital Dr. Md. Nazrul Islam and UHFPO Dr. Md. Aminul Islam answered the different questions raised in the meeting.

The meeting was moderated by CCC Vice-President Ahsan Habib Nilu.

RTI Act orientation for female students

"Information is Power: Know, notify and will resist corruption" keeping this slogan in mind CCC Mymensingh Sadar, organized a workshop on Right to Information (RTI) Act 2009 on 13th August 2015. Whereas around three hundred female students of Mymensingh Mahila Degree College learned about RTI Act 2009. Mr. Karuna Kishore Chakraborty, Program Manager-Civic Engagement, TIB and his team facilitated the orientation program and they gave the training on RTI, like how to fill up application form etc. The participants expressed their gratitude for arranging such type of workshop. They pointed out that they were not well informed about the RTI Act.

Leaflets on RTI Act and containing the list of Designated Information Officers of Mymensingh District and Sadar Upazila offices/institutions with their contact address were distributed among the participants.

Md. Golam Sarwar, Principal of the college was presided the opening session and inaugurated the event while Senior Information Officer of Mymensingh District Md. Shamsul Haque was present as special guest.

The participants also took anti-corruption oath in the orientation session.

YES News

YES-Jahangirnagar University organized book fair

YES Member, Jahangirnagar University, organized a Book fair of TIB's publications in University campus on 09th August 2015. They distributed more than 1200 books on anti-corruption and good governance issues among the 35 departments seminar library and 250 individual students of the University.

Youth Pledges to Fight against Corruption

It is time for the youth in Bangladesh and beyond. If they are equipped with necessary skills, positive thinking and effective choices, they present an enormous opportunity to transform the future. Keeping this in mind, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) celebrated The International Youth Day, 2015. The youth day was marked throughout the world with innumerable events to acknowledge and encourage the actions of youth towards a more constructive future. TIB organized set of programmes on 12 & 13 August 2015. This year the global theme was 'Youth Civic Engagement', a campaign that aims to promote civic engagement and participation of youth in politics and public life, so that young people can empower themselves and contribute to the society's development and peace.

With the objective of assembling youth's thinking on sustainable human development considering politics, human rights, socio-economical development, climate change, and other contemporary governance issues and forward their recommendations to the prime authority, TIB organized the day long 'Anti-Corruption Youth Fair and Cultural Event' at Bangla Academy premises with the theme 'Vigilant conscience, invincible youth shall surely resist corruption' on 12 August 2015. The observing events were participated by CCC and Dhaka based YES members, students from different universities, volunteers of various youth forums, NGO professionals, media et al. One of the important features of this year's International Youth Day events was the participation of around 100 YES members from TIB inspired Committees of Concerned Citizens (CCCs) across the country.

The fair was started after an anti-corruption rally which was brought out from TSC of University of Dhaka that paraded to Bangla Academy. The Vice Chancellor of the University of Dhaka, Professor Dr. A A M S Arefin Siddique joined the rally as Chief Guest. Besides rally, the Anti-Corruption Youth Fair also featured discussion meetings, quiz and extempore speech contests. As a part of the fair, twenty seven stalls of different NGOs and youth clubs were set up at Nazrul Mancha of Bangla Academy. They showcased their stalls with leaflets, posters, brochures, and multi-media presentation of their various undertaken socio-economic development programmes.

TIB's Trustee Board Chairperson, Advocate Sultana Kamal; Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman; Director, Outreach & Communication, Rezwan-ul-Alam; Director, Civic Engagement, Uma Chowdhury and Director, Admin & Finance Division were also attended the rally, discussion meetings and award giving ceremony among the winners of different contests. The discussion meetings were held at Abdul Karim Shahittyabisharod Auditorium respectively on 'Roles of Youth in Anti-corruption Movement,' and 'National Youth Integrity Survey' where a presentation has also made on it. At the end of the first round discussion meeting, the participants took anti-corruption oath and expressed their firm stand against corruption.

Day second, on 13 August 2015, TIB arranged an anti-corruption cultural event at Rabindra Sarobar Mukta Mancha in Dhanmandi. A record of 7000 people from different strata of lives, CCC and Dhaka YES members enjoyed the event. Theatre groups of CCC Gazipur and Dhaka YES were performed where they portrayed various sector based corruption issues including health, education, local govt., land, right to information, climate finance governance, etc. The local folk song 'Gombhira' from Chapai Nawabganj mesmerized the audience through its outstanding performance. Besides, the YES members performed recitations and patriotic songs at the event.



Anti-Corruption Youth Camp 2015

'Vigilance conscience, invincible youth shall surely resist corruption' was the slogan of Anti-corruption Youth Camp organized by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB). The 4 day long camp was organized from 20-23 August 2015 at Koitta, Manikgonj. The numbers of 220 YES members both from CCCs' and Dkaka YES were participated in the camp. They took pledge to establishing good governance and fighting against corruption through their various activities.

To sensitize and nurture strong ethical values of democracy, governance and transparency among the young generation both at the local and national levels, day one programme started with brief introduction about the camp. This camp mainly focused on responsibilities of youths in anti-corruption social movement and TIB's new project 'BIBEC'. Similarly, the participants were divided into ten groups to explore some innovative anti-corruption event.

Day two had different sessions which were intended to motivate youths and to build leadership qualities. Morning session began with brief discussion on Youth Integrity Survey which was facilitated by Mr Manzoor E Khoda,

Programme Manager-Reasearch & Policy of TIB. Following this session, guest speaker M. A. Muhit, conqueror of the Mount Everest, gave his presentation on the topic "leadership & role of youth for social change". His inspirational introduction quickly grabbed attention of all the participants and by the end of his session most participants were easily motivated and encouraged. Moving further, discussion



continued on Gender, Corruption & Good Governance by Kazi Shafiqur Rahman, Manager (Gender) of TIB, which was followed by another guest speaker Dr. Abdun Nur Tushar, Media Person. He gave presentation on Ethical practice in personal & professional life and shared his views on ethical values in our daily life. Day two programme ended with drama performance by professional artists. Theatre Group Drishyopot staged a play titled 'Socratecer Jobanbondi'.

Similarly, day three began with presentation by Dr. Rezwan-ul-Alam, Director Outreach & Communication, on Advocacy & Legal Advice Centre (ALAC) & Report Corruption. During the session participants shared various stories of being the victim of bribery, fraud and abuse of power by the authority in the different parts. Also, Executive Director of TIB Dr. Iftekharuzzaman exchanged his views about anti-corruption movement. Third event of the day was assignment to the participants with their respective groups. Each group was assigned with topic such as; RTI, Land bill, Health, Education, Climate finance, Good Governance and mixed topics which was guided by mentors. After doing their group work, two members from each group were assigned to give presentation on their respective topics and innovative idea. Last session of the day was a cultural event in which YES members participated and performed various kinds of programmes.

The camp concluded on the fourth day after a short review on the events.

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