

National News

Tripartite partnership among the government, mass media and citizens can contribute to good governance as enshrined in SDG 16

During a dialogue on ‘SDG 16 and Good Governance: Government, Mass Media and Citizens’, organised by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) on May 2, speakers called for improving communication with the citizen by the government and ensuring supportive regulatory environment so that media can effectively contribute in achieving transparency and accountability targets as outlined in the SDG 16.



Chaired by Member of TIB’s Board of Trustees and former chief election commissioner ATM Shamsul Huda, the dialogue was arranged on the occasion of International Press Freedom Day declared by UNESCO. BRAC University’s teacher Afsan Chowdhury and media analyst Mohammad Jahangir were the key discussants. TIB’s director (Outreach and Communication) Rezwana-ul-Alam presented the keynote paper. TIB’s Deputy Executive Director Dr. Sumaiya Khair, journalists from different media outlets and media analysts also attended.

TIB’s Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman observed that the government has to provide a congenial environment so that mass media can work independently. Terming that the freedom of the mass media is important for the progression of democracy, Dr Iftekharuzzaman said: “The pressure on the Bangladesh’s mass media is growing, pushing the media towards self-censorship. This is not acceptable in the democratic process.”

It was observed in the dialogue paper that various research findings across the world have shown direct and indirect correlation among the media reporting and good governance. Media’s critical

analyses also impact on governance-related policy formulation and media's watchdog role can enhance the government's transparency and accountability and improve relations with the citizens.

Good Governance in the light of the relationship among government, mass media and citizens



Speakers decried that journalists are divided under the political banners and their division is increasing day by day and the journalists' leaders are taking opportunity of this. They also observed that the democratic process and good governance would be impeded if the mass media fails to work independently.

To implement the governance related target of SDG 16, the paper proposed few measures, which included, among others: development of a strategic communication strategy by the government, enhancing the capacity of the Ministry of Information to provide timely and accurate information to media, refraining from imposing harsher regulatory measures such as banning Youtube or Facebook by the authorities and ensure free and balance flow of information for the media. Media was also urged to intensify the number and the quality of investigative reporting, facilitating dialogue among citizens and authorities, maintain ethical standard of journalism and improving media's internal governance mechanisms to earn respect and confidence of the media consumers.

Call for formulation and application of complete risk mitigation policy in consultation with independent and impartial experts

In the context of governance decay and unbridled forgery in Bangladesh's banking and financial sector through misuse of power and collusions in one hand and growing illegal money laundering on the other, TIB urges to reconsider multiple important decisions for the sector recently taken by the government. Avoiding tendency of ad hoc decisions, TIB further urges the government to move forward in the basis of a complete risk mitigation policy formulated according to the recommendations by an expert committee comprising independent, non-partisan and experienced people and institutions in the relevant sector.

In a statement released on May 09, TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekhharuzzaman said, "In the context of recent information that money is being siphoned at an alarming rate, TIB is deeply concerned on the interest of banking division to allow three organizations of personal sector with opportunity to invest abroad bypassing advises of Bangladesh Bank. Besides, the banking and financial sector is in huge risk of becoming unregulated, unaccountable and unprotected due to lack of effective steps to increase the flow of foreign remittances which remarkably decreased for 'digital hundi' through misuse of evolving mobile banking, and an initiative of the government to establish dynastic rule in the private banking sector through amending Company Act."

In the banking sector, the deposit money of ordinary people is at severe risk due to uncontrolled loan defaulting, forgery and corruption through misuse of power and connections. On the other hand, visible hostage situation of the government towards a special group is responsible for the decay of the governance of this sector which is a sign of impending disaster for the economy, Dr. Zaman added.

TIB believes, no matter how catching the opportunity to invest in foreign countries for Bangladeshi private organizations seems, creating such opportunity in ad hoc basis in absence of required legal policy framework and monitoring system might pose much risk of money laundering. On the other hand, without analyzing the possible impact of the institutionalizing the dynastic trends in this sector

through proposed reforms in managing committee of private banks, such legal modification will be an act of imprudence.

Prior to implement such decisions, TIB urges to step forward according to the suggestions of proposed experts committee. In addition, in order to bring laundered money back, TIB further demands for collective efforts of relevant institutions, especially Bangladesh bank, Anti-Corruption Commission, National board of Revenue and the Office of the Attorney General and ensure punishment of the criminals responsible for money laundering according to the law.

Individual Members Day held



TIB organized Individual Members Day on 18 May 2017 at Meghomala Conference Room of its Head office with the participation of 30 TIB members. Chaired by TIB individual member, Mr. Tanbir ul Islam Siddiqui and moderated by TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman, the draft election procedure of Individual Members Representative to TIB's General Assembly (GA) was shared with members in the meeting. Based upon the discussion on the election process, members agreed on the on-spot voting system which will be held in mid-July at TIB Head office. Nomination procedure of the election will be closed one week prior to the election and two more days will be provided for keeping the withdrawal option of the nomination after publishing the final nomination.

Besides, members discussed about their role in TIB and agreed to review the cancellation of membership status of non-resident members who also failed to attend members meeting for a long period.

Call for ensuring the highest level of integrity, transparency, and accountability in adaptation related activities

Government and the relevant authorities were urged to ensure the highest level of integrity, transparency, and accountability in the overall management of various types of adaptation funds and projects in Bangladesh. Participating debaters in the national round of the South Asian Debate Competition on adaptation finance governance made the call on 20 May 2017. TIB organised a day-long national round debate competition on 20 May 2017 for selecting the best two teams who will be representing Bangladesh in the upcoming South Asian Debate Competition on adaptation finance governance. A total of 24 debaters from 12 universities, both public and private, competed

in the parliamentary-styled four rounds of debates on different themes i.e. adaptation finance, RTI, SDGs and local participation.



The theme of the final round debate of the national round was “You have Your Say-Local Participation” and the topic was “Region Should Elect Local Environmental Protection Committees (made of Climate Scientists, Scholars and members of Civil Society) with the power to veto investment projects in the locality”.



The Islamic University of Technology debate team emerged as champion defeating Institute of Business Administration -Dhaka University debate team. Renowned Former debater Mr. Abdun Noor Tushar attended the final round as Speaker.

Government employees should ensure proper services to citizens

Government employee’s main responsibility is to ensure proper service delivery to citizens. No irregularity will be accepted in failure of fulfilling responsibility and no one will be spared in any cases of corruption, said Dr. Nasiruddin Ahmed, Commissioner of Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

Dr. Nasiruddin Ahmed made the comments while delivering his speech as Chief Guest in the concluding session of a public hearing held at Muktagacha, Mymensingh district on 23 May 2017. Organised jointly by ACC and TIB, besides public hearing, a two-day long information fair was also organised on 22 & 23 May, 2017 in association with Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC), Muktagacha and Durniti Protirodh Committee (Duprok), Muktagacha Upazila.



Mr. Zulkar Nayan, Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) of Muktagacha moderated the public hearing where representatives from Sub-Registrar office, Palli Bidyut Samity, Upazila Land office, Education office, Upazila Secondary Education office, Upazila Health Complex, Project Implementation office, Social Welfare office, Upazila Accounts office and Upazila Engineering office participated. In the public hearing, citizens raised various questions and their concerns regarding services of government institutions and representatives from respective institutions addressed the questions and concerns. Prior to the public hearing, an anti-corruption rally visited the main roads of the city and organized a human chain in front of R. K. School of Muktagacha with banner, festoon, posters and placards bearing messages regarding right to information.

On 22 May 2017, Mr. Salahuddin Ahmed, Member of the Parliament from Mymensingh-5 inaugurated the information fair where a total of 30 government institutions and 4 non-government organizations participated and disseminated their service related information to visitors. A discussion meeting was held after the inaugural presided by Principal Md. Akhlasur Rahaman Jewel, president of CCC Muktagacha. In the discussion, Mr. Salahuddin Ahmed MP reminded the responsibility of everyone to fight against corruption. He further stressed on raising awareness of mass people to attain the goal. The meeting discussed the progress of decisions taken in the last public hearing held on December 2014 at Muktagacha.

Among others, ACC Director Md. Moniruzzaman, Dhaka Divisional Director of ACC Mr. Nasim Anowar, Additional Deputy Commissioner (Education and ICT) of Mymensingh district Muhammad Abdul Latif, Muktagacha Upazila Parishad Chairman Md. Zakaria Harun were present in the discussion meeting.

Visitors of the fair received basic orientation on procedure of submission of RTI application to the institutions according to the RTI Act-2009 provided by YES and YES Friends member of CCC, Muktagacha. Alongside the main event, an Anti-corruption cartoon exhibition and cultural program were also organized in the fair.

Participatory budget to promote transparency at UP

To ensure participation in the Union Parishad (UP) budget, With an aim to develop the Union Parishad (UP) budget in a participatory method, 4 no. Haripur Union Parishad of Paba Upazila, Rajshahi organized an open budget session on 25 May 2017 in association with CCC, Rajshahi City. Mr. Ayeen Uddin, Member of the Parliament from the constituency attended the program as the Chief Guest while Md. Bozle Rezbi Al Hasan Munjil, chairman of the UP presided over the program. Prior to the discussion session, *Gomvira*, locally popular cultural performance was staged in the place containing basic concept of budget of a UP.

After sharing proposed budget of the UP for the fiscal year of 2017-18 by UP Secretary Saidul Islam, the floor was declared open where respected citizens participated. They raised various demands including allocation for construction of roads, supply of electricity, establishment of a college in the union etc. Indigenous people from the territory also raised their basic demands like water supply.



Both Mr. Ayeen Uddin MP and Md. Bozle Rezbi Al Hasan Munjil assured the citizens that necessary initiatives will be taken within their capacity to meet the growing demands. Ashraful Haque Tota, Vice-Chairman of Paba Upazila; Kamruzzaman Kamru, Counselor of Ward 5 Rajshahi City Corporation, and Prof. Abdus Salam, President of CCC, Rajshahi city also discussed as Special Guests at the event. Among others, members of CCC, Swajan, YES and YES Friends also attended the program.

Commitment to ensure quality health services to citizens

Dr. Saiyed Mohammad Habibullah, Director of Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmad Medical College Hospital, Gazipur committed to ensure quality services to people by utilizing existing resources. He made the commitment while speaking as the Chief Guest in a sharing meeting with service recipients and

service providers held on 27 May 2017 organized by CCC, Gazipur with an aim to ensure transparency and accountability in the hospital and its services.



Mr. Mukul Kumar Mallik, Convener of health related sub-committee of CCC, Gazipur shared the goals and objectives of the meeting while Mr. Hatem Ali, member of Sachchotar Jonno Nagorik (SWAJAN), moderated the program held at conference room of the hospital. Relevant Area Manager of TIB shared observation report on Mr. Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmad Medical College Hospital and authority of the hospital responded to the report respectively. In the open discussion session, service recipients shared that services of the hospital have been improved, but there are many scopes to make further improvements.

Deputy Director of the hospital Dr. Ali Haidar Khan, Assistant Director Dr. Kamar Uddin, Residential Medical Officer Dr. Pronoy Bhushon Das, Senior Consultant (Surgery) Dr. Ashraf Alam along with other officials present in the meeting.

Plan for amplifying good initiatives to improve the quality of education

School Managing Committee (SMC) presidents and Head Teachers of 25 government primary schools under Jhenaidah Sadar Upazila prepared a plan for amplifying good initiatives of Vutiargati Govt. Primary School, initiated by the assistance of CCC, Jhenaidah to improve the quality of education. Their plan includes inclusion of Ethics Education through *Bornomalai Nitikotha* (a publication of TIB), introduction of money receipt for taking different fees, complaints logbook, and provide information register, display information of the Designated Information Officer, set up Information Display Board, publish leaflets and ensure separate toilets for female students and teachers.

SMC presidents and Head Teachers made this plan in a special coordination meeting organized by CCC, Jhenaidah on 24 May 2017 at Sadar Upazila Parishad Auditorium. Upazila Nirbahi Officer Mr. Mostafizur Rahman attended the event as Chief Guest where District Primary Education Officer Mr. Ataur Rahman and Assistant District Primary Education Officer Mominul Islam were present as the Special Guests in the program.

Jhenaidah Sadar Upazila Education Officer Mr. Mustak Ahmed shared a Power Point presentation on responsibilities of SMC and Head Teachers for the improvement of primary education, and Mr. Rajesh Kumar Adhikary, Programme Manager-CE of TIB, shared a presentation on activities of CCC at Vutiargati Govt. Primary School and its achievements.

In the event, participants stressed on ensuring transparency and accountability in school management and responsibilities of SMC, Teachers and parents of the students. Participants further requested Head Teachers and SMC Presidents to replicate the good practice of Vutiargati Govt. Primary School. The participants of the meeting also recommended to resolve the infrastructural problems of schools, arrange training for SMC members on their roles and responsibilities. District education authority assured to take necessary measures to solve the problems, which are possible at local level.

Dhaka YES arranged Satellite AI Desk at DMCH

Members and friends of different groups of Dhaka YES has organized a two-days Satellite Advice and Information Desk (AI Desk) in the Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) on 24-25 May 2017 with the objective of providing people with access to information about their rights and entitlements, and thereby empower them so that they can receive the desired public services and stand up against corruption.



At the desk, the YES members provided relentless assistance to arriving patients with information of services, direction to the service rooms and details of available services at the Outdoor section from 8 Am to 2 PM. The members also received information of harassment and complain of corruptions which were forwarded to the relevant authority for necessary action. YES members assisted around 3200 service recipients with information and approximately 5000 leaflets with information and direction of available services of DMCH were distributed among the recipients during the period.

Workshop on Anti-Corruption Documentary Making

Members and friends of the YES group- Stamford University participated in a workshop on anti-corruption documentary making on 7 May at Meghomala conference room of TIB Head office.

Organised by TIB, a total number of 12 members and 33 friends participated and got the opportunity to enhance their capacity in making video/documentary.



Mr. Barkatullah Babu, Programme Manager, Outreach and Communication, TIB facilitated the workshop where he practically discussed and showed the ways of capturing video in different dimensions and edit the content using mobile phone or low-cost Handy Cam with available software. He focused on the easier and fruitful ways of editing in details. In the feedback session, the participants successfully made number of documentary using the mobile phones and software.

Mr. Mohsinul Karim, Advisor of the YES group and Assistant Professor of the department of Economics, Stamford University Bangladesh encouraged the YES members to use the knowledge gathered from the workshop and carry on with their fight against corruption with responsible confidence. He thanked TIB for organizing such timely workshop for the youth.

In the introductory session, Mr. Zahidul Islam, Senior Programme Manager, Outreach and Communication of TIB discussed on different aspects of prevailing corruption trends and urged the YES participants to resist corruption collectively.

Transparency, Accountability and Citizens participation essential to protect life and environment

To ensure sustainable development in protecting life and environment, there is no alternative to transparency, accountability and citizen's participation. The application further profoundly requires awareness and caution of citizens to overcome the crisis.

The recommendations were made during a seminar organized by Jahangirnagar University YES group on 22 May, 2017 at the faculty of Social Science, JU as part of a daylong celebration to mark the World Environment Day. Professor Dr. Shahedur Rashid, Chairman, Department of Geography and Environment, JU and Mr. Zakir Hossain Khan, Senior Programme Manager, Climate Finance Governance Unit, TIB presented papers on issues including the current scenario of climate finance governance and adaptation and way forward in the seminar. The seminar was attended by hundreds of students from the faculty and other departments.



Earlier in the morning, Professor Dr. Shahedur Rashid inaugurated the daylong programme by opening the Anti-corruption Cartoon Exhibition at the faculty premises. Other programmes also included among others, anti-corruption theater show by Dhaka YES theatre Group.

Drama titled *Swapner Swades swapno noy sambhab* stressed to ensure governance on public sector

Dhaka YES theatre group continues to disseminate anti-corruption messages portraying irregularities such as violation of law and human rights, wrongdoing in the health, education and climate finance sectors regarding governance issues. In the month of May, 2017 the group performed its production titled *Swapner Swades swapno noi sambhab* in the campuses of Jahangirnagar University and Uttara University on 22nd and 24th May respectively. The drama carries strong messages for the concerned authorities focusing the corruption taking places in public service delivery and the helpless condition of sufferers which are absolutely wrong. The drama concludes with strong urge to improve the prevailing situation and calls people to raise their voice against the corruption in the spirit of historical achievement of mass people in 1971 and 1952.



Theater show at Uttara University



Theater show at Jahangirnagar University

As part of TIB's variety of campaigns to aware and engage people in the fight against corruption, Dhaka YES theatre group produces thematic drama shows highlighting inequality, wrongdoing,

unjust and oppressive activities prevailing in the society in an effort to create mass awareness about the issues among the people.

Editor: S M Rezwan-ul-Alam | Sub-Editor: Mohammad Zahidul Islam, Shakil Md. Faisal

Write us: Transparency International Bangladesh, email: advocacy@ti-bangladesh.org

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