

Governance Challenges in the Implementation of the Infrastructure Development Project under Constituency-Based Block Allocation*

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Executive Summary

Background

- Constitutional responsibility of the Members of Parliament – to make laws in Parliament, to represent the people of their respective areas and to ensure the accountability of the Government.
- MPs have the power and opportunity to express their views on local development activities [Zila Parishad Act, 2000 and Upazila Parishad Act, 1997 (as amended in 2009)].
- There is link between local infrastructure development and local economic development.
- Involvement of MPs in various development activities in the constituency has created an expectation among the common people that they will build roads, schools and colleges in the area (TIB 2012).
- On the other hand, people want to see MPs in the role of taking steps for overall development of the area but do not want their interference during implementation of the project (TIB 2008).
- On the basis of roles played by MPs in local infrastructure development, MPs of both the government and opposition parties proposed for block allocations, and the then Finance Minister approved the allocation of BDT 20 million for each constituency in 2005.
- A project was later approved at the meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) and the allocation per constituency gradually increased; 50 women members of reserved seats are not covered under this scheme.
- Objectives of the Rural Infrastructure Development Project under this allocation are -
 - ✓ Development of rural road system, construction of bridges and culverts and development of growth centers and hat bazaars
 - ✓ Provide assistance in increasing the production of agricultural and non-agricultural products
 - ✓ Increase marketing facilities for agricultural non-agricultural products
 - ✓ Accelerate rural employment
- Proposals for such projects mentioned schemes only related to development of rural road system, construction of bridges and culverts and development of growth centers and hat bazaar – no scheme of any other objectives of this project was included.

Table 1: Overview of ‘Important Rural Infrastructure Development Project on priority basis’

Name of Project	Duration	Date of approval	Number of constituency	Allocation per constituency (Tk)
Important Rural Infrastructure Development Project (IRIDP - 1) on priority basis	March 2010 – December 2014	March 2010	300	30 million

* Released on 12 August, 2020 through a press conference.

Name of Project	Duration	Date of approval	Number of constituency	Allocation per constituency (Tk)
Important Rural Infrastructure Development Project (IRIDP - 2) on priority basis	July 2015 – June 2019	July 2015	284 (Excluding 16 seats in City Corporation area)	50 million
Important Rural Infrastructure Development Project (IRIDP - 3) on priority basis	July 2020 – June 2024	June 2020	280 (Excluding 20 seats in City Corporation area)	50 million

Rationale

- Allegations of different irregularities and corruption in the use of constituency-based allocations by concerned MPs, local government representatives, implementing agencies and contractors published in media.
- According to experts, there is an opportunity to question some issues in such projects -
 - ✓ Use of local infrastructure development commitments as electoral vote bank
 - ✓ Schemes registered as per the wishes of the MPs for political reasons
 - ✓ Absence of feasibility study, and technical and financial analysis of schemes
 - ✓ Risk of wastage of money during implementation and sustainability of the scheme
- Challenges and irregularities in implemented projects in the meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee and by Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Department (IMED) were mentioned – but lack of complete evaluation of projects implemented during 2010-2019.
- Current research has been conducted as a continuation of TIB's regular research on transparency and accountability of MPs in their conduct and activities.

Research Question

- What kind of policies, strategies and methodological framework exist for the block allocation project in the parliamentary seats?
- What was the level of participation of common people in studying feasibility of schemes adopted under this project?
- How transparent and accountable was the process of formulation and implementation of schemes adopted under this project?
- Was there any corruption in the implementation of all these schemes? What kind? What kind of measures have been taken to prevent these corruptions?
- Are schemes completed within the stipulated time?
- How many schemes are actually completed? What was the quality of work? What is the current status of implemented schemes?

Objective

The main objective of the research is to review governance challenges in planning, implementation and monitoring process of schemes under the rural infrastructure development project.

Specific objectives are -

- ✓ Review the legal and procedural framework of this project
- ✓ Review level of participation of people in assessing needs in scheme planning and verifying feasibility
- ✓ Observe implementation, monitoring and evaluation process of schemes and review challenges at various stages
- ✓ Review type and extent of corruption in implementation of scheme, and regulatory measures
- ✓ Propose recommendations to increase the effectiveness of this project and to overcome the existing challenges, on the basis of findings and experience of other countries.

Research Method

Mixed methodological (qualitative and quantitative) techniques have been applied in this research.

Table 2: Research Method

Type of Data	Collection Method	Informant/Source	Tool
Primary Data	Survey of completed schemes in selected constituencies	A total of 628 schemes were observed - IRIDP-1: 464 schemes and IRIDP-2: 164 schemes	Checklist
	Key Informant Interview (341)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ MPs ✓ Officials of the concerned ministries, departments and local organizations implementing project ✓ Contractors ✓ Public representatives of local government institutions ✓ Local government experts ✓ Chairpersons / members of relevant parliamentary committees ✓ Media personnel 	Checklist
	Group Discussion (180)	Beneficiaries of the scheme areas (farmers, traders, teachers, other professionals)	Checklist
	Request for general information related to relevant development scheme (Application placed under RTI Act where applicable)	Project Implementation concerned department and local government organization	Checklist
Secondary Data	Literature Review	Project related documents/ reports, law, rules, reports published through website and news media, related research reports	-

Scheme Selection Procedure:

- ✓ A total of 50 out of 300 parliamentary constituencies were selected on the basis of systematic random sampling.
- ✓ One upazila of each constituency was selected through random sampling.
- ✓ From the list of schemes implemented under both projects in each selected upazila, 10 schemes of IRIDP-1 and 3 schemes of IRIDP-2 were randomly selected.
- ✓ A total of 650 schemes (500 schemes from IRIDP-1 and 150 schemes from IRIDP-2) were planned to observe.
- ✓ However, 36 schemes of IRIDP-1 could not be observed (as 31 are under other upazilas rather mentioned in the documents and 5 for natural calamities); 14 additional schemes were observed in IRIDP-2 on the basis of completion.
- ✓ A total of **628 schemes** (464 in IRIDP-1 and 164 in IRIDP-2) were observed.

Research Duration:

Collection of data from May to December 2019; data analysis until March 2020

Disclaimer: Not all research data and findings are equally applicable to all concerned stakeholders.

Scope and Analytical Frame:**Table 3: Issues covered under governance indicators**

Indicator	Issues
Legal Framework	✓ Project relevant act, policy, strategy and structure
Transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Disclosure of information on planning and implementation of schemes and financial accounts ✓ Institutional transparency in tender process
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Monitoring the quality of work ✓ Scheme-related grievance management and redress mechanism ✓ Overall monitoring and evaluation of the project
Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ People's participation in listing schemes ✓ Reflection of people's opinion on feasibility of schemes

Control of Corruption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Types and extent of irregularities and corruption in scheme planning, implementation and monitoring ✓ Anti-corruption measures
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Introduction of Sampled Schemes

As the IRIDP 2 project is still being implemented, completed schemes were observed.

Chart 1: Types of Scheme of IRIDP-1 (%)

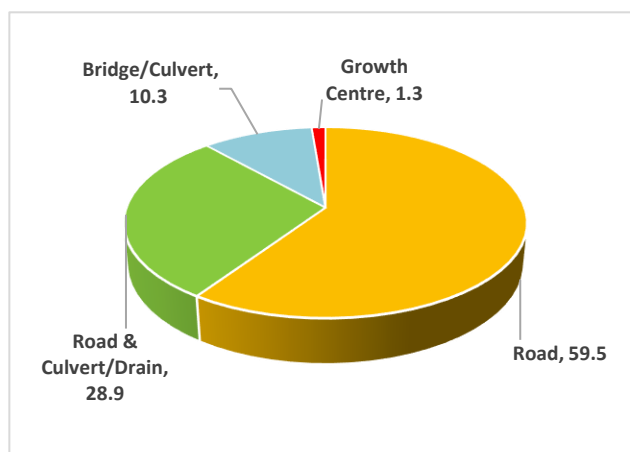
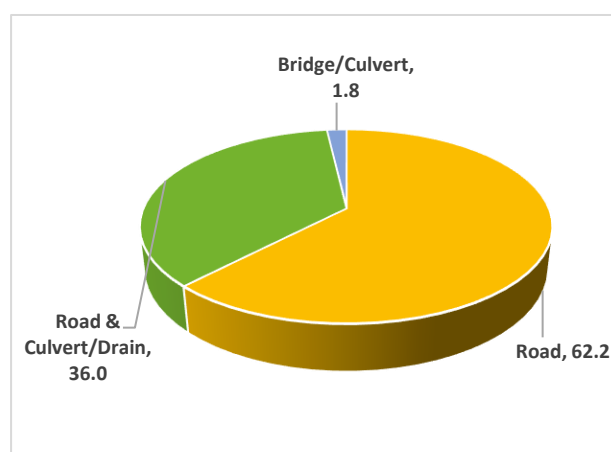


Chart 2: Types of Scheme of IRIDP-2 (%)



A total of 68 per cent schemes were implemented within the stipulated time mentioned in tender. While 32 per cent were needed extra time. Among the schemes not completed within the stipulated time, 82.3 per cent in IRIDP 1 and 85.2 per cent in IRIDP 2 took an additional year.

Reasons for delay -

- ✓ Obstruction by land owner during land requisition
- ✓ Delay in explaining field plan by LGED representative within scheduled time
- ✓ Delay in transporting goods and equipment such as stones or rollers in remote areas
- ✓ Late payment of bills
- ✓ Sudden price hike of construction materials and product crisis, theft of goods from site
- ✓ Natural disasters

Key Findings

Legal Framework

Table 4: Legal Framework and challenges

Legal Framework	Challenges
Although the Planning Commission has a uniform policy for all development projects, there is no specific policy or guideline for the planning and implementation of the bulk allocation for the constituency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ No prerequisite of allocation by scheme, area and demand in scheme selection process ✓ Lack of transparency and accountability in project implementation, monitoring and evaluation
Provision for disclosure of eight information to the public, including income and expenditure of MPs, updated assets statement before the election (Representation of the People Order, 1972, Section 44AA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Lack of accountability of public representatives due to inadequate legal framework for disclosure of post-election information and specific rules of conduct regarding MPs activities, integrity and interests.
MPs have the power and opportunity to express their views on local development activities [Zila Parishad Act, 2000 and Upazila Parishad Act, 1997 (as amended in 2009)]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Political power exercise and influence expanded ✓ Strengthening of local government hampered

Legal Framework	Challenges
Tender process and scheme implementation at field level are administered as per Government Procurement Rules, 2008	✓ Lack of systematic transparency and accountability due to ineffective supervision
Representation of mass population of the area except professionals and various related organizations / organizations in the existing policy framework of local government bodies – ✓ about 29% in the Town Level Coordinating Committee ✓ about 14% in the Ward Level Coordinating Committee.	✓ Lack of reflection of people's views in the decision making process

Transparency

Disclosure of information:

- Contractors do not display information boards.
- No information board in the site during implementation of observed schemes.
- No website or institutional platform to disclose scheme implementation progress, financial accounting, monitoring and evaluation monitoring, etc. with project policies and guidelines.

Institutional transparency in tender implementation:

- In some areas 20-25% of work illegally sub-contracted (sold). No document of sub-contract preserved at institutional level, although supervisors of implementing authority are aware of the sale of work.

Accountability

Scheme supervision and monitoring during implementation

- Overall, 76.2 per cent of schemes was supervised during implementation.

Table 5: Types of Scheme Supervisors During implementation (Multiple Answers)

Supervisor	Percentage of Scheme
LGED Engineer	70.0
Fieldwork-assistant	17.1
Union Parishad/Upazilla/Municipality Chair/ UP member/ Ward Commissioner	13.1
Identity not known	12.0

- Observations of the officer-in-charge / work-assistant are documented in the work order book kept at site for subsequent follow-up till completion of work. There is a rule to submit the book for storage at the LGED office at the end of the work.

Monitoring and evaluation

- The actual status of schemes was different than the status described in the document – quality of work was mentioned satisfactory although inconsistency was found in field level observation.
- Following anomalies were found –
✓ In some cases, schemes were not completed
✓ In some schemes no work was done
✓ In some cases, security deposits were withdrawn with approval of authorities even the work was not complete after one year.
- Quality of work was not good for a significant per cent of all schemes although the report mentioned the quality of work as satisfactory.

Table 6: 'Quality of work is satisfactory' as mentioned in completion reports vis-à-vis actual status of schemes

Factual Status of scheme	Percentage of schemes	
	'Quality of work is satisfactory' written in Work Completion Report	'Quality of work is satisfactory' written in Report of Security Money Withdrawal
Completely Done	74.0	76.1
Partially Done	21.5	19.3
No work Done	4.5	4.6

Table 7: 'Quality of work is satisfactory' as mentioned in completion reports vis-à-vis actual quality of schemes

Quality of scheme	Percentage of schemes	
	'Quality of work is satisfactory' written in Work Completion Report	'Quality of work is satisfactory' written in Report of Security Money Withdrawal
Good	41.8	41.6
Not good not bad	28.6	27.4
Not good	29.6	31.0

The quality of completed schemes

- Non-existent schemes – 16 road schemes, 1 bridge/culvert schemes and 8 road and culvert /drain schemes.

Table 8: Implementation Status of Completed Schemes

Status of completion	Percentage of Scheme (n = 628)
Completely Done	77.8
Partially Done	17.8
No work Done (Picture 1)	4.4

Picture 1: The document mentioned the completion of work but in reality no work was done



Table 9: Work Quality of the Completed Schemes

Work quality of scheme	Percentage of Scheme (n = 628)
Good	37.0
Not good not bad	30.0
Not good	33.0

- Work quality of a significant percent scheme was found not good (Table 9) due to following reasons –
 - ✓ Lack of public awareness and supervision of work
 - ✓ Additional tendency to exert influence of public representatives.
- 14.5 per cent of all schemes was repaired (18.3 per cent of IRDP 1 and 3.7 per cent of IRDP 2).

Table 10: Current status of unrepaired scheme

Conditions from field observation	Percentage of scheme (n = 537)
Good	44.6
Usable	13.2
Not good, need repair	42.2

- Although schemes of IRIDP 2 are relatively new, a significant number of them (16.4%) are not in good condition and need to be repaired.
- The reasons for this condition of relatively new schemes are -
 - ✓ Ineffective oversight due to political influence

- ✓ Not using quality construction materials continues
- ✓ Ignoring local and geographical context while designing and allocating for schemes
- ✓ Illegal movement of heavy vehicles on the road.

Picture 2: Scheme status due to non-use of quality materials
(relatively new scheme completed in IRIDP 2)



Picture 3: Road scheme without sustainable piling



Picture 4: Such roads where heavy vehicles move



Causes of ineffectiveness of work monitoring and evaluation system

Political influence:

- ✓ Lack of supervision by the authorities and local public representatives during construction, when he or his / her staff / acquaintance / relative is the contractor
- ✓ Lack of supervision by some MPs – due to extra-legal commission/ dividend from contractor and maintaining control of the constituency during polls by party leaders-workers/ relatives-acquaintances who are contractors.

“From the beginning to the end of implementing a development infrastructure, the MP, the LGED engineer, the accountant, the person in charge of the tender, the contractor himself – all ensured their share. Almost everyone, starting from the common people, knows this. But the hands of the journalists are tied. There are also questions about freedom of expression.” - Key Informant

Mutual agreement:

- ✓ Through financial transactions the contractor makes more benefit from substandard work in exchange for illegal deal and the implementing and supervisory authority approves the work in exchange for illegal financial transactions. The public representative, party person upholds the influence of power and financial gain.
- ✓ Commission/illegal financial transaction at different stages of the implementing organization and the extortion of political influential at a certain rate at different stages is the reflection of the mutual benefit (win-win situation) among the stakeholders.

Lack of institutional capacity:

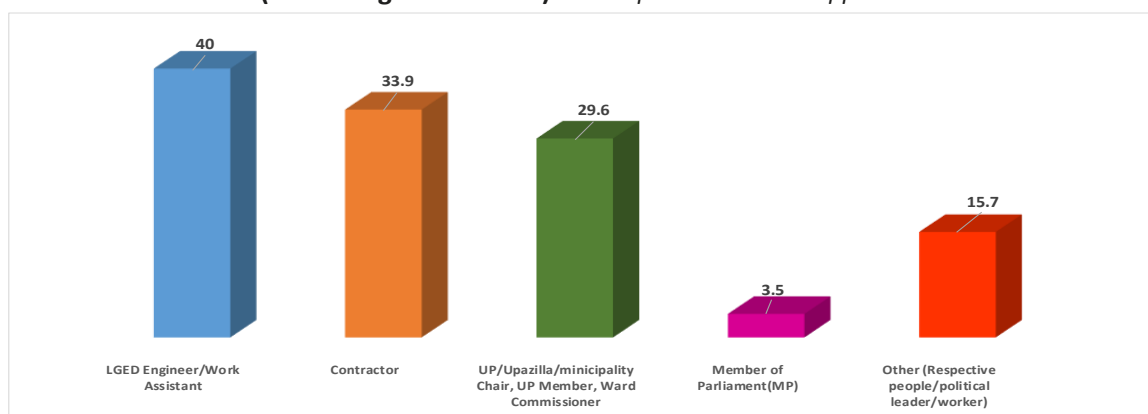
- ✓ Lack of initiative and interest between contractors and supervisors in implementing advice and observation written in the work order book.
- ✓ Limited capacity of supervising all schemes of different projects simultaneously in one upazila.
- ✓ Insufficient allocation for vehicles for regular supervision in remote areas, especially in hilly and char areas.
- ✓ Lack of complete evaluation of this development project by IMED (Monitoring and Evaluation Division) of Planning Commission as it was a politically motivated one.

Complaint management and redress mechanism

Table 11: Complaints about the quality of work during the implementation

Complaints	Percentage of scheme (n = 628)
Complaint lodged	18.8
Complaint not lodged	77.6
No complaint	3.5

Chart 3: Complainants lodged to persons about quality of work during implementation (Percentage of Scheme) * Multiple answers are applicable



Reasons for not reporting:

- ✓ Complaints are not addressed
- ✓ Faced threats and harassment while protesting or directly complaining
- ✓ If the contractor is a relative / acquaintance / party worker of the concerned MP, mass people are less interested in making any complaint out of fear.

Table 12: Changes made based on complaints during implementation

Changes in quality of work	percentage of scheme (n = 117)
Positive change occurred in work quality	23.9
No change occurred in work quality	77.1

Reasons for poor complaint management and redress mechanism -

- ✓ Complaints of locals were not taken into account by supervisory bodies, public representatives or politically influential.
- ✓ Mutual benefits between LGED, public representatives and politically influential persons with contractors and commission.

"Everyone knows who is doing the development work in the area. They work by giving commissions. There is no point in complaining, so no one talks."

- Key Informant

Participation

- Demand/opinion was obtained through direct discussions with locals in 34% of schemes in 50 constituencies.
 - In 29 out of 50 constituencies, in case of 28.5 per cent of schemes the MP directly sought opinions of local people while visiting the area.
- Lack of opportunity for giving opinions by common people due to under-representation in relevant coordination committees of local government body and exercise of political power in committees.
- As of beneficiaries' opinion, schemes are very appropriate for common people. But A few schemes had also been enlisted out of personal needs due to special requests of influential/ local leaders, MPs or their relatives.
- Result of not taking people's opinion or assessing needs – absence of concrete roads in market, waterlogging and flood-prone areas, bridges without approach roads, similar amount of allocation in hilly areas.

Picture 5: Roads in waterlogged or flood prone areas



Picture 6: Roads adjacent to kitchen market



Picture 7: Bridges without connecting roads



Irregularities and Corruption

- Irregular financial transaction (commission) at fixed rates (sometimes lump sum) transacted among various stakeholders in different stages of tender, withdrawal of final bill and security deposit.
- Although e-tendering has been introduced to curb corruption, irregularities exist in a systematic way where oversight bodies, contractors, MPs and local public representatives and influential syndicates are involved.
- Lack of initiative and interest in disclosing information on irregularities due to legal impediments, fear of false charges and harassment.

Table 13: Estimated value of financial corruption* in terms of actual bill amount of 628 schemes (Excluding audit and commission rate for MPs)

Amount	Estimates Per Scheme (BDT)	Total Estimate (BDT)
Minimum	4,33,237	27,20,73,080
Maximum	6,64,603	41,73,70,833

* It is to be noted that the overall value of financial corruption has been estimated on the basis of both the percentage of commission and the amount of money by type.

Table 14: Rate/Amount of Illegal Financial Transaction

Level/ Person responsible to extort commission	Rate of Commission (based on allocation per scheme)	Amount of Cash (BDT) by type
Work Order issuing Committee	1%	-
Six step product test	-	6-8 thousand x 6 = 36-48 thousand (except test fee)
Peon at Upazila LGED Office	-	500-1000 (per scheme)
Field Work Assistant (monitoring)	1% - 2%	-
Sub-Assistant Engineer of Upazila LGED	1%	-
Assistant Engineer of Upazila LGED	1% - 2%	-
Administrative Dept. of District LGED	2% - 2.5%	-
Executive Engineer	0.25%	-
Treasury (for bill clearance)	0.5% - 2%	-
Accountant (for withdrawal of security deposit)	1%	-
Peon of Treasury	-	200-500 (per scheme)
Project Director	0.5% - 1%	-
Politically influential/ workers	-	5-10 thousand (per scheme)
Audit of local LGED office	-	2-5 lac (one time yearly from contractor)
Total* (except the commission during audit)	8.25% - 12.75 % (per scheme)	41,700 - 59,500 (per scheme)

* Estimated based on interviews with local contractors, journalists and other stakeholders.

Types of irregularities and corruption

▪ **Political influence:**

- ✓ In some cases, on the recommendation of a Member of Parliament, LGED's evaluation committee selects tenders for preferred contractors, through 'Bid Money'. Receipt of certain amount of commission from the contractor through the representative of the political party / to party fund.
- ✓ Representatives of MPs involved in contracting business and a part of local government representatives control implementation of development work and extortion activities in an area. Force negotiations with representatives of ruling party in exchange of money.
- ✓ Being the part of political power structure, a portion of local representatives (UP chairman / member, municipal mayor / councilor / commissioner, etc.) tend to not do quality work while working as contractors.
- ✓ Contractors are forced to purchase construction materials from some of local political leaders and activists involved in the business of road construction materials (bricks, rods, sand, cement, etc.). Intimidation, including obstruction of work is done if not purchased; as a result, they are forced to compromise on low quality and less quantity of materials.
- ✓ Lobbying of contractors through politically influential, public representatives to get payment without complete and quality work and forcing the implementing agency to waive the bill with the approval of completion.

"In some cases, we are forced to hand over the work to another person on the recommendation of the MP, regardless of the tender." – Key Informant

"When a contractor submits and gets a tender from LGED, he is warned from the office, "Look, the boys in the area will not let you work, handover your work to" – Key Informant

"As we are '.. ..' brother's man, the Executive Engineer also respects us. So he is not late to file our bill. I complete work with bricks and water, even though it is not mentioned in the scheme. This takes less stone and pitch. Because watering with bricks makes the bed even, it is convenient to do carpeting and the cost is less. The field engineer '.. ..' says, 'no matter what you put down, the carpeting has to be good'." – Key Informant

▪ **Influential Syndicate:**

- ✓ In some cases, a few contractors make a syndicate and distribution of work is disseminated among themselves on the basis of mutual agreement.
- ✓ In many cases the work is sold to influential contractors in an area on the basis of a dividend (5-10%). In some cases, the authorities also complained of this compromise.

▪ **Using someone else's license:** In many cases new and less experienced contractors submit tenders using licenses of more experienced contractors.

▪ **Tax evasion:** Tendency among Bengali contractors in hill districts to participate in tenders using licenses of indigenous contractors to evade tax, as indigenous contractors do not have to pay VAT.

▪ **Not using quality materials:** In many cases not using quality materials to maximize profits (poor quality of bricks and sand, not using standard rods, mixing of burnt mobil with bitumen, piling with brickwork instead of concrete pouring on bridges); use of less materials (less amount of pitch layer in the, less amount of rod used).

▪ **Extortion by special regional syndicates in hilly areas:** In the hilly areas, special regional powerful syndicates (*Jana Sanghati Samiti-JSS*, *UPDF*, *JSS Reforms*, *UPDF Reforms*, etc.) collect a portion (5% -10%) of all development works from the contractors.

Role of Member of Parliament

▪ **Listing Schemes:**

- ✓ The opinion of the local people's representatives and party leaders and workers prevails over the direct opinion of common people in making list of schemes.

- ✓ Lack of effective initiatives from the end of public representatives to get views of common people, including their participation in relevant coordination committees of local government bodies.
- **Involvement in tender process:**
 - ✓ Distribution of works under various schemes among family members, relatives and party workers and local people's representatives by a section of MPs.
 - ✓ Complaint of extorting commissions from the contractor at a fixed rate (1% - 2%) in 86% of selected constituencies – either directly in party fund (one time) or by the MP through personal assistants.

Table 15: Estimated value of financial corruption (1% - 2% per scheme) of commission by MPs* (received through personal assistant) (BDT)

Amount	Estimates per scheme (Based on average actual bill amount)	Estimates per Constituency in IRIDP 1 (Based on allocation of BDT 15 million)	Estimates per Constituency in IRIDP 2 (Based on allocation of BDT 20 million)
Minimum	47,459	15,00,000	20,00,000
Maximum	94,918	30,00,000	40,00,000

Source: Estimates based on interviews with local contractors, journalists and other stakeholders

* Not equally applicable to all MPs.

- Depending on the area and the ruling party's relationship with the contractor, there are variations in the amount to direct party fund (one-time) grants. The exact amount is not known.
- **Supervision of Scheme implementation:**
 - ✓ No direct supervision of the concerned MP was observed during implementation of work.
 - ✓ MPs instruct concerned persons directly to know the progress of schemes, take steps to resolve grievances and improve quality of work.
 - ✓ An MP does not hold a contractor accountable if he is a relative/ known to party leader-worker / MP, even if there are complaints about the quality or progress of work.
- **Involvement of Opposition MPs:**
 - ✓ MPs belonging to the opposition party face challenges in the process of implementing project schemes in his/her constituency. To what extent s/he is accepted to the ruling party leaders in the area are considered for his/her involvement.
 - ✓ MPs from opposition enjoy the opportunity to be involved in implementation of schemes on the basis of compromise.

Experience of other countries

- In some other 23 countries there are examples of bulk allocation schemes for MPs for infrastructure development in respective constituencies.
- Analysis of data from eight countries (India, Bhutan, Kenya, Ghana, Uganda, Jamaica, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands) reveals that different types of practices are noticeable; implementation process along with structure of the project is still evolving.
- There are both positive and negative observations in the implementation of such projects.
- Some similarities can be observed between these countries and Bangladesh -
 - ✓ A fixed amount of money is allocated for each constituency
 - ✓ Fund allocation goes to implementing authority / institution. MPs do not have the opportunity to spend this money directly.
 - ✓ The local government engineering department supervises the implementation of schemes at field level.
- With regard to transparency and accountability some strategic/ systematic shortcomings of this project in Bangladesh vis-à-vis examples of other countries -
 - ✓ No specific legal / policy framework, institutional policies and guidelines.
 - ✓ No management / monitoring committee at community level; no separate parliamentary committee to monitor the policy framework and overall evaluation.
 - ✓ No project-related information is disclosed to the public. There is no separate website for this project, and no detail information is available on websites of organizations involved in this project.

- ✓ No complete evaluation for this project by IMED, although there is a project evaluation framework for any project implemented.

Overall Observations

- Only infrastructure development schemes are implemented although there are other objectives of this project.
- Most of the schemes are useful, however the quality of work of schemes is not at an expected level – due to mutual benefit of all stakeholders involved in scheme planning and implementation, and illegal financial transactions.
- Although MPs of concerned areas have been in direct contact with the concerned to monitor the progress of work and resolve grievances, the transparency and accountability of the entire development process has been questioned as some of them have indulged in various irregularities for political influence and financial gain.
- There is lack of specific policy framework / strategy; inadequate institutional framework to make project details available to the public, including information on constituency-based schemes.
- Lack of opportunity of common people to give direct feedback on schemes – from enlistment to implementation.
- Absence of specific rules of conduct regarding the integrity and interests of MPs, including effective oversight and overall evaluation of projects, further encourages the institutionalization of irregularities and corruption and causes a waste of state resources.
- The project is being used as a way for a section of MPs to exercise political power locally, to secure votes in elections, and to gain unethical economic benefits. There is also a lack of legal and procedural framework that ensures accountability of the people's representatives.

Recommendations

1. An impartial and comprehensive evaluation of the projects under block allocation for development of constituencies already implemented should be done. The weaknesses and opportunities should be detailed and this information should be used in the next project planning to increase effectiveness.
2. The legal framework or policy of the project should be specified, which will provide detailed instructions for the scheme selection process, pre-requisite allocation by area and demand, and implementation, monitoring and evaluation process.
3. Feasibility of schemes based on geographical location and appropriateness must be done before planning and listing of schemes.
4. It is necessary to increase the representation of local people in relevant coordination committees of local government bodies to ensure people's participation and reduce the political influence in the decision making process.
5. Information boards should be set up in areas where schemes are implemented. On the information board, details of the scheme, budget, deadline, names and contact numbers of the engineer and contractor etc. must be disclosed.
6. All types of information about this project (policy, list of seat-based schemes, feasibility study report, budget, details of progress of scheme implementation) must be published on a website and regularly updated.
7. Initiatives should be taken to plan and implement schemes directly consistent with the objective of increasing marketing facilities and accelerating rural employment, including providing assistance to increase production of agricultural and non-agricultural products.
8. In order to establish good governance, effective accountability system (Code of Conduct for MPs, disclosure of financial accounts including their activities, area-based public hearings for development projects implemented in their involvement) should be introduced to reduce the tendency and opportunities for corruption.
9. Continuous effective monitoring (community monitoring) may be introduced with local beneficiaries during the implementation of schemes.
