

TIB backs single authority for a centralized role at RMG

Concerted efforts by relevant stakeholders followed by tragic Rana Plaza collapse have gained a considerable amount of progress in establishing good governance at the ready-made garment (RMG) sector. However, significant shortcomings still prevail in the major foreign currency earning sector and a lot of reform initiatives taken since the deadliest incident are yet to be implemented, a fact-finding research study by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) observed. The study, citing lengthy judicial process associated with the Rana Plaza collapse and other industrial cases an unfortunate impediment to trying the people responsible for the deadliest garment incidents recommended formation of a speedy tribunal for quick disposal of the cases, and establishment of single authority in the long run for centralized supervision and coordination in regulating issues to speed up the implementation of the reform initiatives.



The fact-finding study, fourth of its kind, since Rana Plaza collapse aimed to review the progress and current state of the notable reform initiatives taken after Rana Plaza incident to establish good governance in the sector. To unveil the study findings of the report titled “Good Governance in the RMG Sector: Progress and Challenges”, TIB organized a Press Conference at its Dhaka office on 26 April 2018 where Chairperson, Board of Trustees of TIB Advocate Sultana Kamal and Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman were present. Mohammad Rafiqul Hasan, Director, and Md. Waheed Alam, Senior Programme Manager, of Research and Policy division of TIB also attended the event. Nazmul Huda Mina, Assistant Programme Manager, Research and Policy division presented the research findings at the event.

The study observed that factory owners have been continuing disproportionate attention to the growth of RMG export and sustaining their businesses; however, rights of workers and their social protection have not received due attention. Legal limitations prevail for ensuring rights of workers. avoiding tendency of both the relevant government entities and buyer parties in reforming factories. According to the study, 39% of 102 different initiatives, taken by stakeholders since the 2013 industrial disaster, had been implemented, but a whopping 41% of targeted activities had not yet been implemented while the remaining 20% of tasks were making slow progress. The study recommended to set up a single authority in the long run for

centralized supervision and coordination in regulating issues to ensure transparency in the apparel sector as factory owners needed to obtain licenses and clearances from 17 departments in absence of coordination among the regulatory bodies.

Conducted in between May 2017 and March 2018, the study identified significant progress in the areas of safety and security in factories, supervision, labor wages, efficiency of government organizations. However, challenges have been identified in setting up fire stations, appointment of required inspectors, making the online services user-friendly.

Some 400,000 workers lost their jobs as around 1,200 factories were shut down for different reasons following the Rana Plaza disaster that left 1,134 workers dead and countless more maimed, the study revealed. According to the report, lack of political will and influence of factory owners persist which influence the formation of a conducive environment for ensuring workers' collective bargain. According to the study, 40 out of 102 major initiatives in the last five years by factory owners, the government, buyers, and retailers to strengthen the workplace safety and improve workers' rights were fully implemented, 42 are still under process and 20 have been closed down.

On the other hand, there have not been notable progress regarding compensation for the loss of job, commensurate compensation for accident, maternity benefits, freedom of association, social safety for severe injuries etc. Risks prevail for durable improvement of the sector due to financial and technical inability of RCC. Further, due to inordinate delay in legal process, punishment cannot be dispensed to the offenders of accidents and worker rights and accountability of relevant stakeholders cannot be ensured. There is no safety inspector in 147 RMG factories, and the absence of necessary fire-extinguishing equipment in many high-rise factories also poses significant fire and explosion risks. The study in its recommendation part, stressed to stop such unethical practices including closing factories, not compensating workers in case of termination and not offering fair prices of apparel items, withdrawal of the provision of giving group insurance premium from the Central Fund.

To ensure good governance in the RMG sector, the study recommended, among others, to ensure legal rights of workers specially in setting wage, overtime, leave through a coordinated effort of all stakeholders and government oversight with enhancement; ensure creation of a fund with the participation of relevant stakeholders for ensuring compliance of sub-contract and small factories and easy access to the fund of those factories; enhance financial and technical capacity of the RCC have through collective efforts of the government, buyers and ILO; and appoint neutral observers to oversee the operations of RCC and bring the buyers under legal obligation for making the operation of RCC sustainable.

A one-third customer dissatisfied with Dhaka WASA's service quality

There are still huge limitations and challenges in Dhaka WASA's water and sanitation services, despite efforts to accelerate customer service activities through various initiatives. TIB has recommended a thirteen-point recommendation to make the company more efficient and service-oriented, with deep concern over the displeasure of more than one-third of service providers due to poor quality of water and

sanitation services. TIB releases a research report titled "Dhaka WASA: Challenges and Good Way to Governance" at the press conference where TIB's Board of Trustees Chairperson Advocate Sultana Kamal, TIB Executive Director. Iftekharuzzaman, Advisor - Executive Management Professor. SumaiyaKhair and Director of Research and Policy Mohammad Rafiqul Hasan were present. The report was prepared and presented by TIB's Program Manager Shahnur Rahman and Deputy Program Manager Shahidul Islam of Research and Policy Division.

The specific objectives of this study, which are aimed at exploring the challenges and ways of good governance of Dhaka WASA, are to review the policies and laws of Dhaka WASA; Identify the institutional problems, constraints and challenges of Dhaka WASA to ensure water and sanitation services. The research has identified the legal and institutional limitations and challenges of Dhaka WASA as well as the competence and effectiveness of Dhaka WASA in water services, sanitation services, drainage management and rainwater drainage. Also recommended to identify various irregularities and corruption of the public-based organization.

Studies show that Dhaka WASA has significant positive achievements and initiatives compared to the previous one such as: minimizing system loss, increase revenue collection, inform the bill information through the website and experimentally launch digital billing system. In addition, bill payment system via mobile phone and credit card, establish hotline for receiving frequent complaints, formation of community programs and consumer relations department, launch of retail water supply system through 3 water ATM booths, taking projects to reduce dependence on groundwater and reduce waterlogging. However, there is still a lack of transparency and accountability in conducting various activities of the company, besides irregularities and corruption. There is also a deficiency in the effectiveness of the WASA board in ensuring internal accountability. Apart from the limitations and challenges in the rules and regulations related to Dhaka WASA, the deficiencies in effective implementation of the law are significant. There is a lack of capacity to meet the growing water needs of the growing population, to ensure sustainable and environmentally friendly water production and purification system.

According to the research data, the relevant law of WASA does not mention the precise conditions for contractual appointment and the general conduct and discipline of the contractual and non-executive officers. The Act does not even mention the directive to accept the opinion of the servicemen before setting the price of water and the progressive tariff on the pricing of water. Overall, 5% of the vacancies are vacant compared to the posts allowed for Dhaka WASA. Apart from this, there are various deficiencies in the infrastructure and logistics of the organization, the ability to reduce system losses, coordination with partners, the effectiveness of the WASA board in internal accountability and the actual management of information and information. There are institutional constraints and challenges in Dhaka WASA's poor monitoring system, shortage of population and long-term solution to mass incarceration and slowing down the implementation of the project.

Noted that, the study was conducted from April 25 to March 25. The timeframe for the various data used in the study was 25-27 years. The study was conducted in a mixed research methodology

(qualitative and quantitative), and data were collected from both direct and indirect sources in line with the objective. As a method of collecting direct information, the survey of service providers, interviews of key informants and monitoring methods have been used. And as a source of indirect information, various articles on water and water services, research reports, media analysis, analysis of relevant documents were reviewed. Following a multi-layered bunch sampling, proportional rate and logarithm methodology from the residential, commercial, and industrial and LIC service providers represented in the service provider survey, data were collected from 20 linkers. Full report available on this [link](#)

Relaxing security checks for VIPs at airports unconstitutional: TIB

TIB has strongly opposed the move by the members of Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism to relax security checks and arrange separate queue for VIPs at the airports.

Urging the government to refrain from such decision, the organisation expressed grave concern over the matter and termed it unconstitutional, discriminatory and misuse of power.

TIB expressing deep concern after the report over the issue was published in the media recently.

The anti-graft watchdog also said the proposal will not be aligned as per international rules and regulations in terms of the security management of airports.

TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman said such proposal is suicidal for democratic practices. "So we hoped that the government should not encourage such move", he said.

On April 7, at a meeting, a member of the standing committee on the ministry requested to relax security check and arrange separate queue for VIPs, including MPs, at the airports. After that, all the members agreed on the issue and placed it to the ministry for review.

22 per cent of DAP's reservoirs filled in a decade:

TIB stressed on strict enforcement of the law

Over the past decade, about 20 per cent of the flood flow area, 3 per cent of the catchment area and 5 per cent of the reservoir area had filled in the name of land development in Dhaka and its surrounding area. Comparative analysis of the satellite imagery of the land use map of Dap 20 and the filled water reservoir on the same map of Dap 20, which is the great concern to the environment and environment of the region as a whole. The study came out in a study titled 'Fill the water reservoir of Dhaka and its surroundings'.

The apparent failure of the monitoring institutions to prevent such destruction in the name of land development has made the rule of law in the country questionable. The treacherous confrontation between the political palace and the local administration along with a section of land grabbed the institutional form of horror, against which all together, including the local sufferers, had to build up their resistance. In addition,

in the near future, to prevent the illegality and to prevent the illegal activities of the land traders, to ensure the proper application of the laws and exemplary punishment of those involved, to ensure the involvement of the people, to address the social and environmental challenges caused by these problems. In addition, the Digital River Protection Commission will be strengthened, empowered and associated with the management of land in designated catchment areas, including setting up of technology-based monitoring system to prevent illegal land seizure and waterlogging in digital Bangladesh. Experts expressed this opinion at a press conference on the publication of two research reports titled 'Image of Dhaka and its surrounding reservoirs' and 'Filling of wetlands of Savar region'.

Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA), Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), The Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD), Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP), Rivers and Environment Development Council, Savar and Nijera Kori jointly organised a press conference to release the two publications of the research reports. Presenting the results of the research, BIP general secretary Prof Dr Adil Mohammad Khan, and Mr. Feroz Ahmed Konok, Research Associate for the Center for Environmental and Geographic Information Services (CEGIS).

The press conference was presiding over by the Executive Director of TIB Dr. Iftekhazzaman. Advocate Syeda Rizwana Hassan, chief executive of Bela, former president of the Institution of Engineers (IAB), Mobashir Yogesh Hossain, Busey, and Burea Planet Hossain. Ishrat Islam, Khushi Kabir, co-ordinator of their own affairs, Shamsul Huda, executive director of ALRD, Iqbal Habib, joint secretary of Bangladesh Environment Movement (BAPA), and Md. Shamsul Haque of River and Environment Development Council, Savar.

During the presentation of the research report titled 'Image of Dhaka and its surrounding watershed', images related to the filling of water in Dhaka and its surrounding area were made available through available points. A comparative image is presented by analyzing satellite imagery of the areas under the DAP (25) and the areas previously filled in 25 and the next 25 areas. According to the research, 25 acres of land belonging to the Dap's floodplain, reservoir and aquaculture category have been filled from 25 to 25, which is 22 per cent of the total area. The areas under study are; Area adjacent to Dhaka-Mawa Highway, Bashundhara Residential Area, Mohammadpur (Basila), Beraid, Narayanganj Bactar Chara, Amin Bazar, Uttara Sector 6, Savar Police Station, Gazipur Police Station, Rugganj Thana Area, Kerala. The study used satellite imagery to identify the filled water reservoirs of DAP 20 by collecting land use map of DAP 20 from the Capital Development Authority. Arc-map software used in GIS technology has been used for satellite image analysis, and the amount of different reservoir zones has been determined using the image processing tools of this software.

TIB seeks judicial enquiry into police role in the Nusrat killings

TIB has demanded a judicial inquiry into the allegations of neglect and coercion against police in connection with the killing of Feni's Madrasah student Nusrat Jahan. In a statement today, the agency said that the level of violence against women across the country, the number and the level of brutality is now unimaginable. To

address this situation, TIB believes there is no alternative to ensure the strictest enforcement of the law against the responsible persons and their allies.

It is not enough to arrest the accused at the expected speed of the members of the police force, said TIB executive director. Iftekharuzzaman said, "We expect the investigation to be carried out well and that the culprits will receive exemplary punishment. However, we are appalled at the allegations of neglect of duty and coercion against the police officer concerned in this brutal murder. We have already learned from reports published in various media that the police officer did not take Nusrat's allegation seriously but also questioned the authenticity of the complaint. Even after Nusrat tied his hands and feet and poured kerosene on the fire, the police officer tried to carry it out as a suicide attempt, according to reports. He has also been accused of trying to streamline the case in a separate case.

Dr. Zaman says, "Each of these allegations needs to be properly investigated and the police officer concerned and the police administration as a whole should be subjected to accountability." That is why we are demanding judicial inquiry. Because if the police forces do not perform their duties properly, the culture of justice will get institutionalized in the country. Such a serious allegation is being investigated against a policeman, while Feni's police superintendent has written in favor of the accused policeman. Therefore, we cannot be absolutely convinced of how effective this police investigation will be. "

Noting that withdrawal from the police station alone cannot be a punishment, the executive director of TIB said, "The culprits will not get anybody - the people of the country want to see the proper implementation of this assurance by the Honorable Prime Minister. I urge you to initiate judicial inquiry immediately for this purpose. "

CCCs demanded legal actions against the direct and indirect perpetrators of Nusrat Murder

Human chains were organized by Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCCs) across the country on 30 April 2019 with slogan "Justice for Nusrat murder, stern legal actions against the perpetrators." The CCCs voiced strong demands of ensuring severe and exemplary punishment to those involved directly and indirectly in Nusrat murder, following proper judicial process, rising above fear and mercy. The human chain at the same time called for effective steps to prevent all kinds of violence against women and children in Bangladesh and taking judicial measures against the perpetrators as well as extending every kind of help towards the family of the victims.



The speakers participated in the human chain said, "Those who directly took part in Nusrat murder are not the only ones responsible. Part of the local government representatives, law enforcement agency,

political and other influential persons also have indirect involvement, forming a veritable syndicate of power. We observe with concern that, wherever crime is committed, the same syndicate takes shape which impedes the delivery of justice resulting in an institutionalized culture of impunity.” The participants warned that people will lose confidence in the rule of law if justice is not delivered in Nusrat murder case. Posters and banners were displayed depicting demands of speedy trial of the murder case and calls for preventing any kind of violence against women. People of all walks of life, along with CCC, Swajan, YES and YES-friend members, the Mayor of the municipality, teachers, students of different educational institutions, journalists and representatives of civil society, TIB staffs took part in the human chain.

44 CCCs have organized Human Chain on Nusrat issue. 41 CCCs (CCC MymensinghSadar, Nalitabalri, Madhupur, Jamalpur, Muktagacha, Jessore, Jhenaidah, Khulna, Bagerhat, Satkhira, Rangpur, Kurigram, Nilphamari, Lalmonirhat, Dinajpur, Faridpur, Madaripur, Savar, Kushtia, Rajbari, Barishal, Pirojpur, Barguna, Patuakhali, Lakshmipur, Chandpur, Munshiganj, Rajshahi City, Bogura, Gaibandha, Natore, Chapainawabganj, Sylhet, Brahmanbaria, Sreemangal, Kishoreganj, Sunamganj, Chakaria, Patiya, ChattogramMetropolitan, Khagrachari) have organized human chain on 30 April 2019 on Nusrat Issue. In addition, CCC, Gazipur and Cumilla organized human chain on 11 April 2019 and CCC, Jhalakation 24 April 2019.

Ward Level Citizen’s Dialogue on Gaibandha Municipality Budget

CCC, Gaibandha organized a Ward level Citizen’s Dialogue on the budget of Gaibandha Municipality on 27 April 2019 at East Gobindapur Govt. Primary School, housed in ward-7. CCC Vice-President Anis Mostafa Toton presided over the dialogue while Area Manager of TIB Md. MorshedAlam moderated. Among others, Municipal Councilor of reserved seat hailed from Ward-7, DilrubaParvin (Jharna) was present in the program.



In the dialogue, the citizens of Ward-7 shared their views and expectations on the 2019-20 budget of Gaibandha Municipality. In the open discussion session, the local people demanded allocation of money in the municipal budget for taking initiatives to solve water logging, repair roads and drains, supply pure drinking water, make waste disposal facilities available. In response Councilor, DilrubaPervin (Jharna) pledged to address the issues. She also promised to make the Municipality transparent, accountable, free of drug addiction, clean and citizen-friendly.

Among others CCC Member AmaturNurChaara, Ashok Kumar Saha, Mohammad Ali, UjjalChakrabarty, Md. ZiaulHaque Kamal, ShahzadiHabiba Sultana (Palash), SWAJAN Member Nilufa Begum, Selina Sultana Bithe, representatives of Civil Society and local citizen spoke in the dialogue.

Sharing meeting with JhenaidahSadar Hospital Authority

A meeting with Jhenaidah Sadar Hospital Authority was held on 11 April 2019 at the meeting room of the hospital organized by CCC, Jhenaidah with an aim to ensure transparency and accountability in delivering services. Residential Medical Officer Dr. Apurba Kumar Saha presided over the meeting while CCC President Md. SayedulAlam moderated.



CCC Vice-President and Health Sub-Committee Convener M. SaifulMabud, CCC Vice-President Nasrin Islam, Convener of Gender Sub-Committee SuraiyaParvinMoli, Area Manager of TIB Bokhtiar Hossain, 10 Nursing In-Charges and other employees of JhenaidahSadar hospital took part in the meeting.

The meeting discussed lack of progress in implementing decisions taken in the previous meeting and explored ways to set up a sustainable management. It was pointed out that although the list of medicine and duty roster of Emergency Unit and Outdoor doctors are displayed properly in a board, the information are not updated regularly. Moreover, information about the designated Information Officer is visible, a Register Book providing information is kept in place and information is delivered as per requirement of applications demanding information, nonetheless the Register Book is not used properly. In addition, a Complaint Box has been hung, important mobile numbers of Appeal Authority and instructions for submitting complaints in the Ministry are visible but the relevant Register Book is not used for this purpose.

In response the Hospital Authority explained that they are providing health services amid shortage of manpower and different infrastructural problems. They pledged to take initiatives to address the shortcomings and to work more cordially for a sustainable management that can handle the initiatives already undertaken and ensure improved health services.

Joint efforts required for ensuring transparency and accountability in primary education

'When all concerned discharged their duties properly, transparency and accountability on education sector will be increased. The local citizens especially the members of SMC and Active Mothers' Forum should play active role to improve the quality of education' Upazila Education Officer Nilufar Hakim stated this while she was delivering the speech in a sharing meeting. CCC, Muktagacha organized this meeting with Upazila Education Authority on 18 April 2019 with a view to increasing transparency, accountability and ensuring quality primary education. Emphasizing the combined efforts, she said, Presidents of SMCs and Head Teachers of Primary Schools must work jointly for the improvement of primary education through upholding transparency and accountability.



The meeting was presided over by Upazila Education Officer Nilufar Hakim while Area Manager of TIB Iqbal Hossain was the moderator. Area Manager of TIB discussed activities of TIB and CCC on primary education. He also shared the activities of CCC, Muktagacha concerning the improvement of education of Sayedgram Government Primary School and its success. Upazila Education Officer shared the initiatives already taken at local level following the recommendations of CCC on increasing transparency, accountability

and ensuring quality primary education which included formation of Active Mothers Forum at all primary schools, setting up Complaint and Advice Box, organizing Mothers' and Parents' Gathering, activate School Management Committee (SMC), teaching on the book BornomalaiNeetikotha published by TIB regularly and ensuring disclosure of all information.

CCC Member Journalist Helal Uddin Nayon pointed out that the improvement of primary education which is visible and praiseworthy. CCC Member Mohammad Muzahidur Rahman expected that the practice of transparency and accountability and different measures taken for the improvement of education by MuktagachUpazila Education Office and Primary Schools could be replicated in different parts of the country. CCC Member Molina Rani Datta thanked Upaliza Education Authority for taking measures concerning the recommendations provided by CCC.

Among others Assistant Upazila Education Officers of all clusters of Muktagacha, CCC Member Shamsunnahar and Swajan Coordinator M. Idris Ali were present in the meeting.

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