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People's Voice in between Elections: Democratic Public Sphere and Accountability of Elected Representatives in Bangladesh

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Certificate

This is to certify that Abu Rusho Muhammad Toab Hossain PhD fellow, session 2011-2012, Institute of Bangladesh Studies (IBS), University of Rajshahi, has prepared the dissertation entitled " People's Voice in between Elections: Democratic Public Sphere and Accountability of Elected Representatives in Bangladesh' under my direct academic guidance and supervision. The researcher has himself prepared the dissertation, and this is not a conjoint work. He has contributed to the field of Political Science through this original work. This dissertation or any part of it, as per I know, has not been submitted to any other university for any degree. At the same time, I also pronounce that he did not submit any part of this dissertation to be published in any journal within the country or outside the country.

I have gone through the draft and the final version of the dissertation and found it satisfactory for submission to the Institute of Bangladesh Studies, University of Rajshahi in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science.

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DECLARATION

I do hereby declare that the dissertation entitled "People's Voice in between Elections: Democratic Public Sphere and Accountability of Elected Representatives in Bangladesh" submitted to the Institute of Bangladesh Studies, University of Rajshahi in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science is exclusively my own and original work. No part of it, in any form, has been submitted to any other University or Institute for any degree, diploma, or for other similar purposes. All the evidences that have been taken from the published and unpublished works of other authors have been acknowledged, and references have been cited.

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ABSTRACT

A democratic public sphere is conducive to make the elected representatives accountable to the people. Civil liberty, free flow of information, platform for citizens and communication channels consisted in public sphere are significant to create non-electoral vertical accountability of the elected representatives. The state of public sphere, public opinion formation and non-electoral vertical accountability of the elected representatives of Bangladesh have been analyzed in this study to find out the nexus between democratic public sphere and accountability of the elected representatives in Bangladesh. To do this, three objectives have been examined profoundly. The first was to reveal the state of the democratic public sphere in Bangladesh for analyzing to what extent it acts its due role in terms of representative accountability. Secondly it has been assessed whether the democratic public sphere forms public opinion associated with common concern, predominately the issue of corruption, in terms of representative accountability in Bangladesh. And finally it has been explored whether public opinion can convert public issues into representative accountability mechanism in Bangladesh. The study is predominately qualitative in nature using data from both primary and secondary sources. For the validation and reliability of the data and triangulation, four tools i.e. SLR (Secondary Literature Review), KII (Key Informant Interview), FGD (Focus Group Discussion) and QS (Questionnaire Survey) have been used. The study shows that the state of democratic public sphere in Bangladesh is of mediocre type. This situation has been exemplified by the negative impact of the vested interest groups regarding freedom of opinion and expression affecting civil liberty. It is also identified that access to government information is very difficult which influences free flow of information negatively. Poor performance of the media adds to this dysfunctioning as debate creating nature of media coverage and political pressure on media affect the performance of communication channels. Therefore, citizens' platform cannot become the people's forum due to the lack of democratic structure and leadership. It is also clear that protecting business interests and self-censorship of media, elite and self evading voice of talk-shows' participants and lack of authenticity of facebook's posts and fear of political color of facebook users affect communication channels negatively in terms of public opinion formation. Hence, public sphere produces public opinion only partially. Furthermore, the elected representatives' negative response to public sphere and seldom behavioral change imply minimal nexus between democratic public sphere and non-electoral vertical accountability of the elected representatives in Bangladesh. Finally, the absence of formal mechanism like deliberative democracy compels public sphere having a "limited" impact on the non -electoral vertical accountability of the elected representatives in Bangladesh.

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACC	Anti Corruption Commission
AJ	Academics from Journalism
AS	Academics from Sociology
BD	Bangladesh
CC	Communication Channels
COMGAP	Communication for Governance and Accountability
CP	Citizens' Platform
CS	Civil Society
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DO	Designated Officer
DSHE	Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education
DPS	Democratic Public Sphere
DFID	Department for International Development
EJ	Editors and Journalist
EJISDC	Electronic Journal of Information Systems in
ERs	Elected Representatives
FA	Facebook Administrator
GO	Government Organization
HRIC	Human Rights in China
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
LE	Legal Expert
MATIB	Members and Associates of TIB
MOE	Ministry of Education

MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non Government Organization
PO	Public Opinion
PS	Political Scientists
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDRC	Structural Dynamics Research Corporation
TAG	Talk -Show Anchors and Guests
RTI	Right to Information
RTIA	Right to Information Act
TI	Transparency International
TIB	Transparency International Bangladesh
UGC	University Grant Commission
WMFD	World Movement for Democracy
YP	Young Politician

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

A democratic public sphere—civil liberty, free flow of information, platform for
citizens and communication channels— is conducive to making the elected
representatives accountable to the people. It provides the people with the scope of
raising voice and enforcing public opinion. As the parliamentary form of governance
provides indirect mechanism of accountability of the elected representatives, the
issues and concerns of the general masses through the public sphere become
paramount in Bangladesh. In view of the people's desire of direct accountability
mechanism of the representatives, the democratic public sphere acts as a catalyst in
making the elected representatives accountable. The concept itself highlights that
"citizens and their representatives ought to publicly justify the decisions they make
and the rules they institute in order to establish a legitimately democratic bond" (Maia
2007). However, we hardly see such legitimate connections between the people at
large and their elected representatives develop in Bangladesh. The elected
representatives in all spheres of governance structures in Bangladesh seem to be alien
from the mass people after election and people suffer from lack of proper connection.
Despite the existence of different forms of the democratic public sphere in
Bangladesh, the dysfunctional state of the sphere is, nonetheless, the most prominent
in between elections.

People aspire that their voice would be reflected in the realm of democratic
institutions. Such aspiration has been more pronounced after the regime change of

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autocratic Ershad era through mass upsurge. Democratic governance, however, since then has turned into election oriented practices engulfed with cyclic problems. Albeit wide political chaos, the periodic elections elevate aspirations of the people in the public sphere. Oppositions' parliament boycott, control of elected members through article 70, and the impotency of accountability mechanism raise common concerns further. Oppositions' hard-line for regime change along with vandalism before election- election in particular, and their failure to initiate public issue based movement instigate people's anger, frustration and pessimism. These cyclic problems of governance show the importance of people's voice in terms of representative accountability in Bangladesh.

In a democratic country, people's voice is considered as the most significant tool to justify the legitimacy of the government. A democratic and functional public sphere promotes rational debate and discussion. Odugbemi (2008: 34) argues that "democratic public sphere is of fundamental importance to promote rational debate and discussion. Otherwise every policy question, every reform proposal will be viewed from the prism of ethnicity or sectarianism". The relationship between citizens and representatives becomes mutual and cooperative within the functional democratic public sphere. When the representatives comprehend the political impact of the people's voice, they make the mutual relationship with the citizens in between the elections.

The representation role of the parliament is closely associated with its accountability to the electorate. "The voters and citizens expect that the parliamentarians will be accessible to them, will be transparent in their business, and will in the final analysis be accountable to them" (Jahan & Amundsen 2012 : 28).

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Due to the continuous parliament boycott by the opposition members and ineffective role of the ruling party's MPs for article 70, the people's voice in between elections becomes substantial in Bangladesh.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The success of democracy depends on magnitude of freedom of opinion, expression and assembly; free, plural and independent media system; freedom of organizational activities and free flow of information. "Most theories of democracy emphasize the importance of the public sphere for collective decision making and public opinion produced within it can be regarded as a source of legitimacy to those in power" (Haung 2006). Through comment, debate, discussion or deliberation and public opinion enforcement mechanism people enjoy democratic rights in it. "Even dictatorships are dependent on the public sphere to remain in power and necessarily try to control, access to and content of the public sphere- mass media ,public assemblies, demonstrations" (Haung 2006).

Indeed, people's voice is a vital element in democracy. "Voice refers to the strength of the impetus that decision makers or duty bearers receive from rights holders" (Balassanian 2006: 6) . Voice needs congenial atmosphere to be raised. For this, civil liberty, communication channels and platform for citizens – civil society organizations are instrumental. Public sphere provides all the required spaces for the articulation of the voice. Voice is raised for public opinion formation. Public opinion is a product of the public sphere, and a crucial concept in governance and political decision making. "Voice can include complaint, organized protest, lobbying and participation in decision making, service delivery or policy implementation" (Goetz &

Gaventa 2001). It rises through the process of deliberation, coalescence of views and collective decision making.

Voice enforcement mechanism plays crucial role in public sphere to influence the government. "Public opinion has enforcement mechanisms, as even authoritarian regimes know only too well. Latent opinion makes elites nervous; corrupt elites do not want public opinion activated" (Lee & Odugbemi 2011).   For counterbalancing between the electorate and the elected, voice enforcement mechanism acts substantial role. Active public opinion enforces voice. The impact of voice makes representatives accountable to the people. "Dependency on the people is, no doubt, the primary control on the government" (Hamilton &Madison 1960). Ultimately, holding governments accountable is the responsibility of the citizenry. "Of everything that is thus done or endeavored at, the success depends upon the spirit, the intelligence, the vigilance, the alertness, the intrepidity, the energy, the perseverance, of those whose opinions public opinion is composed" (Bentham 1990).

"In a Westminster-style parliamentary system, the main responsibility for ensuring the government's accountability falls on the shoulders of the opposition in parliament, as the ruling party parliamentarians are expected to support the government", (Jahan and Amundsen 2012). In Bangladesh since the mid-1990s, the opposition has adopted the tactics of boycotting parliamentary meetings rather than to voice their concerns through discussion and debate in the parliament. Article 70 of the Constitution which prohibits floor-crossing has long been cited by members of parliament (MPs) as a constraint on their freedom of expression. Though the article only forbids voting against the party, "parliamentarians have been reluctant to even

express views critical of any policy of their party for fear of withdrawal of the party whip leading to the loss of their seats" (Jahan 2012 : 10).

Unmet People's Voice

In parliamentary form of government, it is supposed that parliament would be functional in terms of people's voice. "People are disappointed and bewildered by the performance of the MPs in Bangladesh in legislation making and oversight of government operations and hence do have low trust in parliament" (Rahman 2005: 8). Liton (2011) argues that "Unfortunately, Bangladesh's Parliament has badly failed to embody the will of the people and to perform its cardinal functions efficiently". The expectations of the people remain unfulfilled mainly due to lack of political will of the successive governments, growing confrontational political culture and military intervention in politics as well. "Most important factors behind governance failure are the absence of openness, lack of checks and balances with regard to power and discretion and lack of institutional opportunities for raising citizen's voice against the abuse of power, maladministration, and violation of rights, negligence, nepotism and corruption" (TIB cited in SDC 2008).

The above views about the performance of the representative democracy demonstrate that the voice of the people is not met duly through the present parliamentary practices in Bangladesh. People deserve alternative mechanism for getting scope to formulate, place and enforce their voice to make the representative accountable to the people themselves. Peruzzoti (2011: 55) states that civil society can contribute to improving the quality of representative arrangements by demanding effective legal accountability. The scholars (Cohen 1996 & Wright 2000) claim that

secondary association may sustain democracy by making information available, and promoting equality of representation, citizens education, and power sharing in process of political decision making.

People's Frustration and Pessimism

The elevated aspirations of the people brought about through regime change tend to be dashed with the losing party's discarding election result. "Instead of gracefully accepting the popular verdict, the losers rarely concede defeat but indulge in street protests, boycott of parliament and organize prolonged hartals"(Datta 2003 : 235). The government proceeds alone avoiding the demand of the opposition. Even views of the opposition are hardly tolerated. It results in the struggle between position and opposition for retaining and regaining power respectively. The ruling party uses state power to control the opposition and the opposition takes resort to the path of violence. These dysfunctional democratic practices make people frustrate over and pessimistic to performance of the representatives.

At this crossroads people voice for alternative structure of democratic practices where their voice regarding common concern will be placed, raised and enforced for making representatives accountable to them. Among the common concerns issue of corruption predominates in Bangladesh .People's voice requires public sphere, because, "the public sphere is for the state what the market is for the economy" (Splichal 1999). Besides, participatory democratic theory rests on the assumption of the generation of public opinion and, by extension, public sphere. A healthy public sphere seems to require both 'a multitude of publics' (Calhoun 1997; Fraser 1993) and 'a free exchange across those various publics, (Dewey 1946 as in Galley 2002: 37). "Without a functioning and democratic public sphere, government

officials cannot be held accountable for their actions, and citizens will not be able to assert any influence over political decisions" (CGAP 2011). The democratic public sphere through producing and enforcing public opinion makes the representatives accountable to the people. Because, "it is where the effective Public happens, comes into being, finds its voice, sanctions official transgressions, earns respect" (Odugbemi 2011: 31). It is also relevant; 'power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did, and it never will' (Douglass 2011).

In Bangladesh the electronic and print media through news, views, letters, article, editorials, talk shows, phone in, messages etc. always cover common concerns of the people. Various civil society and Human rights movements try to stage different programmes like human chains, sits-in, demonstration, protests, writ petition, seminar, symposium and discussion for seeking accountability of the representatives. "Non-electoral accountability (in Bangladesh) has been largely limited to citizens mounting protests, rallies, *gheroas* (lock ins), human chains and exposing bad practice in the media" (SDC 2008). But in most cases, except the events like Kansat and Aryal Bill, the representatives are seen indifferent to the activities. The key question thus arises: why the democratic public sphere always cannot translate people's issues into representative accountability mechanism in Bangladesh?

STUDY OBJECTIVES

The general objective of the envisaged dissertation is to find out to what extent the democratic public sphere translates (or fails to translate) people's issues into

representative accountability mechanism in Bangladesh, and, why? The specific objectives are to:

1. reveal the state of the democratic public sphere in Bangladesh for analyzing to what extent it acts its due role in terms of representative accountability.

2. assess whether the democratic public sphere forms public opinion associated with common concern in terms of representative accountability in Bangladesh.

3. scrutinize whether public opinion can translate people's issue into representative accountability mechanism in Bangladesh.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

DEMOCRATIC PUBLIC SPHERE

The notion of public sphere is the centre of participatory approaches to democracy. "The public sphere is the arena where citizens come together, exchange opinions regarding public affairs, discuss, deliberate, and eventually form public opinion" (CGAP 2011). "It is a space between the state and household where free and equal citizens come together to share information, to debate, to discuss or to deliberate on common concerns" (Odugbemi 2008). It is a metaphor describing both virtual and material space that includes an area of social life in which people can interact by exchanging ideas, remolding public opinions and discussing issues, in order to form a mutual agreement and 'common mind' about general issues, matters and interests. "This public sphere is located between the spheres of privacy and authority: it is neither private nor authoritative, but between the two" (Habermas 1989). Today, according to Habermas the media —television and radio, newspapers and magazines — are regarded as part of the public sphere (Rasan 2011). Oliver & Meyer (1999 :

40) argues that public events play a significant role in promoting or shaping the public sphere, and that mass media are important conduits of information between groups of people. "Scholars around the world recognize the importance of public events for the public sphere, the abstract space in which citizens discuss and debate public issues" (Oliver & Meyer 1999).

The public sphere does not have unique form and mechanism to suit for all the societies. It also differs from thinker to thinker. Keeping the central ideas unchanged the following way the democratic public sphere could be conceptualized in Bangladesh in the following way.

1. Civil Liberty implies the freedom of opinion & expression and assembly guaranteed by the constitution of the people's republic of Bangladesh and the practices of the guarantee.

2. Free Flow of Information covers access to official information, freedom of information and public culture of transparency guided by the official information act 2009 and the applicability of the act.

3. Platform for Citizens incorporates civil society organizations guided by the Bangladesh constitution. It also covers the structures and practices of the platforms regarding generating public opinion on the basis of common concerns.

4. Communication channels include free plural and independent media system covered by the press council act, 1974 and the reality of the act, printing presses and publications Act 1973, and proposed online draft act 2012.

Oliver & Meyer (1999:38) argue that Street theater, street-corner speeches, marches, celebrations, vigils, leafleting, and other kinds of public acts seek to express collective sentiments or influence public opinion. Public opinion is the product of public sphere and 'life blood of democracy' (Taber and Young 2011 : 95). "Civil society has been very important to mobilize public opinion and raise public awareness on their rights. Many organizations have generated broad-based mobilization and creating bottom-up demand to hold decision makers accountable" (Balassanian   2006). It is also a critical factor in governance. It is the only true basis of power and legitimacy. A regime or a system of governance is secure only to the extent that the relevant population willingly consents to the ruler. It covers the affairs related to the state, the government, or social institutions; issues that are open and accessible to everyone; issues of common concerns etc. In this research the public opinion is sketched as follows:

1. Deliberation incorporates comments, debate and discussion regarding common concerns faced by the people in Bangladesh.

2. Voice representation denotes interest articulation, refining opinion and collective decision regarding common concerns prevailing in Bangladesh.

3. Public opinion formation implies voice raising, voice representation and opinion formation regarding common concerns in Bangladesh.

Representative Accountability

Accountability is considered one of the important indicators of good governance. But it is difficult to find the unique idea of accountability. Its concepts differ from context to context. "The English term accountability, which has no direct equivalent in other languages, has long pedigree and dates back to the middle ages" (Dubnik 2007). Steffek(2008) states "in the conventional understanding, public accountability denotes

a relationship in which the public, understood as citizens, is holding elected representatives, the government, and the administration to account". "At its heart, the idea of accountability seems to express a belief that persons with public responsibilities should be answerable to "the people" for the performance of their duties" (Dowdle stated in Jens Steffek 2008). In the present era the term is considered as having some direct requirement mechanism monitored and sanctioned by the people. Lee & Obudgemi (2011) argue that "accountability requires activation and mobilization of public demands, a constant monitoring and sanctioning function from the bottom up. It requires a public that is willing to take notice, stand up, be counted and demand government responsiveness". Sinclair (1995 as in Steffek 2008) states that "public accountability through critical debate in the public sphere contributes to the broader task of democratic accountability". He also argues that "Public accountability is understood as a more informal but direct accountability to the public, interested community groups and individuals" (Sinclair 1995 as in Steffek 2008). Public accountability hence is the accountability of the power holders towards critical questions and commentary arising from the public sphere (Steffek 2008). Here the purpose of the research is to use public accountability as issue based accountability of the representatives to the public where public sphere plays an instrumental role. In this context, Balassanian (2006 ,p.6) states that "*Vertical accountability* refers to the direct relationship between citizens and their representatives holding public office. Besides periodical elections, vertical accountability is also a function of political parties, public opinion, media and civil society engagement". So representative accountability means, in this research, issue based "non electoral" (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC 2008)"vertical accountability" (Balassanian 2006) of the representatives to the people through the democratic public sphere. For the above purpose the representative accountability has been characterized as follows:

1 Answerability implies the ability of the democratic public sphere to claim responses associated with common concerns from the representatives in Bangladesh.

2 Enforceability covers the forces, opinion enforcement mechanisms, of the public opinion which make representatives complying with the demand of the people regarding common concerns.
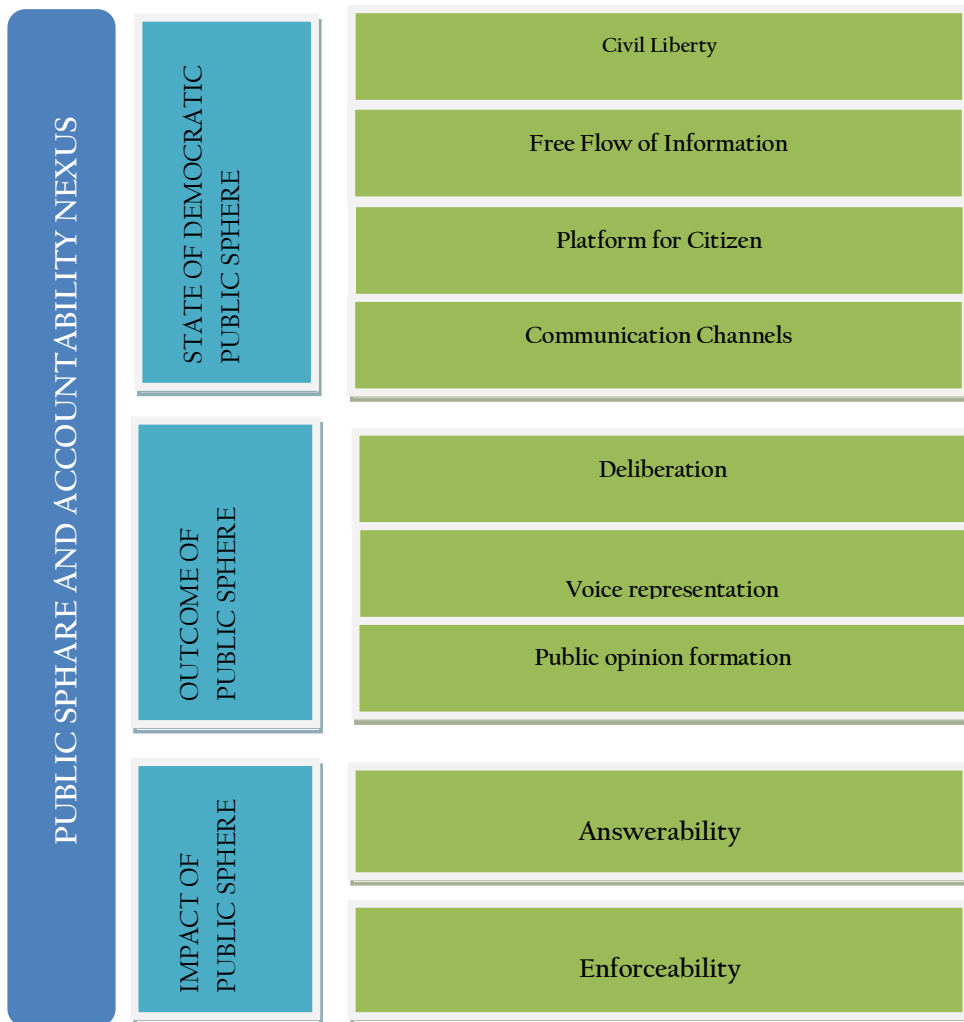
FIGURE 1.1 CONCEPTUAL FRAME

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The proposed study encompasses three core issues i.e. state of democratic public sphere, public opinion and accountability. It is predominately qualitative in nature. Required data have been collected from both primary and secondary sources.

To collect data from the respondents, tools like Secondary Literature Review (SLR), Key Informants Interviews (KII), Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Questionnaire Survey (QS) were carried out. The researcher has conducted and moderated the FGD sessions. Duration for each FGD session was one and a half hour. Before conducting FGD, a theme list was prepared for an elaborate discussion. The researcher himself interviewed the Key Informants with a checklist to gather necessary information.

Table 1.1 Research Matrix

Core issues		Indicators	Sources	Tools
State of democratic public sphere	Civil liberty	Freedom of expression & opinion Freedom of assembly	primary sources Constitution Official information act 2009	**Literature review** **KII**
	Free flow of information	Access to official information Freedom of information Public culture of transparency	The press council act 1974 Proposed online draft act 2012 Newspaper readers, talk show audiences, face book users	Legal experts, Academics, civil society executive members, journalists
	Civil society organizations	Function Scope		**FGD**

	Communication	Limitation Coverage Scope	Secondary source Literature review	Readers, audiences, face book users **QS**
Outcome of public sphere / (public opinion)	Deliberation	Comment, debate discussion	Structure and practices of civil society organizations Leaders and participants of various protest movements	**Literature review** **KII** Legal experts, Academics, civil society executive members, journalists Questionnaire Survey (**QS**)
Outcome of public sphere / (public opinion)	Voice representation	Interest articulation refining opinion, collective decision	Secondary source literature review	
Outcome of public sphere / (public opinion)	Public opinion formation	Voice raising Voice representation Public opinion		
Impact of public sphere (Accountability)	Answerability	Claim Explanation justification	Primary source MPs leaders & members of civil society organizations Secondary source Literature review	**Literature review** **KII** MPs Leaders and executive members of civil society organizations **QS**
Impact of public sphere (Accountability)	Enforceability	Denouncing Loss of reputation Behavioral change		

SELECTION OF STUDY AREA AND SAMPLE

The democratic public sphere covers civil liberty, free flow of information, platform for citizens and communication channels. The population of the research includes people of different sorts such as the Members of Parliament, lawyers, academics, journalists, columnists, talk show and online media personalities, news paper readers, facebook users, the participants and executive members of civil society organizations in Bangladesh. As the study intends to explore the nexus between public sphere and accountability of the elected representatives associated with common concerns, the sample was not taken in the conventional way. Rather, corruption being a nationally and internationally discussed common concern of Bangladesh, it has been selected as an issue to analyze the nexus between democratic public sphere and accountability mechanism in Bangladesh. Due to relevance of the issue one civil society organization, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) has been taken purposively for the study. This organization is prominent in dealing with the problem like corruption. To find out the state of free plural and independent media system, news papers readers, talk show audiences and facebook users and politically conscious citizens have been counted in this research.

Table 1.2 Sampling Distribution

KII sources	
Key Informants	Number of Interviewees
Editors and Journalists (EJ)	05
Talk show Anchors and Guests (TAG)	05
Members of Parliament (MP)	04
Political Scientists (PS)	05
Members and Associates of TIB (MATIB)	04
Academics from Sociology (AS) and Journalism	04

Legal Experts	02
Admins of Face Book Group (AFBG)	02
Young Politician (YP)	01
Total	32

Table 1.3FGDs for Users of Communication Channels and Politically Conscious Citizens

FGD Sources	FGDs	Numbers of Participants
News paper readers	1	10—12
Talk show audiences	2	20—24
Facebook users	1	10—12
Multiple users	2	20—24
Politically Conscious Citizens	2	20—24
Total	08	80—96

Questionnaire Survey

For getting people's perception regarding the ideas produced from other tools –SLR, KII and FGDs on democratic public sphere and accountability of the elected representatives in Bangladesh, Questionnaire Survey (QS) was carried out in this research. Issues of the research demand collecting data from the educated and politically conscious citizens of the country. For this purpose public university graduates were selected as respondents for questionnaire survey.

Due to prominence and contribution in the context of national interests two largest universities— University of Dhaka and University of Rajshahi were taken purposively to select the respondents (public university graduates).

"Determination of sample size was done using Random Sample Distribution Procedure" (Israel 2009). Finally, respondents were selected on the basis of purposive sampling procedure. Numbers of graduates, from the time of the restoration of democracy (1991 to 2012), from these two institutions have been more than two millions. On the basis of this scenario, the formula $n_o = \dfrac{Z^2 pq}{e^2}$ has been used to select the number of the respondents.

Random Sample Distribution Procedure

$n_o = \dfrac{Z^2 pq}{e^2}$;   Where n_o= sample size; Z=confidence level at 95% =1.96

P= 0.5, q= 0.5 ; e= error margin at 0.08

Table1.4 :Sample Size at a Glance			
Respondents	Sample size (n)		
	University of Dhaka	University of Rajshahi	Total
Male	38	38	76
Female	38	38	76
Total	76	76	152

DATA SOURCES AND METHODS

A number of sources provided data for this study. These include written documents, KIIs, FGDs and Questionnaire Survey (QS).

Secondary Literature Review

To capture the debate on democratic public sphere and accountability of the elected representatives in the global context and also in the context of Bangladesh's accountability mechanism of elected representatives, a thorough review of available secondary literature was done. Secondary information sources included published reports, monographs, books, websites, articles, databases, newspaper reports and news portals etc. The analysis ensued through the secondary literature review provided the basis for questionnaires and guidelines with different relevant personalities including Members of the Parliament, lawyers, academics, journalists, columnists, talk -show and online media personalities, news paper readers, facebook users , the participants and executive members of civil society organizations in Bangladesh.

Key Informants Interviews

Key informants interviews were much like a dialogue— questions were open-ended following an interview guide. However, the relevant topics were explored as the informants brought them up during the interview. The 32 KII respondents comprised academics, editors, journalists, MPs and members of civil society. The same guideline of that of FGD was used.

Focus Group Discussions

Eight focus group discussions in different parts of study area provided part of the qualitative information. Participants were selected through open invitation from the social and institutional gatherings. Most FGDs consisted of between 10- 12 persons. The number of questions discussed was eight to ten. The questions were from more general to more specific. Unstructured, open-ended questions allowed respondents to answer from a varity of standpoints. A checklist of the FGDs conducted is provided in appendix. FGD places and number of participants are provided in Annexure.

For doing this, a purposive sampling approach was used to select the issue and agent regarding public sphere and to gather data for the study. The same approach was used to select interviewees drawn from show hosts, invite guests, audience and callers-in, academics and journalists, MPs and political scientists. Purposive sampling is a form of non probability sampling which targets a particular group of people or study population. It is often regarded as an informant selection tool which seeks to yield data for the purpose of drawing inferences and generalizations.

One of the major advantages of purposive sampling is that "the researcher can identify participants who are likely to provide data that are detailed and relevant to the research question" (Jupp, 2006: 145). Though not full proof as a research tool, it helps to identify the key informants or respondents needed in a research. As Paul Oliver puts it, "the necessity is often to identify people termed key informants, who have specialized knowledge or experience of a question" (Oliver, 2010: 78). The choice of purposive sampling therefore seems to suit this kind of research in which I have sought to collect data from the people who have academic knowledge and experience regarding public sphere.

Following the qualitative data analysis processes like codification, categorization, conceptualization, and theorization, the collected data have been analyzed and used according to the study objectives.

Data Analysis

Data analysis process included (a) registration of questionnaires, (b) data processing, and (c) computerization of the data. As soon the filled-in questionnaires were received from the field, they were entered into registration books and kept in files. The interview questionnaires were edited and checked carefully with the purpose of verifying that the survey questionnaires were correctly filled-in, answers have consistence with one another and all the questions have been asked, answered, and noted properly. During each interview, researcher wrote abbreviated notes. On the same day of the interview, these field notes were re-written in expanded formats. At weekly intervals, qualitative data were reviewed based on which decisions were made about specific questions to ask, what to observe, which methods to use, and types of informants to interview.

Collected quantitative data were processed with the help of SPSS program— a fully integrated data entry, cleaning and editing tool with user defined skip logic, rules, and input screens as well as the built-in mechanism to guard against erroneous entry. Validation checks were done to ensure that data are correctly input into the program. Data tables were properly checked for internal consistencies before constructing the output tables. Data analysis was performed by checking central tendencies and frequency distribution.

JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The proposed study is important to fill the knowledge gap. Due to inefficient accountability mechanism in the parliament, people are facing a lot of common problems. So, democratic public sphere has huge possibility to be issues, common concerns, based functional to make elected representatives accountable to the people. But we do not know actually why public sphere cannot translate issue based voices into representative accountability in Bangladesh. There exists a research gap concerning full-fledged function of public sphere in terms of representative accountability in Bangladesh. None of the studies explains the failure of democratic public sphere regarding representative accountability in Bangladesh.

The proposed study is essential to find out the policy hiatus in the context of citizen -representative direct relationship. Representatives become more democratic and accountable to the people when there exists a direct relationship mechanism between people and the representatives. This mechanism incorporates public sphere, public opinion and accountability of the representatives in Bangladesh.

ORGANIZATION OF THE DISSERTATION

The dissertation is divided into six chapters. Chapter one being the introduction to the dissertation attempts primarily to capture the research context and in doing so it covers some sub-points such as the objective, rationale and methodology of the study. Chapter two, in detail provides theoretical framework to understand the relationship between public sphere and accountability of the elected authority.

Chapter three reveals the state of the democratic public sphere in Bangladesh for analyzing to what extent it acts its due role in terms of representative

accountability. It clearly provides the theoretical and practical state of democratic public sphere in Bangladesh. Finally this chapter concludes sketching the real state of democratic public sphere in terms of representative accountability in Bangladesh.

Chapter four assesses whether the democratic public sphere forms public opinion associated with common concern in terms of representative accountability in Bangladesh. This chapter finds the state of output of public sphere within various internal and external challenges.

Chapter five scrutinizes whether public opinion can translate people's issue into representative accountability mechanism in Bangladesh. This chapter clarifies the state of impact of democratic public sphere on non-electoral vertical accountability and also identifies the standard of answerability and enforceability in Bangladesh. It also argues why direct accountability mechanism between public sphere and elected representatives might bring non - electoral vertical accountability through democratic public sphere in Bangladesh.

Chapter six being the last chapter presents findings of the study and also provides some implications for the relevant parties and finally it puts on some suggestions to ensure proper relation between democratic public sphere and non-electoral vertical accountability of the elected representatives in Bangladesh.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF PUBLIC SPHERE

THE CONCEPT OF PUBLIC SPHERE

Jurgen Habermas, German Sociologist, sketched the idea of the public sphere in his book, *The Structural Transformation of Public Sphere: An Enquiry into A Category of Bourgeois Society* (1989). The book was first published in German language in 1962, and all but thirty years later, Thomas Burgere translated Habermas's work into English, which created much attention in intellectual community. The work has soon become a significant topic for discussions and researched in the fields of cultural theory, philosophy, sociology, history and media and communication studies.

Public Sphere, as per Hebermas:

> A domain, free from government and also holding autonomy from partisan economic forces, which is assigned to sensible debate and which is both approachable to entry and open to surveillance by the citizenry. It is here, in this public sphere, that the public opinion is formed' (quoted in Thussu 2000*).*

The main prerequisite for a public sphere, as per Habermas, to be formed is to have a public space in which private citizens assemble and argue as regards issues on public goods without any obstruction or domination by the government; these deliberation are assumed to decide matters of public concern or common interests. In his book, Habermas concentrated on the bourgeois political activities of the seventeenth through twentieth centuries in England, Germany and France in order to find out what conditions led to the development of the public sphere, the decline of the public dialogue, and what is to be done to revive this public arena in our societies today (

Calhoun 1993). From a historical perspective, the associates of the public sphere were actually western educated male citizens who used to participate in, salons, literary societies and associations, and who overlooked their social rank as being the precondition for participation, notwithstanding, the quality of discussion and validity of debate were much important than social status (Weisser 2002).

Before laissez-faire, the civilians who reached to form public sphere were actually able to impact on the executive, legislative and judicial activities. It was fundamentally due to the shift of discussed topics from literary works, plays and shows into state- related concerns that Habermas defined as 'public sphere'. It was founded on the basis of easy access, rational debate and disregarding rank.

Habermas implies that both businesspersons and blue bloods in the bourgeois style of the public sphere had equal scopes to speak and be heard, and that the public sphere must be accessible to all participants. In short, "Habermas considers public discourse that he calls also 'communicative action' as a possibility for the coordination of human life" (Calhoun 1993).

Habermas used to verify the decline of the content of the public debate that is also related to the unbridled access of the public into the public arena, this actually resulted in a significant shift in the prime activities of public discussions that turned to consultation and compromises among interests in lieu of keeping its task as a critical force to state activities. Another significant part in this transformational procedure is linked to the role of media that had its sole goal and focus to achieve commercial gain; meaning that the media had witnessed a shift from addressing ideological point of view to gaining success in commercial context. By comprehending the function

press plays today over people's visions and views, one can simply understand the remarkable position media took regarding debasing public discourse at that time.

"As media and other forum of public debate became more and more interested in their own commercial gains and less with social and political change, the bourgeois public sphere disappeared" (Weisser 2002).

Finally, Habermas clarified that as a result of the growing amount of state interference in civilian activities, the ability or capacity of the public space mostly decreased. "Although Habermas stressed that 'the nature of the public sphere the conditions of its possible existence must be comprehended historically" (Postone 1993). There were lots of criticism as well as new contexts regarding this controversial concept. Actually it is important to critically present some of these influential ideas as they offer an extensive review and discussion about some of the main aspects of the public sphere.

Many critics have used the term "public" as being a controversial concept, Nancy Fraser (1993) has discussed this issue while criticizing the bourgeois public sphere, and she made the idea that:

> '…the word public can, for example, mean (1) accessible to everyone, (2) of concern of everyone, (3) state-related, and (4) pertaining to common good or shared interest…(5) pertaining to private property in a market economy and (6) pertaining to intimate domestic or personal life, including sexual life' (Fraser 1993: 128).

In fact, though the word "public" can possibly carry all those meanings, Josep Harris's notion demands attention about this term that he considered a very interesting one just for people. In addition, it is also indicated that the first recorded uses of the

word 'public' in English identify the public with the common good of the majority of individuals in a community."The term was initially used to understand 'in the best interests of the masses' unlike the term 'private that was initially used to mean 'privileged' at a higher governmental or bureaucratic status" (Weisser 2002). Thus, it is agreeable with Fraser that the term should have been specified more. However; by tracing back the historical fact of the bourgeois society, the term 'public' should be considered as being separated from the state, market and personal affairs.

Oskar Negt and Alexandar Kluge's *'Public Sphere and Experience: Towards an Analysis of the Bourgeois and the Proletarian Public Sphere'* was also published in German and translated into English in 1993. Their book has focused a lot on the prevailing debate regarding the public sphere; as they tried to make a clear distinction between the idea Habermas sketched about the bourgeois public sphere, and the practicability of this concept. Negt and Kluge indicated that the bourgeois public sphere not only discussed regarding common concerns, but it had other objectives like generating profits, developing industrial productions, making up a network relationship among participants and connecting with power and influence. The criticism was clarified further by Weisser as he writes that:

> Negt and Klung comment that "the public sphere was used as a mechanism by bourgeois, a system for increasing their capacity to explore markets for their goods, promote trade, and earn profit for themselves and their partners. They used the notion of openness, equality, consensus, and the like to create congenial atmosphere" (Weisser 2002 :76).

There are many recent and important research conducted about the facts and publicity of the public sphere. In his study to find out the ideological transformation of public sphere in Turkey, Caha (2005) suggested that the globalization process has speeded rapidly to the decline of the ideological public sphere around the world, and he focused that the private sphere does not exist anymore at present world. His idea was ostensibly supported by Karlstorm (2004) who developed a flexible structure of

the public sphere in which both public and private spheres encroach upon each other so that one can discuss of a private within the public.

The preceding discussion implies that the ideas of public sphere have created a cycle of discussions regarding so many different public spheres over the recent years.

> We now have the feminist public sphere, the professional public spheres, the black public sphere, the 'phantom public sphere', the "indigenous public sphere', the global public sphere, the electronic public sphere, the intimate public sphere and so forth" (Hartley & Mckee 2000 : 223).

The concept of the public sphere provides actually some new conditions and rules that govern democratic process. It also raises so many questions about today's democratic standards and values, and it further implies a distinction between deliberative democracy and parliamentary form of democracy.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

With regard to institutional needs, a key condition for public accountability to function is transparency (Dyrberg 2002:83). Democratic self-governance requires that citizens are well informed regarding the political agenda, the decisions made and alternative options not chosen (Curtin 1996: 95, Heriter 2003: 824-5). But only the access to such information does not ensure effective control over governmental activities. Public accountability implies a functioning 'public sphere' of governance.

Since the notion of a public sphere is so central in this respect, a clarification of this term and its political significance in order. The public sphere is thought here as' a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed' (Habermas 1774: 51). It "can be described as a network for communicating information and points of view" (Habermas 1996: 360). In Habermas's work a crucial distinction is made between the centre of a democratic political system, and the periphery. Studied at the centre are the sites of democratic decision making and

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judicial review, hence parliaments, governments and the court system. The periphery consists of process of public communication that surrounds and 'besieges' the formal institutions of democratic decision- making.

This communicative space, in which opinions on governance are formed and demands articulated, develops in civil society, beyond the state and economy (Bohman 1998).The existence of a non-governmental and non-for-profit realm is therefore essential for the functioning of a democracy. It is here that new issues and concerns arises, and it is here that new political demands are formulated (Habermas 1996: 367, Peters 1993: 340). The emphasis on public sphere is not confined to deliberative theories of democracy, such as Habers's. Rather, it has a systematic place in many variants of democratic theory. 'There is a close link between theories of public sphere and democratic theory more generally.

"Democratic theory focuses on accountability and responsiveness in decision - making process; theories of the public sphere focus on the role of communication in facilitating or hindering this process" (Ferree et al 2002: 289). The existence of national public sphere is rather uncontroversial and usually taken for granted. However, a public sphere conceived as a communicative space is not a prior defined by national boundaries but the boundaries of communication flows.

QUALITY OF DISCOURSE AND PUBLIC OPINION

Habermas rightly pointed out how the bourgeois public space in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was functional on rational debate, and how the quality of argument were playing an important role in forming this public sphere. Basically, both issues of articulation and participation got the most attention of critics who

rebutted to structural Transformation of the public sphere. Habermas said that the Public sphere was made by a group from the reading public:

> Nearly all of them were educated, and as such they were able to communicate more fully and easily with one another and articulate in concerning issue. "As a group, many of the bourgeois had similar educational backgrounds- a characteristic that helped them take common stand which to communicate. Also, they began to raise an awareness of the public sphere regarding common concerns" (Weisser 2002 :67).

> Almost same educational background of the participants in the public sphere demonstrates two substantial realities; first that education made a common ground among participants which rendered flow of discussion and made it intellectual. Second, the standard level of argument resulted in undermining the issue of class divisions among participants: In this public sphere, "practical factor was institutionalized through norms of reasoned discourse in which arguments, not traditions or statues were to be decisive" (Calhoun 1993 :2).

On the other hand, one may consider that 'reading culture' or 'literacy' provides the public sphere with the force to approach and affect the political structure in any authority. For instance, "it has been exemplified that the new Jewish politics and media shared the goal of informing Jews, targeting them to moral development in order let them capable of emancipation, and able to access the middle class public sphere of Jewish" (Penslar 2000).

Habermas's concentration on the issue of the 'quality of discourse' faced much of the criticism he received over the point of openness or quantity, to popular participation. It implies that Habermas was interested to find the setbacks of democracy forms today; why the more access of people into politics today, and the ongoing urges for increasing people's participation in the political activities are

unable to result in a democratic public sphere?. Such a question surely emphasizes the quality of consensus as a main criterion, for making a present public sphere, rather than a phenomenon that took place some decades ago. It occurs very often that some intellectuals do not consider a certain kind of equilibrium between quality of rational debate and mass participation when focusing on the public sphere; going profoundly in discussing wishes for democratic practices normally ends up avoiding the level or quality of discourse as a basic characteristics in the public sphere. Edward Said has showed that the intellectual's role is to disclose the truth to power, and to address the central structure in every society without hypocrisy, besides, he analyzed further that " the intellectual incorporates a kind of activities that goes for years, and give voices not to mere fashion but to genuine ideas and values" (Khalidi 2001 as in Jebril 2006).

It is highly considerable that intellectual discourses play an important role in forming an aware public opinion based on reason and argument rather than private gains and manipulations. The public opinion that is shaped out of critical discourse is the purpose that the public sphere is created for. IT is supposed that this final opinion should pass various processes within the public sphere before it is thought as a consensus decision:

"The notion 'opinion' though it continued to mean belief that falls short of knowledge, also came to signify, especially 'public opinion, a collectivized and virtual sort of knowledge in permanent process of formation" (Mckeon 2004 : 276).

"Habermas has pointed out that present means such as polls and surveys in forming the public opinion is rather insufficient and crude" (Crossley & Roberts, 2004). He argued that by two main reasons which sound very true; first surveyors of public

opinion have preconception stages of opinions before the process of identification, and second, they urge for an articulation of views and find the loudest voices unlike the public sphere that emphasizes on the 'best argument' within rational critical debates. This is basically a very novel argument that focuses the uniqueness and enormous importance of discourse in shaping opinions of common concern.

Habermas and others have argued that the result of the public sphere can be identified when its participants reach to consensus, which is thought to be the 'public opinion', and by this agreement, participants become opinion- producers.

Though it is vividly perceivable that consensus or agreement is a prolific result from any functional public sphere, it is not excessively significant that this agreement gets realized. It is discussable that the role of the public sphere is not a unidisciplinary one, and that the failure of the public sphere to arrive at certain consensus does not imply the failure of other techniques within the public sphere.

Though arriving at a consensus public opinion is a clear reflection for any public sphere. Sometimes, a rebuttal with various contested opinions has the capacity to have impact on the government acts. In addition to, the public space has other goals such as discussing issues of common concern, educating associates by sharing rational ideas, fostering the notion of participation and deliberative democracy, and bridging social gaps by emphasizing on the 'common good'.

"As per public sphere, it is thought that the responsibility of shaping the public opinion does not belong to any institutional body, but to an immense communicative channel" (Baynes 1994). But the matter of discussion is that how to find out the relationship between the state and those participating units, Nancy fraser (1993)

argued that the public opinion will be rather strengthened if a full-fledged separation between state and civil society and is not implemented, on the other hand; Habermas's ideas was to have a total separation in the boarders linking civil society with the state, as this will provide working space of civil society. Fraser's argument looks realistic that the complex producing the public opinion gets force when it becomes able to achieve authoritative decisions out of civil views.

A recent thought-provoking study (Savigny 2002 as in Hill 2010) about public opinion and the internet implied that the modern public sphere is sketched by twist of interests; the study focused on the increasing control and motivations of media and politics over traditional communication networks. The author showed internet as a challenging power for both media and politics, and explained it as a network through which an articulated and critical public opinion can be formed without elite control.

The above facts clarify that the common or public discourse is highly associated with civil action while the latter completely depends on the former; that is to say that the rational debate is thought the main fuel for public activities, and accordingly, if the quality of articulation is ignorant or mediocre, civilian will be the same and vice versa.

MEDIA VOICE AND PUBLIC SPHERE

Besides, education, information plays a great role in assisting the public to make a moderate public opinion rather than only a state of agreement. In order for the public to reach a consensus among them, it is substantial that they have both accessibility and capacity to get and disseminate information. Probably the most important kind of

information in reference to the notion of the public sphere is the information

dissemination about state functions; such information provides a topic to be discussed,

analyzed and criticized as well as a main effort for making up a critical public

opinion. Habermas has analyzed that media in the bourgeois public sphere has made

the news circulation available, and that these news has become 'the source of

discussions', on the other hand; people are used to read these news in private space

and discuss the issues of common concern in the public sphere. With this, the freedom

of press was a challenge for the activities in the public sphere, mainly because media

made a ground for their arguments.

The role of press and information, as the central part in the public sphere, has

been a matter of discussion among many theorists, for instance; in theory of

communication action, the relationship between the citizens and the state has become

increasingly "one of customer or client of services rather than citizens" (Crossley &

Roberts 2004:5). When people become dependent on the authority, they lose their

independence, and that influences on their citizenships while at the same time

provides the political argument lose its political edge by focusing on distribution of

resources and domestic issues (Crossley & Roberts : 2004). This notion has been also

identified by theorist who showed that the growth of capital and governmental power

has led the formation of communication empires that worked on influencing on public

opinions, and that a certain system for the guarantee of more selection and democratic

entrance is required to respond to the growth of conglomerate media organizations,

and concentration of media ownerships (Calhoun, 1993 & Penslar, 2000).

Negt and Kluge said that press and government have mutual relations giving

an example of talk show political debates, and that analyze that by circulating such

kinds of debates both media and political actors get benefits; the former gains legitimacy and respectability while the latter disseminate their ideology (Weisser, 2002). One of the substantial theories that clarify further regarding media set up in developing countries is the communication theory or development journalism. McPhail's analysis of this theory implies how media in developing countries are away far from playing a concrete role in developing any possible public sphere.

> It is a communication theory that promotes an engineered press- a press committed to government- set priorities and goals. It is thought that all efforts including local media need to work in unison to support national goals. Totalitarian regimes in a substantial number of peripheral nations follow and enforce this media theory and approach. Consequently, development journalism essentially serves to promote the needs of developing countries. It encourages indigenous media and discourages reproduction of western Media models (MCPhail 2006 : 40 as in Jacobson 2012).

Like public sphere, this type of journalism is important for ordinary citizen. People can measure the state of public opinion on the basis of media steered information dissemination. This type of journalism works through the process of discussion and argument presentation among community members. Basically, this media is concerned with creating debate out of discussion forum. According to Hass(2004), promoters of civic journalism emphasize on enhancing the informational and deliberative abilities of media and information, as well as in organizing sites for participants' deliberation such voluntary civic organizations and community forums .

Spenser (2005) analyzed the relationship between mild politics and media, where he found out that commitment and trust in politics are major fundamentals for sound communication between citizens and representatives. That's mean whether the

voices of the citizen are made hear to the politicians is the main issue of discussion of the study.

TALK SHOW AND PUBLIC SPHERE

Talk show programs try to pay attention to the public as well as to the expert. These programs arrange debate considering the state of audience. The media is a great power of the society. It aims at getting involved in political events. In this way it plays an important role in the political decision- making. Recently, the talk show debate is focused on the concept of 'public sphere' and on the space that televisions dedicate to the people as the main agent inside this arena. It is contemporary view that if the citizen is interested to play a role in the democracy, he has to participate in these types of forums where he can articulate his voices and his apprehension about the political authority.

In the context of public sphere, it means first of all a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be shaped. Access is open to all citizens. A part of the public sphere comes into being in every discussion in which private individuals gather to form a public group. They then act neither like business elite or professional people discussing private matters nor like members of an institutional body subject to the legal constrains of a state authority. Citizens act as a public body when they articulate in an unrestricted way—that is, with the guarantee of freedom of assembly and in association and the freedom of express and disclose their opinions— about affairs of common interest. In a large public body this kind of communication needs specific mechanisms for disseminating information and influencing those who receive it. At present, radio and television, newspaper and

magazines, are considered as the main agents   of the public sphere (Habermas, Lennox, F 1964:2).

FACEBOOK AND PUBLIC SPHERE

Facebook is a multi-semiotic media ambiance where users communicate with photos, links, text, sound, and videos— using different ways such as status updates, messages, chat, and the wall. In addition, users can participate in groups, networks, and 'like' pages, confirm or decline participation in ensuing events, accept game and app requests, 'check in' in places, account for their geographical location tag photos, write notes as regards interesting and favorite issues. (Valtysson : 2008 as in Liu 2011).

As per the viewpoint of digital public spheres, the news feed is of particular importance as this is the arena where users share their photos, links, status and videos. Prior to the recent changes, users could select whether to incorporate everyone, is now called public— and the process of tailoring different publics has been made more transparent. "Actually it is called network adaptation" (Valtysson : 2012 as in Liu 2011), which Habermas later considered in his conceptual framing of the public sphere, on the basis of density of range , communication, institutional complexity.

But in spite of an observation of this kind, Habermas' insights still as principally 'analogue' and ' digital' public spheres cannot but coexist in this culture of real- virtuality (Castells 2008 as in Bowerbank 2013)' where process of convergence affect technologies, spaces and practices (Papacharissi 2010 as in Bowerbank 2013) alike. This is vivid when looked upon from the viewpoint of media power, which remains to be substantial for Habermas' conceptualization of the public sphere: "The public sphere simultaneously redefined and dominated by the mass

media, developed into an space by power in which by means of topic selection and topic contribution, a battle is taken place not only over influence but over the control of communication flows that behavior while their strategic intentions are kept hidden as much as possible" (Hebermas 1992 : 437).

DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

As per Habermas, the public sphere is an important democratic forum in which people share a commitment to solve problems of collective choice. This ambiance also transforms the state to an authority supervised by the public and demarcated to a limited number of activities. This kind of democracy was considered to be a representative one, but for clearly a deliberative democracy in which people deliberate about their general concerns in an organized arena termed the 'Public sphere'. In his essay about rethinking the theory of the public sphere, Tanni Hass (2004) comments on Habersmas's model of democracy as he states:

> Habermas's theory of public sphere is based upon the ideal of a 'deliberative', as opposed to merely 'informed' public. As the sphere between civil society and the state in which citizens can discuss about the issues of common concern, a well-function public sphere depends on both accesses to relevant information about the activities of governmental institutions and opportunities for citizens to engage in rational-critical deliberation that result in the formation of public opinion, and the shaping of governmental conduct (Hass : 2004 : 179).

Hass thinks that Habermas's idea of democracy is totally deliberative with a certain power that is able to affect the rulers' activities and policies. Unlike other forms of democracy, deliberative democracy focuses that the legitimacy of lawmaking will only rise from the deliberation of the people. This type of democracy

provides time for all participants to understand and discuss the matters. It also calls for providing people with real opportunities of citizens' deliberation. As this kind of democracy seeks to incorporate marginalized and isolated groups in the decision-making process, it provides as a fundamental principle in the public sphere as long as the participation rules are clearly discussed. Regarding the benefits gained by discursive or deliberative democracy in the part of citizenry, Fraser (1993) and Weisser (2002) implied that the public sphere creates a theatre in which rational debate provides the state accountable for at least the concerned participants, and that citizens become worthy of influencing the decisions of the state having a control over their social, economic and political circumstances of their lives.

"In fact, several theorists have indicated that the notion of the public sphere is the foundation for strong democracy, and that rational public opinion is likely to be shaped by the deliberation of people" (Dahlberg :2005 & Clark :200). Habermas's democratic model was criticized for his idea as to the need for a total segregation between the civil society and the state and his negligence to social equality as a necessary requirement for participatory party in public sphere (Fraser :1993 & Postone :1993). At this stage, it is arguable with Calhoun (1993) that the struggle instead must concentrate on seeking a 'democratic public discourse', which means to emphasize on this rationality, as the boundary between the society and the state has not been clearly identified in this age. The notion of deliberative democracy has been discussed critically in the recent years, according to Clark (2001), the value of 'deliberative democracy, or 'public deliberation, has been tackled by (Bohman :1996 as in Comeford 2003). As mentioned earlier, the idea of the public sphere though it

may not render a perfect model for democracy, nevertheless; it critically questions the mode of democracy and communication today:

> In present discourse, 'public sphere' now indicates the general questing for democratic agency in an era of declining electoral participation, compromised sovereignties, and frustrated or disappointed citizenship (Hartley & Mckee 200 : 224).

At the very centre of his conceptual framing of democracy, Habermas emphasizes the issues of political participation; the quantity or openness to popular and political participation is considered a main pillar in the process of building up deliberative democracy. A common meaning of participation can be the act of sharing or taking part in something; which simultaneously indicates the expressions and forming one's identity through various ways. On the other hand, "political participation can imply to the legal activities done by private citizens with the goal of influencing the selection of governmental personnel and/or the activities they take" (Verba, Nie & Kim 1978 :46)as in Hah 2012).

Here, the reality that the legality of activities is necessary when thinking political participation, because this legality protects the means of communication between the citizens and state. Not to disclose that the scope to participate is thought a political right by itself, and this opportunity or right is actually given by the state to the citizens for the purpose of improving and scrutinizing the state activities. Therefore, it is ultimately up to the citizens whether to take or refuse this right. In many cases, citizens may lack the resources to take advantage of these rights, while in other cases; the state itself may set up hindrances to bar or discourage citizens to participate.

There has been a big discussion about the quantity of political participation which may theorists restrict to the availability of resources, motivations, and opportunities. This implies that imbalanced distribution of these three indicators will

result in unequal grade of participation, add to that the fact that the quality of participation or even the quality of discourse is further linked to the participants' individual capacities. It could be mentioned " When political participation increases largely, political discourse does not become marked more critical and rational" (Schudson 1993 : 160 as in James 2008) a very good example which reminds us of the row of balance that happened between increase of participation and rational argument in the bourgeois public sphere, and ultimately ended it.

Habermas has correctly urged for depoliticizing politics in order to increase the opportunities of citizens for political participation, at the same time; considering the complex structures of our communities today. The procedure of transforming people into active participants needs more than a set of isolated acts; it rather requires a comprehensive technique that incorporates the different micro, messo, and macro levels of a certain community.

Through using the legal-channels of participation, citizens become worthy of starting a prolific communication with the authority; where they can opine on the performance of the government, influence decisions made by the authority, make a change in the political process…etc. At a very fundamental level, political participation is not only a need for democracy, but also for citizenship in real meaning. Habermas has analyzed the 'citizens' as the one "who not only has free entry to public discourse but also participates in and helps to form it" (Weisser 2002:36). This implies ideologically that deliberation issues when it appears to define citizens, and simultaneously when we mean communities and societies. Finally it could be opined that foundering the term 'citizenship' only to the rights of nomination and election is an ambiguous idea that is usually over importance in authoritative states.

In order to avoid narrow interpretations of democracy, one must consider the matters that help citizens identify their citizenships. In this context, Roberto Alejandro (1993) suggests that when people deliberate, they are considered citizens, and when they participate they make a community.

Further, he adds that citizens are to the extent they participate in several dialogues; discussion among themselves; argument with the past; dialogue with institutions and traditions, and dialogue with themselves. He also incorporates the idea that citizens are bound to repay the investment the state had in each of them before leaving (Alejandro: 1993). On the other hand, Alejandro referred that Benjamin Barber, who defends citizenship as a core element of sound democracy, implies that "both community and participation are aspects of one single mode of social being: citizenship" (Alejdro :1993 as in Jacobson 2012). In this stage, it is worthy to incorporate the idea 'participative governance' which fundamentally carries the same characteristics of political participation and citizenship, this notion is interesting not only for its importance in responding to the flaw of legitimacy of government institutions, but also for its ability to show the possible solutions to a range of social problems (Newsman : 2005 as in Hill 2010).

It is worldwide known that it is citizens who should identify the values and aspirations of their society. In regard with Habermas's public sphere, forms of private citizens' participation were clearly emphasized and seen as part of the rationalization process. The bourgeois public sphere identified the principle of open participation; as general discussions included both private citizens and state agents, but different classes and traditions of the society at that both private citizens and state agents, but different tradition and classes of the society at that time failed to incorporate this democratic approach.

A public sphere that ensures the role of political participation is not merely a mean of supervision for the practices of state, but also a source of gaining of participants. By participating rational and democratic discussions in the public realm, citizens contribute in educating each other about the issues of their society, and gradually; the rationality of public discourse becomes higher while the concentration on minor individual matters become less important. On the other hand, participants' commitment towards solving conflicts and reconciliation in their society only increases by their real participation in the public sphere.

Although it appears quite unrealistic to have public sphere in which deliberative democracy and political participation are realized at their best functions, at this juncture voice based participation and deliberative democracy should be highly considered and embedded in the designation of the state main institutions.

CHAPTER III

STATE OF DEMOCRATIC PUBLIC SPHERE IN BANGLADESH

INTRODUCTION

Democratic public sphere is a critical part of the architecture of good governance. "A properly functioning democratic public sphere that allows for free information flows and for equal participation in deliberation will provide real opportunities for successful and good governance" (COMMGAP 2011). It is the place where civil society is linked to the power structure of the state. It is "… the informally mobilized body of non-governmental discursive opinion that can serve as a counterweight to the state" (Fraser 1992:134). It provides people due scope to make the elected representatives accountable through public opinion produced in itself.

A healthy and open public sphere is a remedy against uninformed and unconsidered opinion. "Public opinion is not the "tyranny of the majority", but the considered product of deliberation in the public sphere" (Habermas 1997). Public sphere produces public opinion. The smooth production of public opinion depends on the effective function of democratic public sphere. "State intervention undermines civil society in developing a public sphere in the private realm" (EJISDC 2008).This scenario is commonly found in the developing countries. The public sphere in developing countries, where discourse often takes place in different spheres due to unequal access of opportunities (Fraser 1992). "Due to the unstable nature of public spheres in developing countries, counter-public spheres may become a marked threat to democratic public discourse" (Downey and Fenton 2003). In this case it is

important to reveal the state of the democratic public sphere in Bangladesh for analyzing to what extent it acts its due role in terms of representative accountability.

This chapter explores the state of freedom of expression & opinion, freedom of assembly in Bangladesh. It examines the condition of people's access to official information, public culture of transparency, states of supply and demand sides of free flow of information in this country. It also discusses whether international standard of citizens' platforms is maintained here in terms of   the organizational and operational state of citizen's platform.   It investigates external and internal status of communication channels in Bangladesh. It also focuses on the hindrances which bar the democratic public sphere to perform its due role. It is argued in this chapter that various setbacks and mal practices prevailing in Bangladesh form mediocre type of democratic public sphere in our country.

This chapter comprises four parts— first one on civil liberty, second one on the free flow of information , third one on platforms of citizens and fourth one on the communication channels in Bangladesh.

CIVIL LIBERTY

Civil liberty is considered an important part of democratic public sphere for any society. It mainly incorporates freedom of expression and freedom of assembly. To sketch the prevailing status of civil liberty two vital indicators— freedom of expression and freedom of assembly will be analyzed in the context of Bangladesh.

Freedom of Opinion and Expression

The right to freedom of expression is accepted as a human right under *Article 19* of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and acknowledged in international human rights law in the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)*. As per the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, article 39 (1) freedom of thought, conscience and speech is guaranteed. Article 39 (2) subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interests of the security of the state, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, decency or morality, or in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence; article39 (2a) the right of every citizen to freedom of speech and expression; and 39 (2b) freedom of the press, are guaranteed (HRIC: 2013). This provision ensures people's right to freedom of speech and expression in Bangladesh.

Here, freedom of speech and expression is a fundamental right of all the citizen of the country. People have the right to express, to say whatever they have to say to express regarding any matter. It is not a privilege or benefit that comes with a price. Freedom of speech and expression is the right which is equal to all the human being. "This right has been stated in the constitution which implies that it is the very basic and very important regulation. This particular law was entitled into the liberal constitution in 1972 when the constitution was adopted" (The Lawyers and Jurist: 2012).

In spite of having constitutional guarantee of freedom of opinion and expression in Bangladesh, in reality the practical scenario is not echoed as per the legal rights provided by the constitution of the people's republic of Bangladesh. It is observed that various restrictions over the freedom of speech and expression are imposed on various grounds. There is some provision which implies that under some

circumstances, the restriction on freedom of speech and expression can be imposed. All these clauses like national security, international relationships, and moral reasons are valid and well thought reasons. Under this legislation, government frequently puts control over the freedom of speech and expression under any circumstances.

Recently, government has tried to put legislation against the TV talk-shows which criticize the government and the policies. The initiative failed because people still have the sense of what is right and wrong. On the other hand, it has also been noticed that some particular localities do not receive a certain newspaper because of a certain political party which stops delivering that paper as that newspaper write against them. It indicates that society is intolerable to pluralism.

In a stable democratic society to accept pluralism is a long practiced culture. But in our society opposition's views are considered the opinion of enemies. Actually the present level of tolerance remains in a lower stage. Monir (participant FGD: PCC, Dhaka) said "he fears to express opinion which goes against vested interest groups. Due to the fear of physical and mental harassment people abstain from using the right of freedom of opinion and expression" (FGD: MU, Dhaka). One participant of the FGD informed he always felt that his posts in face book were under authority's inquiry (FGD: PCC, Rajshahi).

Attempts to censor internet-based content occasionally occur. In January 2012, a university teacher was given a six-month jail sentence for comments he made about Prime Minister of Bangladesh on the social-networking site facebook in 2011. In September 2012, the government blocked the video-sharing site YouTube following a global uproar over an anti-Islam video produced in the United States. Various forms

of artistic expression, including books and films, are occasionally banned or censored. The ban on social media is rampant in Bangladesh.

Now, the most significant threat to freedom of expression through online in Bangladesh is that the authorities target individuals who take the internet to voice critical options. For the most part, citizens are technically able to do what they like online but that does not mean they will not be unaffected. On the contrary, netizens and online activists are facing significant risk if they cross certain lines in their online posting such as calling for protests, investigating official and non-official corruption or criticizing the high officials of the government.

The last few months have seen a steady decline in the climate of freedom of expression and assembly in Bangladesh. "The recent killing and arrest of bloggers, as well as the arrest of a newspaper editor which has resulted in the discontinuation of the newspaper's publication, the shutting down of two TV channels, and the blocking of websites, are all indicative of the shrinking space of these freedoms in Bangladesh"(Giyoun 2012).

These types of obstacles to freedom of expression online which must be addressed are: "content blocking, access to the Internet, violation of the right to privacy, hate speech, surveillance and the intimidation of individuals who take to the internet to voice critical opinions by the executive and judiciary" (Voice 2013) .

Does freedom of expression guarantee freedom?

We know there are ups and downs in the indices of freedom across the world. However, it is unbelievable but true that the World Press Freedom Index of 2014 indicates that while Finland is Number One with regard to the freedom of the press, Bangladesh stands at 146, behind Myanmar, Uganda, Burundi, Central African Republic, Nigeria, Libya, Zimbabwe, Qatar, Nepal, South

Sudan, and even Afghanistan. In the backdrop of the latest Freedom House findings, and the World Press Freedom Index of 2014, the information minister's remark that Bangladesh enjoys absolute freedom of the press and expression may be exaggerated (Taj Hashmi,16 March 2014,*The Daily Star).*

So, all these very little stories are the violation of freedom of speech and expression. "Only government can put a hold on this freedom under some logical ground and emergency which are mentioned in the constitution and that is it" (www.lawyersnjurists.com). No other can hamper or restrict the freedom of speech and expression at any cost. It is also relevant that repeated violation of freedom of expression forces people to assembly.

Freedom of Assembly

The right to form groups, to organize and to assemble together with the aim of addressing issues of common concern is a human right. The ability to organize is an important means by which citizens can influence their governments and leaders. The right to freedom of association and assembly is protected in international and regional human rights treaties. These rights are applicable to any issue. Mass protest is a potent symbol of the exercise of this right.

Article 37 of the constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh guarantees that 'every citizen shall have the right to assemble and to participate in public meetings and processions peacefully and without arms, subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interests of public order or public health'(http://www.abolombon.org/). People have the right to come together and collectively express, promote, pursue and defend common interests. Freedom of assembly is the right to protest and express grievances to the government. However, the government has systematically violated this right, provoking confrontation and violence.

The constitution upholds the right to peaceful assembly which should not be denied except in situations of national security or public safety. The right to violent assembly is not upheld. However, international standards limit the use of force by authorities in controlling peaceful or non-peaceful assemblies. "International standards require that law enforcement officials should use force only as a last resort, in proportion to the threat posed, and in a way to minimize damage or injury" (http://www.hrea.org).

The constitution provides for freedom of assembly and association, and the government generally respects these rights in practice; however, there are instances of governmental action to limit freedom of assembly during periods of political protest and unrest. Such one, on 19 May 2013, the Home Minister reportedly said that no political party will be allowed to hold any kind of rally or procession across the country for the next one month in the greater interest of maintaining law and order. In this context, Hossain (2013) says, "still article 37 & 39 prevailing in the constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh". These two articles ensure freedom of assembly and freedom of opinion and expression. Though government can impose rational bar, indiscriminate ban is unconstitutional. Barrister Haque raised the question of rationality about the matter and also criticized repeated use of Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

Government has abused Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure and systematically and brutally repressed most of the meetings, mobilization and protests of the political parties opposed to the government, provoking violence and anarchy. It is expected and also democratic norm to use 144 for maintaining peace in the society. But it is being used against protestors' rights.

The right of the people to assemble and express their grievances to the government has also been systematically repressed, often with violence and police

brutality. At present there is an unwritten rule that the law enforcement agencies will put up obstructions and stop meetings and procession by attacking with batons or throwing tear gas shells in the name of 'public safety' when citizens bring out a procession or organize meetings against injustices.

At this stage it is important to know the respondents' perception regarding enjoying constitution provided democratic rights in Bangladesh. Respondents replied against the statement 'People cannot enjoy fully constitution provided democratic rights in Bangladesh'. The views reflect below:

Table 3.1 People cannot enjoy fully democratic rights in BD?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Fully	101	67.7	69.0	69.0
	fairly	28	18.0	18.6	87.6
	partially	12	7.3	7.6	95.2
	least	6	3.3	3.4	98.6
	not at all	3	2.3	1.4	100.0
	Total	150	96.7	100.0	
Missing	System	2	1.3		
Total		152	100.0		

According to data, 67.7% respondents support that people cannot enjoy fully democratic right in Bangladesh. On the other count only 2.3% totally disagrees 'not at all' with the idea.

Now the question comes, why people cannot enjoy democratic right fully in Bangladesh? Answer could be found from respondents' perception.

Chart 3.1 why people cannot enjoy constitutional rights in Bangladesh fully? (%)
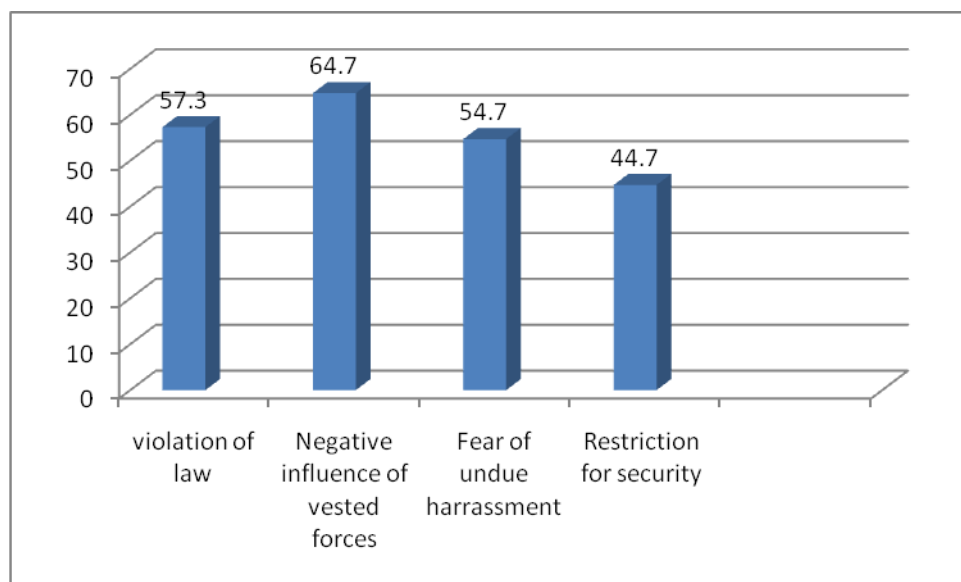
The above bar diagram shows there are various reasons which restrict people to enjoy fully constitution provided democratic right in Bangladesh. Among the problems negative influences of vested forces dominate here. As per respondents' views ,the other restrictions— violation of law , fear of undue harassment , and restriction in the name of public security bar people to enjoy fully constitution provided democratic right in Bangladesh.

The research shows that in spite of constitutional guarantee of civil liberty and prevailing democratic government, the real scenario of freedom of opinion &

expression and freedom of assembly is not up to the mark. We know civil liberty is one of the important pillars of democratic public sphere. Without the full fledged function of civil liberty, democratic public sphere can't perform its due role, producing public opinion to ensure non- electoral vertical accountability of the elected representatives. In short, due to impotent function of civil liberty, expectation of free flow of information increases.

FREE FLOW OF INFORMATION

Information is power, and the right to information is the foundation of all other rights. For a wider process of democratization access to information has been an integral part in the democratic societies. It is not just a need for people – it is an important part of good governance. It is gradually being acknowledged as a basic need and as equipment that can be used to fight against poverty. Development is a continuous process leading to an extension of people's freedom to identify their potential, requires a permanent concern for improving access to necessary decision making, public services, economic participation and justice. Improving access to information is the process of continuously removing the freedomlessness in all this spheres, as Amartya Sen implied it in development as freedom (Jong & Rizvi 2008 as in Kadery 2009). So, access or right to information of citizens can make a congenial atmosphere for development through removing the barriers in terms of access to information.

Right to Information Act (RTI Act) - 2009 has been made to ensure free flow of information by establishing the citizen's right to information. As the country suffers from poverty, fragileness and corruption, effective implementation of this Act

can work as a catalyst of progress of the country, especially by reducing gap between the representatives and the represented. In this study access to official information, public culture of transparency and state of demand and supply side of free flow of information will be analyzed critically.

Access to Official Information

Right to information act has made scope to ensure free flow of information. It is assumed that the Act makes provisions for ensuring free flow of information and people's right to information. The constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh recognizes the freedom of thought, conscience and speech as a fundamental right and the right to information is an inseparable part of it. Since, as per constitution, all powers of the Republic belong to the people, it is imperative to ensure right to information for their empowerment.

If the act is implemented, the right to information shall bring that transparency and accountability in all public, statutory and autonomous organizations and in private organizations run by government or foreign funding shall increase, corruption will come under control and good governance will be established. "It is expedient and necessary to make provisions for ensuring transparency and accountability" (Paul: 2009).

The Right to Information Act is the first law to define public information and give citizens the right to access it. The RTIA sketches out the rules by which citizens can request the information and an appeal procedure if they are not satisfied with the government response. The law, fully effective in 2009, was passed during the

caretaker government and adopted by the subsequently elected Parliament under the Awami League.

"Information", Under the RTIA, is a broad term that incorporates a wide variety of rules, policies, documents, and records kept by government offices. The Act requires each office to proactively disclose much of its basic information but also gives citizens the right to request specific records, which can range from maps, memos, contracts and electronic databases, log books to paintings, films, reports and letters.

Through this law citizens are allowed to make requests for information from every government office, from the President and Prime Minister down to the upazilla. The law also compels disclosure by private organizations, such as companies, for the work they are doing with government funds. It also covers non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that receive funds from the government or foreign aid. In this context rapid disclosure of information is necessary.

As per Right to Information Act (RTIA)-2009 the following important factors come out.

Necessary public information should be disclosed immediately. But if it is not available, the RTIA gives the DO (Designated Officer) 20 working days to comply with an initial request. If the information is held by two or more agencies, the DO has 30 working days. Weekends and government holidays are not counted toward the deadline. For appeals and complaints, however, the RTIA uses calendar days, meaning weekends and government holidays are counted toward the deadline. This

speeds the process. Agencies have 15 calendar days to consider an appeal, and the Information Commission has between 45 and 75 calendar days to render a decision.

The government official in the name of exemption of the law tries to discard people's access to official information. Because, government agencies are not obligated to disclose certain items, including information that:

» Can threaten the national security;

» Was communicated in secret from a foreign government;

» Discloses commercial or business secrets, copyright or intellectual property;

» Pending changes in the tax law, exchange rate or interest rate;

» Offends the privacy of an individual;

» Impedes a criminal investigation;

» Reveals exam questions or marks given

» Is pending before the Cabinet or Council of Advisers;

» Are note-sheets or copies of note-sheets;

» Is held by state security or intelligence units (Information Act 2009).

At this juncture we can look into the matter whether right to information act has made smooth free flow of information in Bangladesh.

Table 3.2 How difficult it is to access government information

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	6	4.0	4.0	4.0
	2	14	9.3	9.3	13.3
	3	22	14.7	14.7	28.0
	4	39	26.0	26.0	54.0
	5	69	46.0	46.0	100.0
	Total	152	100.0	100.0	

'Scale 1' of the table means no difficulty and 'scale 5' means very difficult to access government information. According to the data 46%, it is very difficult to access government information in Bangladesh. On the other hand, only 4% respondents said that there is no difficulty to access government information in Bangladesh.

Some practical scenario of the implementation of information act could be presented here.

Information Act without information

Editorial, Prothom Alo,Aug 12, 2014

There is hardly any relevance in having a law if it has no tangible purpose. The relevance of the Right to Information Act can be questioned in this regard. A report of Prothom alo indicates that even when information is sought through proper channels, it is not provided

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in time. Efforts to avail information are tantamount to sheer harassment.

In drawing up a report in this regard, a reporter of prothom Alo submitted 13 applications from April to July this year, seeking information from various government offices. He received complete information in time in response to only two of his applications, and partial information in response to one. He had to file an appeal in two cases. And nothing came of the remaining applications. This exercise indicates that despite there being a law in place, just how difficult it is to access any information.

The institute for water resources research could five no information on the fund allocation for its various projects, expenditures, etc. The concerned official said that the project directors didn't submit their reports in time, so the information wasn't available. If that be so, it means the project directors are not carrying out their assigned duty.

Since the law was made to ensure the people's right to information, it is imperative to ensure its proper application too.

The newly formulated national broadcast policy is conflicting with the country's Right to Information (RTI) Act, Sultana Kamal, and chairperson of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), said today, 14vaugust 2014 The daily star.

"The policy is conflicting with the country's constitution, democratic norms and values, human rights and Right to Information Act," Sultana said while speaking at a press conference.

However the practice of denying the right to information is a long traditional mentality of the government officials. So the full fledged access to official information depends on various factors. Among them the practiced tradition of public culture of transparency is tremendously important.

Pubic Culture of Transparency

Free flow of information is an integral part for a democratic society. It brings transparency and accountability which ensure good governance. For a long time, a culture of confidentiality has been the part of the administration which is now the

most important challenge for the implementation of RTI Act. To interrupt this tradition, we need to bring pro-active change in society and mindset of the people. In this context RTI Act 2009 can play an important role for establishing good governance and accountability. It can work as a bridge between government and citizens. As per constitution citizen holds all the power. So, this act is very substantial and contemporary for establishing transparency and accountability. Citizens have rights to know about government's activities. 'It is now generally recognized that better and timelier information results in better, more efficient resource allocations' (Islam nd.). Lack of transparency and accountability and access to information has made Bangladesh most corrupt in the world for five times. Democracy is still not in full-fledge practice, except one day exercise, in Bangladesh due to people's limited access to information. Improvements in information decrease secrecy. It can reduce the magnitude and consequences of the many hindrances to good governance. Bangladesh requires the RTI Act for the following grounds:

- ❖ Establishing more transparent and democratic society.
- ❖ Improving solvency state of the people.
- ❖ Breaking chain of corruption and bringing transparency and accountability.

Now functional implementation of the Right to Information Act (2009) is a very substantial issue for Bangladesh. Though the constitution does not make a clear indication on the right to information, Article 39 (2) states, a) 'the right of every citizen to freedom of speech and expression and b) freedom of press' are guaranteed. As the Right to information has implications on every aspect of people's lives and wellbeing, it is implied that this right is a sort of fundamental right. For promoting transparency in the government, Bangladesh requires implementation of Right to

Information Act. The long traditional rules and regulations do not encourage government officials to disclose any information. Democracy is yet to be institutionalized in Bangladesh and rule of law is not up to the standard. Bangladesh being one of the poorest and one of the most corrupt countries of the world, needs urgently an effective implementation of RTI law to strengthen democracy and the rule of law, improve its progress with development and reduce endemic corruption. RTA Act in Bangladesh shows importance in the following reasons.

Implementation of RTI Act 2009 is needed for ensuring good governance in Bangladesh.

Good governance is, in short, anti- corruption whereas authority and its institutions are participatory, transparent, accountable, responsive, consensus- oriented, effective, efficient, and equitable. These are the major characteristics of good governance as outlined by the United Nations. Without people's necessary access to official information it is not possible to dream a less scale corruption in this country. That is why the right to information is considered as a significant step towards achieving good governance.

Every citizen needs information to get due facilities from the administrative process. The greater the access of the citizen to information the greater would be the responsive of government to community needs. Alternatively, the greater the restrictions that are placed on access, it brings the greater feelings of 'powerlessness' and 'alienation'. Without information, people cannot adequate exercise their rights and responsibilities. So, proper implementation of right to information is a must.

Again, democracy may be strengthened, if every citizen has access to information.

Effective progress in the democratic process requires informed participations, and "in democratic society people have a basic right to know, to speak out, and to be informed about what the government is doing and why and to debate it" (X1X GCFFE). Democracy, to be meaningful and effective, should also have pro-people administration which is a bilateral process & right to information will ensure that. The right to information is an effective means to ensure people's participation in local developments and strengthen grassroots democracy and development programmes.

The major task of access to information is to curtail unnecessary secrecy surrounding the decision making process in the government, and thereby helps to enhance the quality of decision making in public policy and administration. It is only possible when the balance between the demand side and supply side is found out.

There are some preconditions to be fulfilled regarding access to information and the practice of right to information. In this regard, some aspects are very significant to follow: information seekers (demand side), information providers (supply sides) and the channels or mediums (mediator sides). However, to get the highest benefit from freedom of access to information, the conditions or the concerned stakeholders should be emphasized.

Table 3.3 Information Act has created unchained information flow

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Fully	7	3.3	3.4	3.4
	fairly	17	11.3	11.6	15.1
	partially	53	35.3	36.3	51.4
	least	38	25.3	26.0	77.4
	not at all	33	22.0	22.6	100.0
	Total	148	97.3	100.0	
Missing	System	4	2.7		
Total		152	100.0		

According to the respondents 35.3% agree that information act has created unchained information flow. On the other hand only 3.3% respondents negated that information act has 'fully' created unchained information flow. If we sum up the percentage of categories— not at all, least and partially, we will find that more than 70% respondents imply that information act has not created unchained information flow in Bangladesh. At this milieu we have to find what are the facts there remain which bar against free flow of information in Bangladesh.

Chart 3.2 Barriers against free flow of information in Bangladesh? (%)
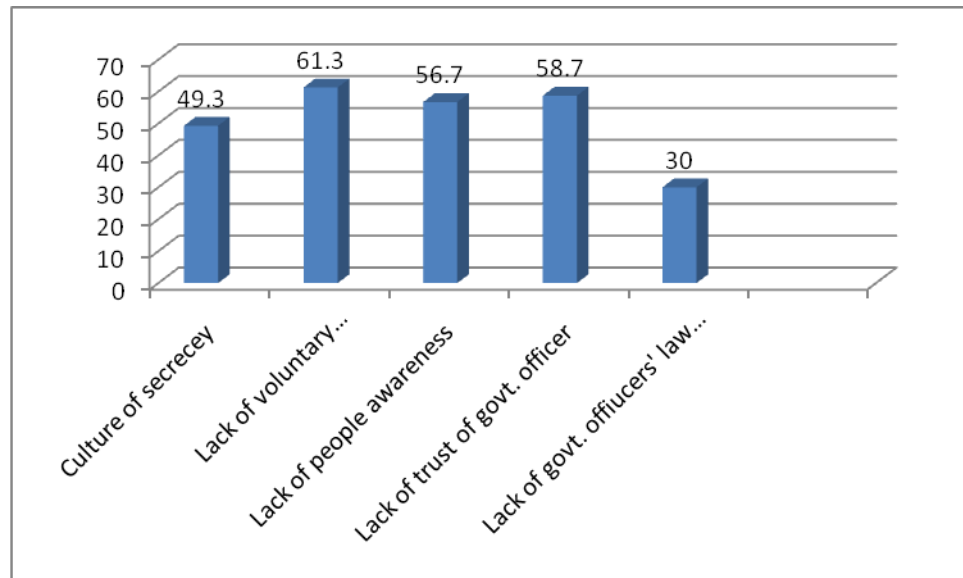
Fundamentally, the reasons that impede information act to create unchained free flow of information are culture of secrecy, lack of voluntary information disclosure, lack of people's awareness, lack of trust in government officers and lack of govt. officers' law abiding. Among the barriers lack of voluntary information disclosure and lack of trust in govt. officer dominate the space. More than 50% respondents supported these two factors which are the hindrances to free flow of information. More than 40% respondents said that rest of the factors— culture of secrecy, lack of people's awareness, and lack of govt. officers' law abiding restrict unchained flow of information in Bangladesh.

The most important preconditions for the right to information are presence of full fledged democracy, political will, legal recognition, information management, minimum solvency basic needs, aware citizenry, people's access to media, and efficiency of ICT use. They are separately dwelled upon below. In this case, to find

out the status of free flow of information, we have to explore the state of supply and demand side as per the Right to Information Act- 2009 in Bangladesh.

Supply Side State of Free Flow of Information

Providing information to the people is the main responsibility of the government officials under the Act. The full-fledged information dissemination to the people depends on will of the government, capacity and positive mentality of the officials, and providing requisite logistic supports, record keeping and training of the officials.

The supply side of this Act has not yet started its function in full- fledged. The reasons behind the slow progress of information providing are the bureaucratic culture of secrecy, lack of capacity of the officials and the lack of demand from the citizen. Basically will to serve is one of important requirements for providing official information.

In terms of training, logistic support, condition of record keeping, the preparation from the distributor side is not sufficient. Capacity building of the government officials need to give emphasis. The lack of a tradition of rule of law and the existence of a culture of impunity are detrimental to the promotion of RTI. In such a situation, it is difficult to convince people that the law would work. The negligence attitude of the government officials hinders in information disseminating. Positive attitude and consciousness can change the scenario.

Awareness about the law is lacking among majority of government officials. Many of designated officials refuse to accept RTI applications from people. "Sometimes designated officers, who are responsible for providing information, exploit the situation and try to take advantage of section 7 of RTIA 2009 by arguing

that the information people asked for falls under the exemption clause of RTIA" (Halim 2012).

Demand Side State of Free Flow of Information

Kadrey explored that the ground reality is that lack of awareness and sensitization of citizen which is the roadblock in the effective implementation of the Act and government has to take action plan in a comprehensive way to improve the capacity as well as to facilitate the demand side.

In a country long used to official secrecy and a deep divide between the people and public offices, the creation of the demand-side is understandably not an easy task. This has been reflected in the performance of this side in the last two years. There is no receptive ground for the law to be trusted and embraced by the people. Due to this ground "very few people took the law seriously when it was enacted and those who came to know about it did not fully understand the real objectives of the law" (Sobhan 2012). As a result, very few applications for information, relevant to the objectives of the Act, were made by citizens to public authorities.

Most of them appear to be unrelated to the basic objective of the Act which is "ensuring transparency and accountability" in the work of public offices. So, those who need information should be well-aware of their rights to free access of information. For sensitizing their right to information GOs, NGOs and INGOs should come up with pragmatic awareness campaigns with an integrated and understandable communication policy. Informed or conscious public are hardly deceived.

To attract people to making use of the Act, an important challenge is to convince them that the government really wants to see the law to succeed in

promoting their participation to monitor the way government offices are run. Very few people believe that public officials would indeed provide them the information that so far they did not wish to share with them. The age-old culture of official secrecy and non-disclosure of official information has created such deep distrust in the minds of the people that they are naturally skeptical about it. The real challenge is to remove it.

Accessed information should be consumed with understanding its due value. Without literacy information it can hardly be read by the consumers. Majority population is invoked to be literate. Illiterate people are gullible. "Those who are in the leading positions in the society certainly have a group to maintain a mechanism of hoodwinking the public" (Ukessays 2012). So the illiterate people, like the blind, are not able to see what actually remaining. Most importantly, the uneducated cannot exploit information in term of knowledge creation, innovation and overall development of society, which is seen in the third world nations.

The first hand demand of information from public side goes to media. Long fostering freedom of the press itself carries the real meaning when media has free access to information particularly held by public officials. On the other, media, as itself has potent impact over the people and society, through its advocacy and public awareness campaign role can sensitize their freedom of access to information.

But the media, in spite of being key players for the promotion of RTI in many countries, do not appear to be excited about it in Bangladesh. They find its processes to be long-drawn and cumbersome. They also seem to believe that their existing practice of obtaining information through private channels is not easier (KII EJ 1). According to a recent media report, efforts of a few journalists to use the Act as a tool

for investigative journalism were unsuccessful because the authorities concerned were not aware of the law.

The position of the civil society is also not much different from the media. In a country where democracy prevails, there the civil society plays a significant role to promote human rights, gender equality, and freedom of expression and information. Especially the contribution of civil society in the overall development process in a developing country is a must. "There is a general fear that asking public officials to disclose unpleasant or sensitive information may result in retaliatory/retributive actions from them" (FGD: PCC, Rajshahi). This could be considered as one of the main reasons why not many information activists have emerged so far. "The civil society has a two-way stake in the implementation of the RTI in Bangladesh – as providers of information and as campaigners for implementation on both demand and supply side" (Iftekhar: 2009).

The political parties and their workers are also not much aware about the law, and those who do not appear to be interested in it. It is obvious that if they came to know the tremendous possibilities that have been created for them by the law, they would be interested in making use of it, particularly those belonging to the opposition parties. The same is the case with lawyers and the legal fraternity. It should be an objective of the promoters of the Act to bring awareness about the Act to them as well.

This is an age which is enormously geared up by the domination of ICT use. In a country where people have meager use of television, radio, computer, mobile technologies, internet facilities, digital access to libraries or the store bank of

information, telephone smooth transportations and other like technologies, there is fewer opportunities are available for the public to practice their right to know.

Free flow of information makes people informed about the right and responsibility. These informed people are the core players in the domain of public sphere. Without people's access to information it is not possible to make public culture transparent. For securing people's access to information the simultaneous effective function of demand and supply side of free flow of information is a must. Despite having Right to information Act- 2009, the lack of required preparations of demand and supply sides act has not been fully functional in the realm of democratic public sphere in Bangladesh.

CITIZEN'S PLATFORMS

Citizen's platform is one of the important actors in democratic public sphere. As per Obudgemy (2011) civil society plays due role as citizen's platform in a democratic public sphere. It is at the core of human nature. We, human beings, want to get together with others … and act collectively to make our lives better. And, when we face evils and injustice, we get together and fight for justice and peace (Tutu 2010). Civil society is the expression of those collective actions. Through strong civil societies, enjoying the freedoms of association and assembly, we encourage and empower one another to shape our societies and address issues of common concern. In this study we have to find out the state of citizen's platform in Bangladesh.

International Standard of Civil Society

CSO is considered as citizen's platform, if they are constituted and guided by the international principle. In February 2008, the World Movement for Democracy and

the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law launched the defending civil society project with the publication of this report which illustrates legal restrictions imposed on civil society groups worldwide and articulates international principles protecting civil society. The following are the international principle of civil society (WMFD 2008).

Principle 1: The Right to Entry (Freedom of Association)

(1) International law protects the right of individuals to form, join, and participate in civil society organizations.

(a) Broad scope of right. Freedom of association protects the right of individuals to form trade unions, associations, and other types of CSOs.

(b) Broadly permissible purposes. International law recognizes the right of individuals, through CSOs, to pursue a broad range of objectives. Permissible purposes generally embrace all "legal" or "lawful" purposes and specifically include the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

(c) Broadly eligible founders. The architecture of international human rights is built on the premise that all persons, including non-citizens, enjoy certain rights, including the freedom of association.

(2) Individuals are not required to form a legal entity in order to enjoy the freedom of association.

(3) International law protects the right of individuals to form a CSO as a legal entity.

(a) The system of recognition of legal entity status, whether a "declaration" or "registration/incorporation "system, must ensure that the process is truly accessible, with clear, speedy, apolitical, and inexpensive procedures in place.

(b) In the case of a registration/incorporation system, the designated authority must be guided by objective standards and restricted from arbitrary decision making.

Principle 2: The Right to Operate Free from Unwarranted State Interference

(1) Once established, CSOs have the right to operate free from unwarranted state intrusion or interference in their affairs. International law creates a presumption against any regulation or restriction that would amount to interference in recognized rights.

(a) Interference can only be justified where it is prescribed by law and necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order, the protection of public health or morals, or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

(b) Laws and regulations governing CSOs should be implemented and enforced in a fair, apolitical, objective, transparent, and consistent manner.

(c) The involuntary termination or dissolution of a CSO must meet the standards of international law; the relevant government authority should be guided by objective standards and restricted from arbitrary decision making.

(2) CSOs are protected against unwarranted governmental intrusion in their internal governance and affairs. Freedom of association embraces the freedom of the founders and/or members to regulate the organization's internal governance.

(3) Civil society representatives, individually and through their organizations, are protected against unwarranted interference with their privacy.

Principle 3: The Right to Free Expression

(1) Civil society representatives, individually and through their organizations, enjoy the right to freedom of expression.

(2) Freedom of expression protects not only ideas regarded as inoffensive or a matter of indifference but also those that offend, shock, or disturb, since pluralism and the free flow of ideas are essential in a democratic society. CSOs are therefore protected in their ability to speak critically about government law or policy, and to speak favorably about human rights and fundamental freedoms.

(3) Interference with freedom of expression can only be justified where it is provided by law and necessary for respect of the rights or reputations of others; or for the protection of national security or of public order, or of public health or morals.

Principle 4: The Right to Communication and Cooperation

(1) Civil society representatives, individually and through their organizations, have the right to communicate and seek cooperation with other representatives of civil society, the business community, and international organizations and governments, both within and outside their home countries.

(2) The right to receive and impart information, regardless of frontiers, through any media, embraces communication via the Internet and information and communication technologies(ICTs).

(3) Individuals and CSOs have the right to form and participate in networks and coalitions in order to enhance communication and cooperation, and to pursue legitimate aims.

Principle 5: The Right to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly

(1) Civil society representatives, individually and through their organizations, enjoy the right to freedom of peaceful assembly.

(2) The law should affirm a presumption in favor of holding assemblies. Those seeking to assemble should not be required to obtain permission to do so.

(a) Where advance notification is required, notification rules should not be so onerous as to amount to a requirement of permission or to result in arbitrary denial.

(b) The law should allow for spontaneous assembly as an exception to the notification requirement, where the giving of notice is impracticable.

(3) The law should allow for simultaneous assemblies or counter-demonstrations, while recognizing the governmental responsibility to protect peaceful assemblies and participants in them.

(4) Interference with freedom of assembly can only be justified where it is in conformity with the law and necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order the protection of public health or morals, or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

Principle 6: The Right to Seek and Secure Resources

Within broad parameters, CSOs have the right to seek and secure funding from legal sources, including individuals, businesses, civil society, international organizations, and intergovernmental organizations, as well as local, national, and foreign governments.

Principle 7: State Duty to Protect

(1) The State has a duty to promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the obligation to protect the rights of civil society. The State's duty is both negative (i.e., to refrain from interference with human rights and fundamental freedoms), and positive (i.e., to ensure respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms).

(2) The State duty includes an accompanying obligation to ensure that the legislative framework relating to fundamental freedoms and civil society is appropriately enabling, and that the necessary institutional mechanisms are in place to ensure the recognized rights of all individuals.

In short international law protects the right of individuals to form, join, and participate in civil society organizations. CSOs have the right to operate free from unwarranted state intrusion or interference in their affairs. International law creates a presumption against any regulation or restriction that would amount to interference in recognized rights. Civil society representatives, individually and through their organizations, are protected against unwarranted interference with their privacy. Its representatives, individually and through their organizations, enjoy the right to freedom of expression. Again its representatives, individually and through their organizations, enjoy the right to freedom of peaceful assembly.

Organizational State of Citizen's Platform

In Bangladesh, there is misnomer regarding the meaning of civil society. Civil society, commonly perceived, means a cluster of known faces having popularity through writing, talk show and cultural activities. With this "some organizations like NGOs, private research organizations, human rights organizations and cultural organizations are exemplified as civil society"(Riaj : 2013).

In this context we, very often, keep all the activities in a same row, and try to oppose functions of the organizations. It results negative perception on civil society organizations. The remarkable fact is that, government and opposition as well tries to capitalize the perception against the concept.

Major allegation, against civil society in Bangladesh, is that it serves the political clients and works for the vested interest groups. Riaj (2013) clarifies that the civil society is politically divided and organized for the economic gain which is contradictory to the real meaning of the concept. He also defines that civil society is the combined form of organizations and institutions representing the interest and will of the people beyond the influences of the political parties and vested interest groups.

But it is deep rooted idea of the people that the figures engaged with the development activities and some popular personalities vocal on common concerns are considered civil society. The prevailing perception has made the concept debatable in Bangladesh. The political parties enjoy the debate and try to shrug off the activities of the organizations.

Operational State of Citizen's Platforms

For understanding the operational state of citizen's platform, we should have some clear notion about civil society. a) It is a reservoir of political, economic, cultural and moral resources to check the process of the state. b) The diversity of civil society will ensure that the state is not held captive by a few groups. c) The growth of associational life will supplement the work of political parties in simulating political participation, as Toqueville argues "large free schools". d) Civil society will eventually stabilize the state because citizens will have a deepen stake in social order. Further, which civil society may multiply the demands of the state; it may also multiply the capacity of groups to improve their own welfare. e) It is a locus for recruiting new political leadership. f) It resists authoritarianism (Rahman 1994).

In Bangladesh an active civil society has been playing strategic role in strengthening the process of democratization. The substantial beginning was made in 1952 when the students and cultural activists protested against the cultural hegemony of the then Pakistani ruling class and shed blood for making Bangla one of the national languages. The seed for an independent Bangladesh was sown at this phase of nationalistic movement leading to the democratic struggles for autonomy and finally independence. The subsequent struggles against military rule and further expansion of civic engagements have broadened the base for a stronger civil society.

The present political ambiance indicates that the politicians have failed to build the necessary confidence between government and citizens. The Bangladesh political elites failed to create an effective local government so the relation between central and local governments was channeled through the bureaucracy. "This failure

to create political institutions had an alternative effect on social institutions. The political class needed to create a support base in the absence of political institutions in local areas, so alternatively they politicized social institutions. This led to politicized CSOs in Bangladesh" (Quadir 2003). On the other hand, the role of foreign assistance has been crucial in Bangladesh and hence the donor perception of civil society has been important. It has created mixed impact on our society.

Firstly, the non-governmental resources are getting concentrated into the hands of a few large organizations who are fast acquiring corporate character. This combining of profit and non-profit activities may create some tensions with the profit-making private sector and can have negative impact on the growth of civil society.

Secondly, the organizations are taking over some functions of the government rather than creating moral pressure on the government to perform better in some constitutionally mandated areas like public health, education and infrastructure development.

Thirdly, the organizations are not yet putting themselves under more transparent and rigorous auditing and accounting system in order to make them more articulate and pro-people at the end of the day.

Fourthly, the organizations like the government in Bangladesh are hopelessly dependent on foreign resources and ideas. They are, however, in a better position to redraw the canvas of alternative paradigm articulated endogenously. They, somehow, have not yet made enough progress in this direction. There is certainly a need for credible commitment in terms of policy and resource redirections.

However, the government was increasingly hostile in 2012 to civil society groups. Following the July 2012 publication of a Human Rights Watch report on the 2009 Bangladesh Rifles mutiny, Bangladeshi officials threatened action against domestic rights groups who had helped conduct the research.

Bangladesh's NGO affairs bureau, responsible for approving projects and funding of NGOs, has created obstacles for some human rights organizations seeking permission to receive foreign donor funding. Organizations critical of the regime and outspoken against human rights abuses appear to be particularly affected. There were some reports of staff members of nongovernmental human rights organizations being harassed by members of the security forces.

With the above discussion it is clear that the condition of citizens' platform is far away from the international standard. Due to misnomer about the organizational and operational definition, consecutive ruling parties' negative attitude toward CSOs, presence of vested interest groups and inertia from the citizens, civil society is not being able to perform its due role in Bangladesh. However, because of domestic and international reality, it still plays important role for producing public opinion in terms of common concerns.

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

In democratic public sphere, media—print, electronic and social— play the role of communication channels. 'Free, plural and independent media system is often seen as the main institution of the democratic public sphere" (Mcquail   2005). As such, it can only guarantee equal access and voice to citizens if it is independent of political and corporate interests. It can play a positive role in democracy only if there is an

enabling environment that allows them to do so. They need the requisite skills for the kind of in-depth reporting that a new democracy requires. There should also be mechanisms to ensure that they are held accountable to the public and that ethical and professional standards are upheld. Media independence is guaranteed if media organizations are financially viable, free from intervention of media owners and the state, and operate in a competitive environment. The media should also be accessible to as wide a segment of society as possible. Efforts to help the media should be directed toward: the protection of press rights, enhancing media accountability, building media capacity and democratizing media access.

With hundreds of daily and weekly publications, the privately owned print media continue to present an array of views, although political coverage at many newspapers is highly partisan. Private broadcasting has expanded in recent years, with more than a dozen satellite and cable television stations and three radio stations now operating; three new television stations, including two 24-hour news channels, started in 2010. However, to find out the state of communication channels, we have to analyze the internal and external state of communication channels.

External State of Communication Channels

Bangladesh has made good progress in its struggle to establish democracy. Progress is also there in the newspaper industry. From 2004 to 2013 a good number of electronic media have been entertaining the viewers. However, this is an encouraging sign that so many newspapers and weeklies are coming out in this country. Newspapers in Bangladesh are, in fact, pluralistic and most of them are owned by big business firms or by political leaders. Compared to the electronic media, the print media in

Bangladesh is more vibrant, but the environment is still far from ideal. There are many laws and several sections under the Bangladesh penal code that affect functioning of the press. In spite of having RTI Act- 2009, the mentality of bureaucracy made by the Official Secrets Act still blocks the development of the free media in Bangladesh.

A free media is the key to promote good governance and make democracy meaningful and effective. As per the country's constitution, the media should be totally free in investigating government and powerful corporations. In reality, the media is far from enjoying an environment conducive to carrying out such journalistic job.

Ostensibly the press in Bangladesh is not a concern here, as the press is relatively free to print what they like. Unfortunately, the press in Bangladesh is divided and polarized along political lines, and this is reflected in the news they report. The low standard of journalistic ethics and the absence of any type of training for new journalists mean that very few reporters check their sources with a second source.

"Due to elected autocrat the magnitude of self-censorship is in tremendous nature. Some electronic and print media have been closed. It has created panic on media and they have been automatically self- censored" (FGD: NRA, Dhaka). The facts prove that the media are not fully-fledged free in Bangladesh.

Journalists are often feared by politicians because they have succeeded in uncovering corruption, the abuse of power and assorted malfeasance. Because a bad press can mean the end of a political career despite constitutional guarantees and in

many cases, also wide public support, the media in fledgling democracies have been hobbled by stringent laws, monopolistic ownership and sometimes, brute force State controls are not the only constraints.

In a developed society, there is no scope to ban media's declaration. In many cases they can register media through post- office. The system has been made easy for the flourishment of democracy and establishment of accountability in every sphere of the society. But in the developing country like Bangladesh, due to namesake democracy, it has been a normal matter to assault, harass and control on media. It indicates that in our country journalists are not free but owners.

Access to the internet is generally unrestricted, but the penetration rate was just five percent of the population in 2011. During the last few years, the number of online news outlets, including news websites and internet-based radio stations, has increased dramatically. "The government continues to monitor internet activity. Some journalists' e-mail correspondence is reportedly watched by police, and those brought in for questioning have been asked to supply personal internet passwords to intelligence officers" (Refworld 2013) .

To avoid chaos in social media it is needed to have some rules and regulation. But it would be welfare -oriented. "When life of the people will be standardized and everybody will get internet 3-G mobile technology, online media will get popularity" (KII EJ 2).

The District magistrate holds power to authenticate any declaration and he is the sole and final authority in this respect. But now in Bangladesh in practice, any application is sent to the Ministry of Home Affairs which decides after police enquiry

whether a declaration shall be authenticated and the newspaper be permitted to be published. So it has been all but impossible to flourish media belonging to opposition (KII AJ 1). It has been observed that every government, at their fag ends, gives permission more than one media. The newly permitted media work for the general election and create disarray on total media system (KII EJ 2).

First two or three years elected government provide tolerable ambience for the media. With the increase of political instability, media face difficulty. During this instable situation, it is observed, regular news monitoring and control are enforced through the Information Ministry and Press Information Department (PID) (KII EJ 1). In addition, prime Minister's office also imposes restriction on some news. These restrictions come in the form of press advice. Press advice means the guidelines for censorship. Such press advice usually lands in newspaper office at midnight.

This politically motivated activities of the government agencies result in negative impact on issuing license for media. "It has been unwritten system that without being ruling party supporter nobody get license for media" (FGD: MU, Rajshahi). We see partiality for govt. advertisement distribution. This disparity and deprivation influence media and indirectly control it. If any media try to criticize government, it possibly will be harassed by the government agency (KII EJ 2 & 5).

Internal State of Communication Channels

The number of private media is increasing day by day in Bangladesh. It indicates, huge investment is pouring to the industry. In general sense, it is realized that the people are being abele to get the expected facilities required for the democracy. But the real picture does not always come as per desired direction.

Though the number of print and electronic media is increasing day by day, our economy is not being able to absorb increasing media. Income from advertisement is being divided. The production cost of every paper is 18- 20 taka. But it is being sold below 10 taka. Those media are not getting expected advertisement taking resort to yellow journalism (KII EJ 4). Actually electronic and print media are the industry of exploitation for the emotionally motivated youths. At the middle or fag end they decay or lead a miserable life.

It is a common phenomenon to sack journalists due to high salary. There is no transparent rule for recruitment and promotion in private media. Very often rules are not maintained. Arbitrary of the owners' favored persons is the real rule in the industry (KII AJ 1). With these consequences it is normal to have question regarding quality of the media. Besides there is a wage board system for the print media, it is not fully implemented. But in electronic media, there prevails anarchy due to lack of wage board. Without having bright future, the meritorious will not come, and it will not be possible to improve quality.

Trust in media has reduced. At past people considered the written words in media as inviolable truth. The more color is increasing, the more lie is coming. Now some people consider media as 'four color lies (KIIEJ 4). At this situation people have to read more than one paper to find truth. "Due to uncertainty of job security many journalists engage themselves in corruption. The perception of the people regarding reporters working rural areas is very bad" (FGD: TSA). Their sufferings from uncertainty of livelihood and insecurity of life deteriorate the standard of reporting. So there is no doubt that media is in trust crisis.

"It is really difficult to demonstrate people's interests through media. The problems remain in the intention of the investors in media" (FGD: PCC, Dhaka). With few exceptions,   land grabbers, dishonest garments industrialists, bureaucrats and politicians are the owners of the media. The targets of these owners to dispel former image crisis and protect huge property earned through ill legal mechanism. After all some benefits, in any form, people get from the media (KII EJ 1).

Kabir (2013) commented "Now media has been split in three blocks—AL, BNP and in between two. To stand beyond AL and BNP blocs is really horribly difficult. He also mentioned "the lack of objective report is prevailing in Bangladesh media domain. It hampers the credibility of the media." Chowdhury echoed with kabir, "to play neutral role in media is a daunting and tire some task." Rahman (2013) told in talk show that "the onus of media to cover the issues of common concerns neutrally is not being carried out in Bangladesh. Actually as a nation we have been divided in two polar. The rate of bias reporting is tremendous here"(Banglavision 2013).

In short, generally we can say that the media help common people to exchange information and it acts as a common platform. The public get knowledge and awake to raise questions, on seeing the news in newspaper and TV. It conducts polls and let public to take part in social issues. Through blogging in the internet and writing letters to the editor in newspapers, many people give voice to their opinion regarding different political and social matters.

But during low degree of parliamentary accountability mechanism, it is supposed; media—print, electronic and social play the role of relation maker between

the accounter and the accounted. In our country we see the plethora of media. In the context of authoritarian regime, the media in Bangladesh is remaining in a far better position. But in case of democratic governance, the standard of communication channels is not up to the mark. Due to the external pressure and internal flaws in media management and activities, communication channels are not being able to perform its role properly.

CONCLUSION

Promoting good governance means striving toward the ideal of a truly inclusive public sphere (COMMGAP: 2011).It indicates that to have constitutionally guaranteed civil liberty and practical implementation of the guarantee, free flow of information law and proper execution of the law, a vibrant civil society which organizes and promotes the citizen agenda, and free, plural and independent of political and corporate interests are the prerequisites for full-fledged democratic public sphere.

This study has identified that civil liberty— freedom of opinion and expression and assembly, is guaranteed in the Constitution of People's Republic of Bangladesh. Government has bindings to respect the rights and it has also logical ground to curtail the rights. But repeated abuse of existing laws, law making with ulterior motive, imposing restriction, negative interference of vested interests, lack of pluralism, apprehension of physical and mental harassment, closing media, censor on publications, case and imprisonment for opinion, putting restriction in the name of public order hinder the proper exercise of civil liberty in Bangladesh.

It is explored that due to enactment of RTI Act 2009, there is strong scope for free flow of information in Bangladesh. It necessitates ensuring accountability and transparency and breaking mal tradition created by the official secrecy act 1923. Despite having facilities of the Act, culture of confidentiality, lack of balance between demand and supply side of free flow of information, the benefits of the Act has not appeared into reality fully yet. Lack of eagerness of the officials and deficit of demand from the citizen are also responsible for not to be implemented of the Act. The study has also found that majority of the people do not take the law seriously due to lack of a tradition of rule of law and the prevailing culture of impunity, avoiding attitude of government official, lack of awareness and sensitization of citizen, low level awareness of government officials, deep division between the people and government official. Media's less exciting about the Act, shortage of logistic support to practice right to know, very few application for information, lack of people's trust in government official bar people to get expected level of free flow of information.

The research has found that there is legal ground to follow international standard in terms of citizen platform. But the issues— confusion regarding meaning of the civil society, civil society organizations, non government organizations , negative perception about CSOs, politically divided and organized for the economic gain, serving as political client and working for the vested interest groups affect on the performance of citizens' platform. With this, imposing restriction by the government, indecent pressure on government and branding cultural and development activists as civil society members impede the activities of citizens' platform.

The study has also identified that as per constitution the media is totally free in investigating government and powerful corporations. There are a lot of presences of

print, electronic and social media. It is also identified that there is ample investment in media and print media is more vibrant than electronic ones. But the concerns— low standard of journalistic ethics, self censorship, plethora of bias reporting, divided and polarized media along political lines, monopolistic ownership , closing media, assault and life threat, hobbled by stringent laws, state controls ,influence by ill political motive, loss of people's confidence hamper the performance of communication channels.

Finally, this study has shown that civil liberty is constitutionally protected. But in real sense it is under tremendous obstruction. Only formulation of the RTI Act cannot guarantee free flow of information, it needs necessary implementation. As per law citizens' platforms are allowed to follow the international standard here, but their activities are not beyond question as regards their goals and vested interests. Communication Channel as a mitigating catalyst is replete with internal shortcomings and external interference cannot play due role up to the mark.

The foregone discussion postulates that from theoretical perspective democratic public sphere is vibrant in Bangladesh. But in real sense the shortcomings and restrictions remaining in this country make democratic public sphere mediocre type. At this state, it is substantial to find whether this type of democratic public sphere shape public opinion associated with common concern in terms of non-electoral vertical accountability in Bangladesh.

CHAPTER- IV

TRANSFORMING PUBLIC SPHERE INTO PUBLIC OPINION IN BANGLADESH

INTRODUCTION

Public opinion is a product of public sphere and a crucial concept in governance and political decision making. It refers to affairs related to the state, the government or social institutions. It also incorporates issues that are open and accessible to everyone. Especially the events, policies, or decisions that concern people are related to public opinion. It also indicates issues of common concern in reference to the public good (COMMGAP 2011).

Public opinion is formed through the process of collective decision making. "Issues of concern are articulated; possible solutions to a problem are developed; decisions makers assess the consequences of choosing one option over the other and finally decision makers evaluate alternative solutions and make decision" (Price & Neijens 1997).

It is crucial for politics. As Scottish philosopher David Hume stated: "It is therefore, on opinion only that government is founded" (Hume: 1994). "It is the basis of political power and legitimacy, and any government is secure only to the extent that the relevant people willingly consents to the rule" (COMMGAP 2011).

This chapter explores the state of voice representation, platform of the people, and public opinion formation done by citizens' platform in Bangladesh. It examines the condition of coverage of common concern, media's nature of political corruption

coverage, setbacks of media regarding political corruption coverage, shaping public opinion by communication channels in this country. It also discusses whether talk - show voice represents the perception of the people and also it can produce public opinion in Bangladesh. It investigates whether facebook can raise voice in terms of common concern and represents the voice of the people .It also unearths whether facebook can produce public opinion as regards to common concern in Bangladesh. It also focuses on the hindrances which bar the democratic public sphere to form public opinion. Finally, the researcher raises various setbacks and malpractices, prevailed in Bangladesh, in this chapter that are making impediments in the public sphere to form public opinion in our country.

This chapter comprises of four parts— first one on citizens' platform and discourse of common concern, second one on communication channels and coverage of common concerns, third one on talk show and interest articulation and fourth one on facebook and interest articulation in Bangladesh.

CITIZENS' PLATFORMS AND DISCOURSE OF COMMON CONCERNS

Citizens' platforms play a substantial supporting role to formulate discourse on common concerns. Corruption has been one of the most common and alarming concerns in Bangladesh. People are not being able to cope with the effects of this very hydra headed   problem. Due to ineffectual performances of MPs in parliament, people eventually become helpless in between elections. At this juncture, people demand non electoral vertical accountability of the elected representatives. They also observe the activities of civil society organizations relevant to the issue. With the

result that, role of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) has been analyzed critically in this chapter.

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) and Corruption

Corruption has been one of the major concerns for Bangladesh. Rampant corruption has slowed down economic growth rate and has been tremendous challenge for ensuring good governance. Due to ever prevailing corruption in every sector in Bangladesh, the activities against corruption always attract people. In this case, CSOs play significant role in public sphere to raise voice. It is also relevant that the name of TIB comes first when the issue of corruption approaches. "TIB is now identified as being synonymous with tackling corruption in Bangladesh and it, through its work, has made anti-corruption as the part of the public discourse and central to the public policy agenda"(SDRC :2007). At this stage it is the matter of critical discussion whether TIB is the platform of citizens. What types of role it plays in terms of forming discourse of corruption. As per GSDRC that:

> Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) is an accredited national chapter of the Berlin-based Transparency International, a global civil society organization leading the fight against corruption. TIB began its activity as a trust in 1996 and became recognized by the Government of Bangladesh as an NGO in 1998. TIB works against corruption, not against the government of the day, nor any particular public sector department or named individual(s). Its work is broadly undertaken at two levels (macro and micro) through processes of civic engagement, research and advocacy (GSDRC :2007).

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) is the local chapter of Transparency International based in Germany and has, since the beginning, been working as a catalyst of social movement against corruption. It has elaborate research

and advocacy programmes for policy change and institutional reform for creating conditions to reduce corruption and promote good governance in Bangladesh (www.ti-bangladesh.org).

Has TIB been able to make discourse about corruption? But the activities have been severely sometimes criticized by concerned state authority. Document and research best presentation is a critical task. For this sophisticated functions organization is substantial. In this case TIB plays pivotal role regarding corruption related voice raising. At this juncture, Question comes from who has given it mandate to work against corruption. In a democratic society people's mandate is a must for being a platform of the people. Are there any criteria to select the top brasses democratically? Their activities are demonstrable but motive is not clear. If the discourses of common concerns are made routine wise that there is no problem, but if it is to tarnish the image of the elected representatives or to bring third force to power, all activities will come under controversy.

Voice Representation

People's voice representation is an important part of democratic public sphere. In this part of research it has been examined whether TIB produced notion on common concern represents the voice of the people. Regarding voice representation Action aid clarifies that:

Politics and social change are bound up together. It is difficult, if not impossible to influence society unless your voice is represented in political process. But political processes vary greatly from place to place and country to country (ActionAid: 2012).

TIB is raising voices on various issues regarding corruption. At this juncture, question comes whether TIB represents the voice of people. One of the KIIs says, TIB is making the people aware against corruption. In spite of having allegation, it may

have intention to brand country as corrupt one, but its voice against corruption is important for Bangladesh. (KII EJ 1). TIB definitely is playing positive role in our country. If you compare the reports published during the tenure of both, AL and BNP, regimes, you will find that, it proves people's voice representation (KII MP 3). Another KII says that some activities act for the voice of the people (KII MATIB 2).

TIB, a research based organization, has some methodology for working on common concern especially on corruption (KII TAG 4). The voices TIB produces that are coming from public interest, experience, opinion and explanation, with the purpose that it acts for the voice of the people (KII MATIB 1).Partially it speaks for the support of the people (FGD:PCC,Rajshahi). "TIB has captured the social conscience of young people and provided them with a way of voicing their opposition to corruption, and engaging in volunteer work to improve transparency and accountability in their areas" (GSDRC : 2007). A key informant explains that:

> TIB is an NGO (claimed as civil society), which has no relations to millions of citizens across the country. I don't think it represents the voice of people. Common people, though they are always victim of corruption, don't know about TIB activities. TIB, in fact, presents voice for a section of people who have closely related to watching the state-administration nexus; not the private institutions, the donor and the big NGO's corruption. For me, TIB initiative is an off track version of anticorruption watchdog (KII AJ 1).

One of the participants in FGD said , inspite of having doubt of the inner purpose of TIB, some voices echos to the voice of the people (FGD: PCC,Rajshahi). Other respondants added that the voice doesnot reach to root level people(FGD: PCC,

Dhaka). It works on the basis of people's opinion and experience through scientific survey. It works on the basis of knowledge based demand creation. As output comes from the people's interest, experience and opinion, TIB activities represent the voice of the people (KII MATIB 1).

It is clear that opinion leaders have different views about whether TIB is an agent for the voice of the people. Some interviewees and participants in FGD opine that TIB is making people conscious, trying to establish social movement, raising voice on the basis of people's interests, experience and opinion, also creating knowledge based demand (FGD: PCC, Dhaka). On the other hand, someone argues it is producing elite, donor and motivated voice. Some of the respondents castigate the organization saying it is creating chaos in the society, working for depoliticisation (FGD: PCC, Rajshahi).

Preceding analyses unfold that TIB's activities with respect to people's voice representation are counted with both constructive and cynical means. Hence it is required to validate the notions on the basis of people's understanding.

Table 4.1   Whether TIB represents the voice of people?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Fully	18	12.0	12.1	12.1
	fairly	82	54.7	55.0	67.1
	partially	28	18.0	18.1	85.2
	least	19	12.7	12.8	98.0
	not at all	3	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	150	99.3	100.0	
Missing	System	2	.7		
Total		152	100.0		

According to the data, majority of the respondents (54.7%) claimed that TIB 'fairly' speaks for the voice of the people. Only little section of respondents (2.0%) opine that it acts for the voice of the people 'not at all'. The data clearly imply that TIB has constructive role at the event of voice raising and it represents the voice of the people. But due to the following reasons TIB is not an agent for with the perception that it represents people's voice 'fully'.

Chart: 4.1 Barriers of TIB in terms of people's voice representation (%)
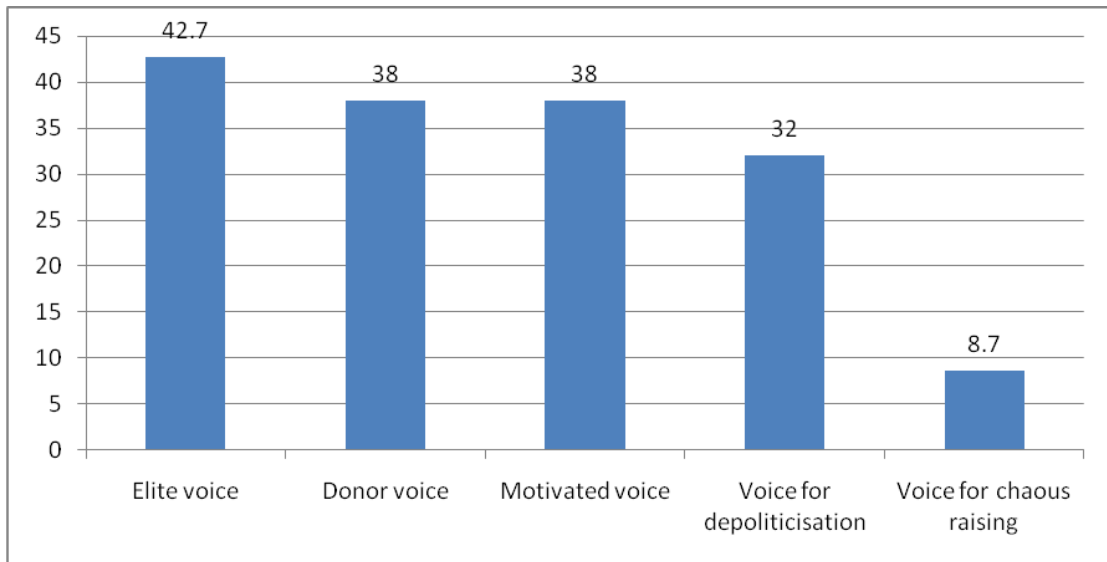
As per respondents' data, TIB is being encumbered with respect to people's voice representation due to the perception of elite voice, donor voice, motivated voice, voice for depoliticisation and voice for chaos raising. Among the notions elite voice is one of the major hindrances for TIB's approaching to people's voice representation. Perception regarding donor voice, motivated voice, voice for depoliticisation and voice for chaos raising is also playing contrary character as regards to people's voice representation.

However, evaluation of TIB's role with respect to voice raising could be analyzed for better understanding the activities of TIB in relation to people's viewpoint.

Chart: 4.2   Evaluation of TIB's role in case of voice raising
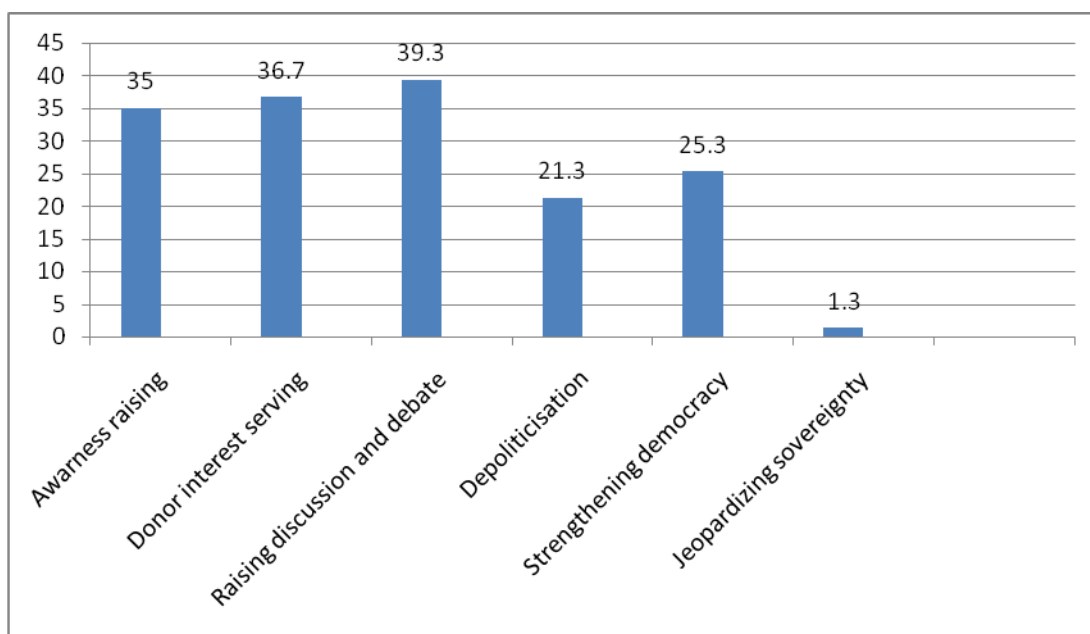
The chart shows that the major task of TIB is to raise discussion and debate in public sphere. 39. 30% respondents opine that it is working for raising discussion and debate. The chart also shows that it is not only raising awareness of the people but also serving donor interest. 35% respondents indicate that it raises awareness of the people. On the other hand, 36.7% respondents opine that it serves donor interests. The respondents also clarify the stand of TIB in case of debate between TIB's role of strengthening democracy and jeopardizing sovereignty. 25.3% respondents opine that it works for strengthening democracy. On the other hand only 2% respondents indicate that it is working for jeopardizing sovereignty of the country.

Finally it could be noted, notwithstanding having negative perceptions—promoting elite voice, donor voice, motivated voice, voice for depoliticisation and voice for chaos rising, TIB is making people conscious, trying to establish social

movement, raising voice on the basis on people's interests, experience and opinion, and also creating knowledge based demand.

Platform of the People

People's platform is one of the important actors in democratic public sphere. As per Obudgemy (2011), civil society plays due role as citizen's platform in a democratic public sphere. It is at the core of human nature. Here we have to examine whether TIB can be the platform of people in case of voice raising in Bangladesh.

It has been a big debate regarding TIB's scope of being people's platform in Bangladesh in terms of common concern. Many respondents opine that it has a little chance to be a platform. 'We can call an organization as people's platform when it is established in a democratic manner. TIB is not constituted as per democratic structure but the plan of a foreign country. He further added it has not come into reality following the aspiration of demand side. So we cannot term it as people's platform' (KII MP 2). According to a key informant:

> TIB cannot be a platform of the people, because it is not connected to the people. It's a foreign funded organization. Its activities sometimes look good but also pose chaos in the society. It maintains global standard, but if it wants to work genuinely for our country, has to follow the domestic standard, standard for Bangladesh (KII MP 1).

Basically the main allegation against TIB is that it is a foreign funded organization and it has democratic deficit. Due to this common objection, experts opine negatively regarding the issue of platform. A key informant says:

Due to some limitations TIB can't be a platform of the people. It's a foreign funded research organization. It has some paid employ like NGO. With this paid workers, no social movement can't be held. For being a people's platform the leadership must come from the people. Leading influential figures must emerge from people who can dedicate for the country. But foreign paid employee can't lead the people (KII TAG 4).

One of the key informants directly negates the chance of TIB to be a platform of the people. He said it should not be the platform of the people, because various social and political organizations would play the role of being platform. (KII MATIB 2). The members of TIB (civil society) are not accountable to the people (KII EJ 5).Only on the basis of corruption; no organization can be a platform. Corruption has been the weapon of power changing (KII PS 5). Another key informant explains that:

I don't think that TIB could be platform of people. Rather, I am afraid of who are running TIB? Where their money come from? I have very little trust to their activities due to non-transparent way of their activities. For me, are they transparent for their own activities? They are confined among some self-claimed (un) civil society people. In my position of (un), If I am not wrong, these people are fragmented and keep connection to political line, hardly consider anything from impartial point of view. Nevertheless, they have no independent voice as they keep close connection to power holders for their own interest. Indeed, they are donor-driven, depends on media to check corruption. The media scenario is more complex after the imposition of corporate culture. Journalists are not writing everything objectively. Overdependence to the media is a mistake too (KII AJ 1).

On the other hand some observers claim TIB has little bit scope of being platform. Due to the less effective roles of the expected people's platform in Bangladesh, it has chances of being platform. In one sense TIB is the platform of the

people. Because some views regarding common concerns produced by it have similarity with the perceptions of the people (KII AS 3).According to a key informant, 'when political parties fail to work as per the demand of the people, general perceptions grow that some people oriented organizations are needed. Due to similarity, sometimes, between the voice of the organization and the views of the people, it is thought that this type of organization may be treated as the platform of the people' (KII MP 3). She further added that if we analyze its (TIB) activities, we can make comment that it has possibility to become a platform of the people (KII MP 3). A key informant analyzes that:

> Sometimes, TIB organizes programs nationally and locally to make people aware about the negative impact of corruption on the society and politics. However, making TIB a platform of people is quite challenging as beneficiaries of corruption and irregularities will impede the formation of strong anti-corruption platform involving people from all walks of life (KII PS 1).

One of the participants said, due to polluted politics, TIB has been a part of people's platform (FGD-CC). It is working for creating social movement (Jahan : 2014). A key informant says that:

> In one sense it is a platform but has long intellectual dream.It aims to create knowledge based demand for social movement.It is becoming platform ,not already has been. It's not a Dhaka based organization , it has 6000 volunteer, among them 75% is youngster. For being a platform, the structure must be bottom up. It is providing knowledge to the local level so that the people of local level should rise for national level demand creation. It is also working in local level so that people of that area can create knowledge based demand through perepherial platform(KII MATIB 1).

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In short, due to foreign funded organization and lack of democratic manner and structure, TIB is not termed as democratic platform. Top down leadership pattern and lack of domestic strategy bar it to be a platform of the people. Besides, questions regarding members' dedication to the country and accountability to the people lessen the possibility of TIB to be a platform of the people in Bangladesh.

On the other hand, due to less effectiveness of expected people's platform, working for knowledge based demand creation and creating trust among the people interms of voice raising , it seems that TIB has a little chance to be a platform of the people in Bangladesh.

Now it is substantial to validate the data through the people's judgement. On the basis of the question, whether TIB can be the platform of people in case of voice raising, it could be examined.

Table 4.2 Whether TIB can be the platform of people in case of voice raising

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	61	40.0	40.8	40.8
	Yes	88	58.0	59.2	100.0
	Total	149	98.0	100.0	
Missing	System	3	2.0		
Total		152	100.0		

It poses debate at the event of TIB's chance to be people's platform with reference to voice raising. According to the majority respondents, TIB can be a platform of the people as regards to voice raising on common concern (corruption). Near about 60% respondents opine that TIB has chance to be a plat form of the people. On the other hand near about half (40%) of the respondents negates its scope to be people's platform. Basically the reasons made them think in this way were lack of people's participation, lack of democratic structure, lack of democratic leadership and elite representation. Among the causes, lack of democratic structure and democratic leadership play predominating role to negate TIB's chances to be people's platform with respect to common concern related voice raising.

As most of the KIIs and FGD participants opine that there is no scope of TIB to be a platform of people, the questions are set to find out the reasons that bar TIB to be the platform. The chart shows respondents views regarding hindrances which bar TIB to be a platform of the people.

Chart 4.3 Barriers of TIB in terms of people's platform (%)
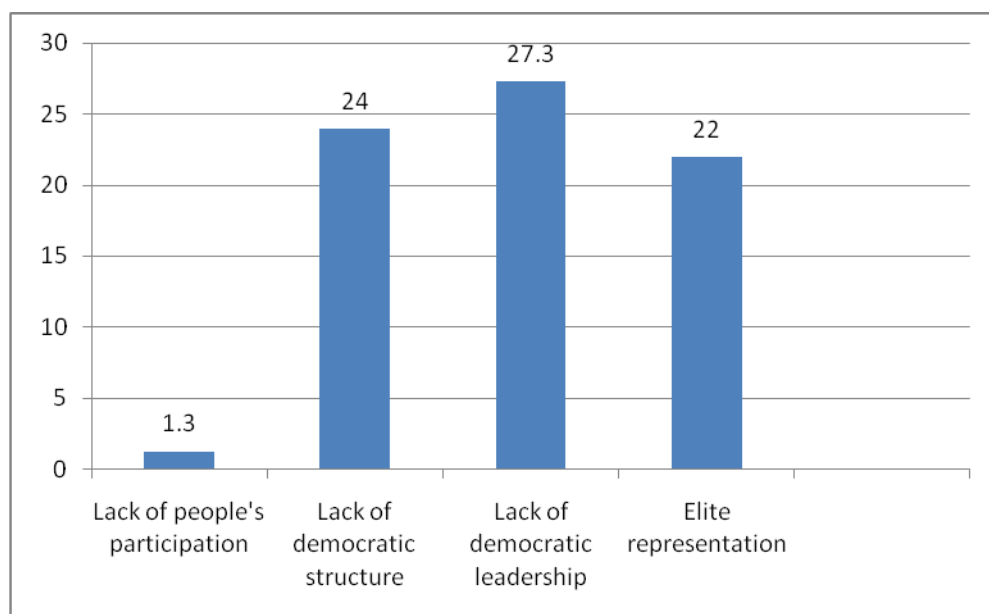
According to the respondents, lack of people's participation, lack of democratic structure, lack of democratic leadership and elite representation are the reasons which bar TIB to be a platform of the people. 27.3% respondents think that lack of democratic leadership is one of the majo reasons that impede TIB to be people's platform. Among the respondents 24% and 22% respectevlely imply that elite representation and lack of democratic structure hindrer TIB to be the platform of People.

Finally it could be noted that inspite of having problems – lack of people's participation, lack of democratic structure, lack of democratic leadership and elite representation, donor funded organization, some times, TIB's voice echos the voice of the people and when it talks against established forces people get confidence. It implies that ther is scope to raise voice against malpractices. This stage implies to examine the platform's ability to form public opinion interms of common concern.

Public Opinion Formation

Public opinion is considered as the best protector of the fundamental rights of the people.In countries where public opinion is not alive, the government becomes absolute. It is, therefore, collectibly said that "an alert and enlightend public opinion is the first essential thing of democracy" (Agarwal :2013 ,402). In order to make public opinion strong in the real sense, it is essential that there should be no hindrances to the means which create public opinion. Hence, space of voice raising is important for public opinion formation.

People's voice within public sphere is an important dynamic of democracy. Voice is raised for public opinion formation. Public opinion is a product of the public

sphere, and a crucial concept in governance and political decision making. In spite of having debate over voice representation and people's platform, TIB is raising voices against corruption in Bangladesh. Now it is a matter to examine whether TIB is able to form public opinion in Bangladesh.

One of the key informants explains that:

> Bangladeshi common people have no voice to reflect except during election. The voices on street have come from political activists; they hardly have any relations to commoners under a patron-client relationship of our political culture. Their opinions usually do not count for any policy making process at any level. All policies are the reflections of political parties, key leaders in particular, at every stages of power. I wonder TIB can bring any positive turn in curbing corruption which is embodied in the deep root of our feudalistic mindset. I am sure if a survey will go on about TIB activities, 90 percent of rural and urban communities reflex their reluctance about it. If they don't know about TIB how do we consider the impact?(KII AJ 1).

Another key informant analizes TIB's role about public opinion formation that:

> I think TIB is quite successful in raising voices against rent-seeking and corruption both in public and private sectors of Bangladesh. In last several decades, TIB has conducted research in different sectors through collecting and analyzing primary and secondary data. It has also published findings and report of this research online. Although a section of the society, particularly government agencies have criticized findings and raised questions about the methodology of the data collection, people have come to know about the nature and extent of corruption in public sectors. People, particularly the educated section of the society have more knowledge about corruption than before (KII PS 1).

As per GSDRC report TIB has various storng contribution in case of pulic opinion formation. It clarified that:

TIB started working under a political government which proved resistant to its activities and key messages on corruption. In this environment TIB exercised influence and exerted impact through engaging elites at the highest level and the general population in local level activities. Through their national research and advocacy work, TIB also made a significant contribution in moving Bangladesh to a situation where there is now a government which has anti-corruption as its headline agenda. In this supportive context at the national level, the impact of TIB's work has increased, with a positive response to their activities. The evidence shows that in both conducive and adverse political contexts, TIB has had a positive impact significantly.

Now we have to analyze respondents perception about TIB's role regarding public opinion formation.

Table 4.3 Role of TIB in case of public opinion formation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Fully	12	8.0	8.0	8.0
	fairly	42	28.0	28.0	36.0
	partially	49	32.0	32.0	68.0
	least	36	23.3	23.3	91.3
	not at all	13	8.7	8.7	100.0
	Total	152	100.0	100.0	

Data imply that TIB has significant role in case of corruption related public opinion formation. Majority of the respondents claim that it produces public opinion partially. But if we count fully and fairly altogether we see more than 35% respondents support TIB's contribution to public opinion formation. Only 8.7% respondents express that TIB does not play any role regarding public opinion formation.

At this milieu to identify the factors which hinder TIB as regards public opinion formation need to be disclosed. The reasons are as follow:

Chart 4.4 Barriers of TIB in terms of public opinion formation (%)
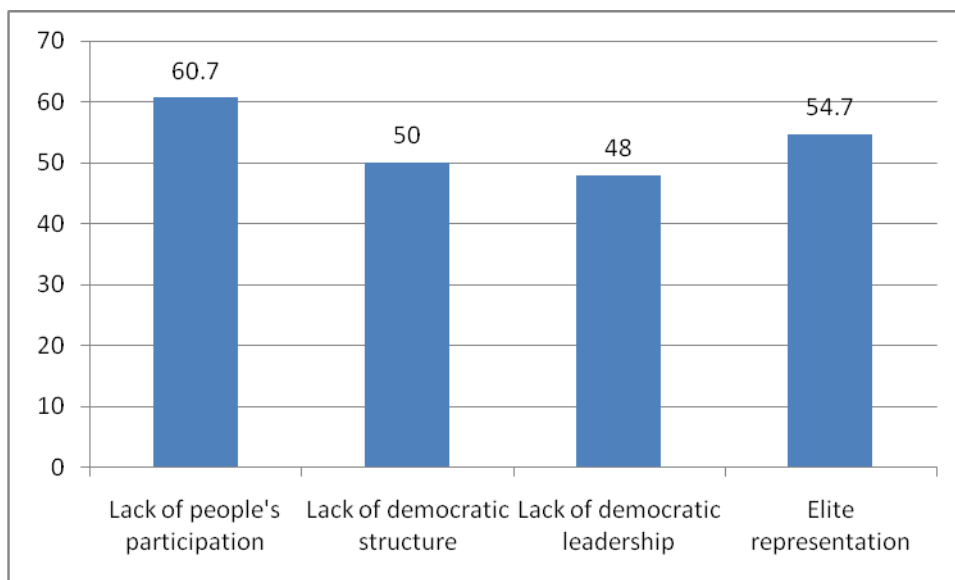
According to respondents, 60.7% indicates that lack of people's participation is the main barrier of TIB with respect to pulic opinion formation. Besides, lack of democratic structure ,lack of democratic leadership,and elite representation are the major hindrences against TIB in terms of public opinion formation.

Finally it could be noted that TIB has made a significant contribution in terms of anti-corruption movement in Bangladesh. Due to its repeated and vigorous campaign anti-corruption stand has been headline agenda here. Majority of the respondents claim that it produces public opinion partially. As per findings, 35% respondents opine that TIB has contribution to public opinion formation.

On the other hand, research finds that, people's participation level is low in terms of TIB's contribution in public opinion formation.It is also found that lower standard of democratic structure and deficit of democratic leadership hinder TIB to produce public opinion.Besides, elite representation impede it to form public opinion in Bangladesh.

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS AND COVERAGE OF COMMON CONCERNS

The Mass Media

Newspapers, radio, television, and the Internet—including e-mail and blogs—are usually less influential than the social environment, but they are still significant, especially in affirming attitudes and opinions that are already established. The news media focus the public's attention on certain personalities and issues, leading many people to form opinions about them. Government officials accordingly have noted that communications to them from the public tend to "follow the headlines."

COVERAGE OF COMMON CONCERN

Coverage implies about the amount of attention that television, radio, and newspapers give to something, or the way in which something is reported

(www.macmillandictionary.com). Needless to say, the importance of media in case of covering concern, it is the main part of public sphere to raise voice through covering concerns. As per the thesis design, it is to be found out the real scenario of media's coverage on corruption in Bangladesh. At this stage media's nature of political corruption coverage, media's independence in case of political corruption coverage and setbacks of media regarding political corruption coverage have been analyzed.

Media's Nature of Political Corruption Coverage

To find out the real scenario of media reporting on corruption, it is important to investigate the nature of coverage. Especially, when the performance of media in third world countries is questioned from various corners, the media of Bangladesh is not out of this ambiance. One of the key informants argues that in some cases, we see, the quality of journalism has reached an expected level. But overall quality status is not up to the mark (KII TAG 3). The nature of the media in Bangladesh is inherently partisan, although recently this partisanship is greatly influenced by the protection of media owner's business interests (Ali: 2006). Due to self censorship media is not being able to perform its due role in the context of democracy in Bangladesh. Media don't cover all the political corruption news due to some internal and external effects (KII EJ 6).

> All those interviewed generally agreed that there are four different kinds of media outlets: a) those created purely to promote and protect business interests; b) those created to advance political ideologies; c) those created as a means of carrying political favor by means of financial gains and influence; and d) those created for journalistic purposes and to provide information. According to media observers, and even those within the media, those in the last category are very few, while

those in the other three are making up the majority of the media landscape. There is an impression that the leading media outlets are accountable, but there is a huge "underground media" that is questionably run and funded that is not under proper watch-dog. These, legally licensed but usually unavailable or un-circulated publications, act as channels for corruption, money laundering and other illegal activities. Some of these publications are reported to only survive due to government advertisements (Ali: 2006).

Chart 4.5   Media's nature of political corruption coverage(%)
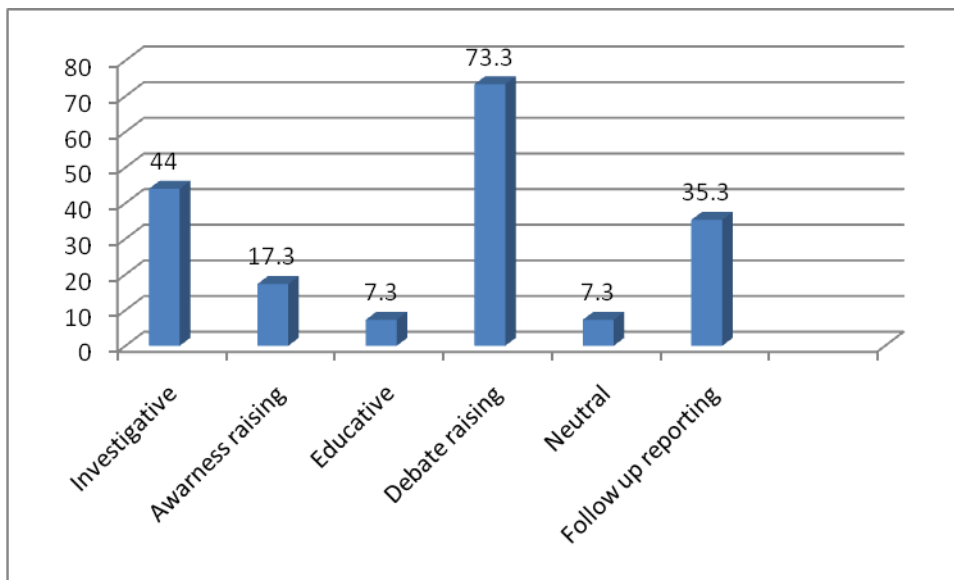
According to respondents, fundamentally the notions we get as regards media's nature of political corruption coverage that are investigative, awareness raising, educative, debate raising, neutral and follow up reporting. 73.30% respondents think that among the nature of coverage, debate raising occupies the most spheres. Investigative and follow up reporting are also found in the nature of political corruption coverage.

Media's Independence as Regards Political Corruption Coverage

Owners of the media are clutched by hidden gang. This ambiance demeans the purpose of media (KII EJ 6). Another key informant explains that we are living in a compromising society. Basically we compromise to the morality. Media is not out of this trend. He also admits that the freedom media enjoy in Bangladesh that could not be underestimated. If Bangladesh is ruled by 50 political parties, journalist society will be divided into fifty groups. It is nothing but just trend of gaining self interest (KII EJ 1). Every government wants to see media weak. It takes advantages from the division of media. Leaders of the media take undue facilities from government and try to impose undue pressure on total media ambiance in Bangladesh.

Chart 4.6 Media's independence in case of covering political corruption (%)
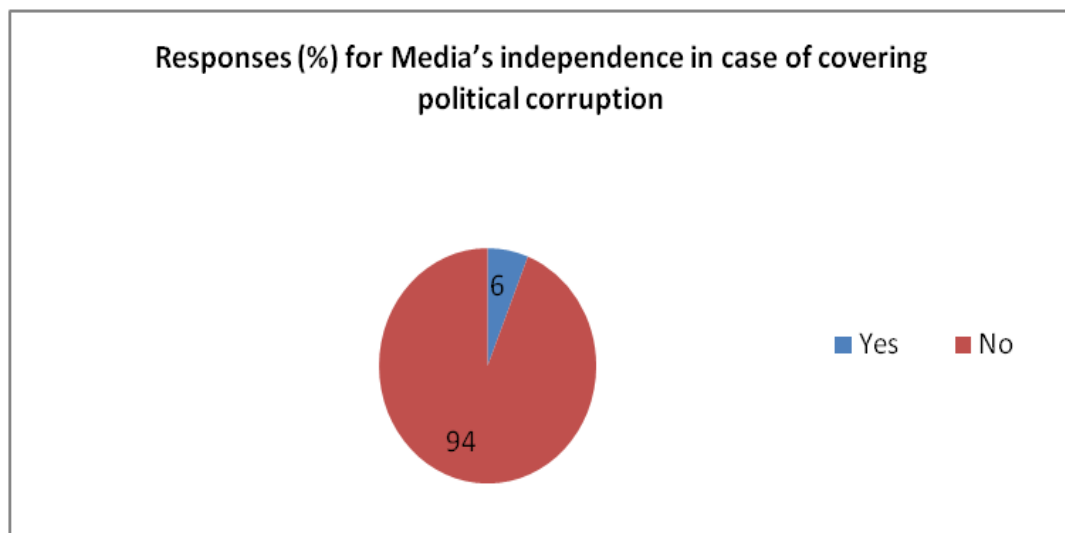
Setbacks of Media Regarding Political Corruption Coverage

Due to political interest, some journalists are dividing journalist society, it is definitely dangerous moral degradation (KII TAG 3). Why people read paper, because, they have trust on it (KII EJ 1) . When society is established with plundering

economy, we cannot expect that media is beyond from this economy (KII TAG 2). News of private TV channel is one of the popular programs for the people. If the broadcasting policy is implemented it will lose attraction and professionalism. People will enjoy artificial and manipulated news (KII AS 2). It is widely acknowledged in Bangladesh that the owners of both print and electronic media outlets are the members of the political and business elite. Most are in some way directly members of political parties, close to leading members of political parties or leaders of business and industry (Ali :2006).

Chart 4.7 Media's hindrances in case of coverage (%)
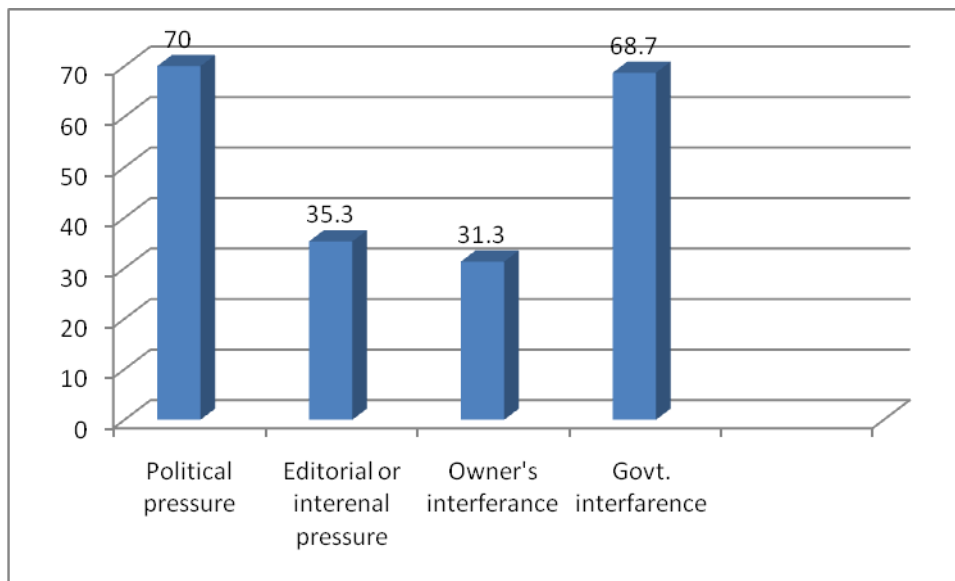
Fundamentally the reasons that impede media to cover corruption duely are poliotical pressure, editorial or internal pressure, owner's interferance and govt. interferance. Among the problems, political pressure and government interferance play predominating role in case of coverage. More than 65% respondents opine these two factors which bar media to perform expected role at the event of corruption coverage.

Table 4.4 Do you think that the corruption of media is the main obstacle for raising

voice against corruption?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Highly agree	39	26.0	26.0	26.0
	fairly agree	58	38.0	38.0	64.0
	partly agree	38	24.7	24.7	88.7
	least agree	5	3.3	3.3	92.0
	disagree	12	8.0	8.0	100.0
	Total	152	100.0	100.0	

All respondents were asked to give opinion on an common perception about medias internal corruption, that the corruption of media is the main obstacle for raising voice against corruption, in a 5 point scale where, 39 (thirty nine) are highly agree and 12 (twelve) are disagree. The maximum 38% of total respondents were found to be 'fairly agree. If we sum up highly agree, fairly agree and partly agree that there we get more than 85% respondents agree with the statement that the corruption of media itself is the main obstacle for raising voice against corruption.

Shaping Public Opinion

The mass media play another important role by providing individuals information what other people think and by giving political leaders large audiences. In this way the media make it possible for public opinion to encompass large numbers of

individuals and wide geographic areas. It appears, in fact, that in some European countries the growth of broadcasting, especially television, affected the operation of the parliamentary system. As an influential part of daily life, media influences the public to a great extent. It is a voice of the voiceless and a great force in building the national consensus. Hadeshian (2006) asserts that, media is the most powerful tool for the formation of public opinion in contemporary times. Now-a-days public opinion consequently becomes a key factor in the decision making process (Anam 2007). Voltmer (2010) mentions that media are expected to provide a forum where a broad range of voices- opposition parties, civil society actors, independent experts and ordinary citizens can express alternative views(as in Razzaque : 2013).

Despite media's chance to be a forum of raising voices, media of Bangladesh is not out of question as regards people's trust on it.

Table 4.5 How much do you rely on media?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	17	11.3	11.4	11.4
	2	34	22.7	22.8	34.2
	3	78	52.0	52.3	86.6
	4	18	12.0	12.1	98.7
	5	2	1.3	1.3	100.0
	Total	149	99.3	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.7		
Total		152	100.0		

In case of relying on media, 52% respondents view that their level of relying on media is medium (scale 3), where scale 1 is lowest and scale 5 is highest. Only 2 respondents agree that they rely on media in highest level. On the other hand, if we calculate scale 1. 2 and 3, we find that the level of relying on media in Bangladesh has negative trend from medium (3) to lowest (1). It means that the problems media face internally and externally create negative perception on itself.

The people in the most societies receive maximum information through the media. The media shapes in large part what people think of the issues and institutions that affect them. It is critical to the information of public opinion. The character of the media tends to determine the character of public debate in democracy. A free media is a fundamental weapon to any definition of democratic good governance (DFID: 2008).

Media can be defined as the means of communication that include both print and electronic media. Role of media in combating corruption means how and to what extent media reporting create tangible impact (indirect enforcement) and intangible impact (prevention) in fighting against corruption. Corruption is understood by the uses of entrusted power for personal gain, which is considered as unethical (Haque : 2012).

Table 4.6: Level of public opinion formation by media

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Valid Percent
Fully	15	10	10	10
fairly	31	20.66	20.66	30.66
partially	51	34	34	64.66
least	23	15.33	15.33	79.99
not at all	32	21.33	21.33	100
Total	152	100	100	

The table shows that majority respondents reply that media produce public opinion partially in Bangladesh. 34% respondents opine this view.

Table 4.7 Level of satisfaction on the performance of media

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Highly satisfied	1	.7	.7	.7
	fairy satisfied	49	32.7	32.7	33.3
	partial satisfied	52	34.0	34.0	67.3
	least satisfied	30	19.3	19.3	86.7
	dissatisfied	20	13.3	13.3	100.0
	Total	152	100.0	100.0	

All respondents were asked to give opinion on level of satisfaction with the performance of media, in a 5 point scale where, 1 (one) respondent was highly satisfied and 20 (twenty) respondents were dissatisfied. The maximum 34% of total respondents were found partially satisfied. If we sum up least satisfied and dissatisfied we get that only 32 percent respondents are dissatisfied with the performance of media. It implies that media is playing major role in public sphere to raise voice.

Now it is important to validate the data found from interview and FGD regarding dissatisfaction on media. In this case the reasons are found that are corporate voice, internal corruption, self censorships, political lenience and owners' interest.

Chart 4.8 Reasons regarding people's dissatisfaction on Media (%)
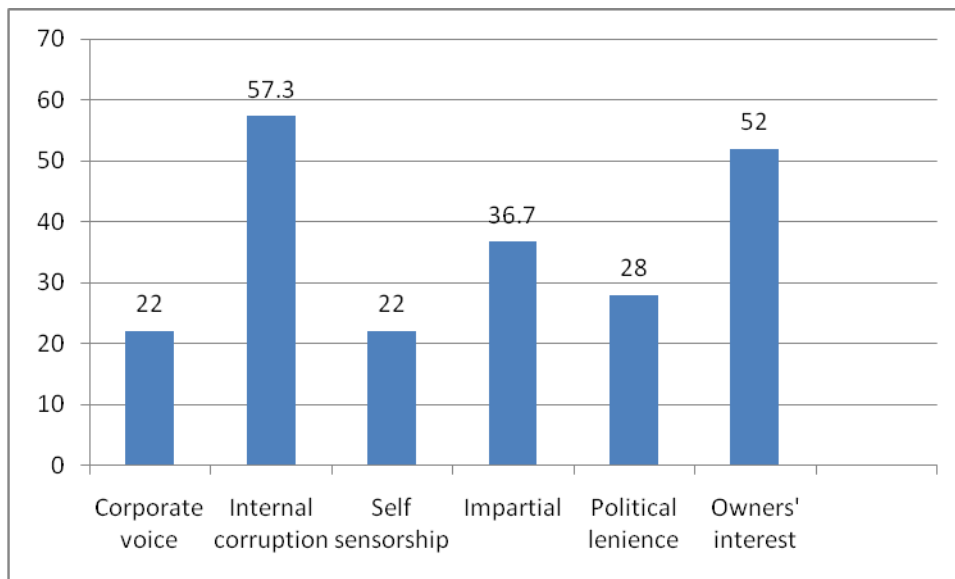
According to data, both internal corruption and owners' interest affect negatively on Medias' role as regards satisfaction on media. More than 50% respondents opine that these two indicators have deterrent impact on media.

Free, independent and plural media provide a critical check on abuse of state power or corruption; enable informed and inclusive public debate on issues of common concern. While this notion of free and independent media acting on behalf of the citizen against both state and other interests is a widespread ideal, the reality of most media worldwide is complex, rapidly changing and extraordinarily diverse (DFID : 2008).

Primarily, a free media creates an informed polity that is more prepared to hold their elected representatives accountable – a prerequisite for effective democracy. Hudock (2003) argues that a robust media provides people with the political and economic information that they require to effectively participate in democratic decision making (as in Ali 2006).

The quality of journalism has advanced with the line of democratic advancement in Bangladesh. Despite the confusion of the performance of media, it is the only place where people depend on. It tries to cover political corruption conceding some setbacks (KII EJ 4). It is tough to disclose true facts through media, where society is divided. Media owners are more concern regarding their business and media leaders are busy with getting self political and economic interest (FGD: NRA, Rajshahi).

Shaping media steered public opinion has been restricted by various ways. Ongoing broadcasting policy 2014 has also been termed as setbacks for media performance. Various media stakeholders comment on broadcasting policy 2014 the following ways in Bangladesh.

Mahfuj Anam says:

> The truth is the broadcasting policy passed by the cabinet has had two mindsets working behind it. One is that of bureaucracy who never feel comfortable with the free media. Now that they have become more partisan than ever and see their future more in sycophancy and less in merit, they prefer a gagged media that will be less prone to doing investigative journalism.
> The other mindset is of a political party that, having come to power through a questionable process, sees an enemy in every critical voice. It feels vulnerable to a free spirited media culture and is foolishly moving towards throttling it (*The Daily Star* 8 August, 2014).

The newly formulated national broadcast policy is conflicting with the country's Right to Information (RTI) Act, Sultana Kamal, chairperson of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), comments:

The policy is conflicting with the country's constitution, democratic norms and values, human rights and Right to Information Act, Rejecting the broadcast policy, Sultana said the entire policy is aimed at controlling the press. She said the policy has been formulated abruptly. A common ground for formulating such policy will have to find out through broader consultative process, she added.TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman, who also attended the conference, said the broadcast policy would curb the freedom of press. But, the government says that the policy has been enacted to protect the media, not control them.

In an uneducated democracy, public opinion has to be generated and some agencies are required to do work. An instrument of mass communication can serve the requirement of effective mobilization of national opinion. This is the only way where a democracy can survive. "While the Constitution upholds freedom of speech and freedom of the press, the broadcasting policy has laid down restrictions on news pertaining to particular institutions. The government or the information Ministry can't dictate what the media will air or not"(*Editorial Prothom Alo* Aug 06, 2014).

Finally, the research finds that the quality of journalism has reached in an expected level. But overall quality status is not up to the mark. The nature of the media in Bangladesh is inherently partisan, although recently this partisanship is greatly influenced by the protection of media owner's business interests. Due to self censorship media is not being able to perform its due role in the context of democracy in Bangladesh.

Media don't cover all the political corruption news due to some internal and external effects. Though media serve journalistic purposes and provide information, it also promotes and protects business interests, advance political ideologies, carrying

political favor by means of financial gains and influence. There is an impression that the leading media outlets are accountable, but there are a huge "underground media" that is questionably run and funded that is not under proper watch-dog.

Media's natures of political corruption coverage are investigative, awareness building, educative, debate raising, neutral and follow-up reporting. Among the nature debate raising occupies the most spheres. In this case 70.10% respondents opine that nature of media is debate raising oriented in the public sphere.

Owners of the media are clutched by hidden gang. Every government wants to see media weak. It takes advantages from the division of media. Leaders of the media take undue facilities from govt. and try to impose undue pressure on total media ambiance in Bangladesh.

"Due to political interest some journalists are dividing journalist society and media face the impact of plundering economy" (FGD: NRA, Dhaka). It is widely acknowledged in Bangladesh that the owners of both print and electronic media outlets are members of the political and business elite. In short,the reasons impede media to cover corruption duely that are –poliotical pressure, editorial or internal pressure, owner's interferance and government's interferance.

85% respondents agree with the maxim of media's internal corruption of itself which is the main barrier to cover political coverage. In case of relying on media, majority respondents (52%) viewed their level of relying on media is medium (scale 3). The maximum 34% of total respondents were found to be 'partial satisfied. Corporate voice, internal corruption, self censorship, political lenience and owners' interest impede media to perform its due role. Internal corruption and owners' interest

affect negatively on media's role in terms of satisfaction in media. More than 50% respondents opine that these two indicators have deterrent impact on media.

Finally it could be noted that media inform individuals regarding what other people think and provide political leaders large audiences. In this way, the media make it possible for public opinion to encompass large number of individuals and wide geographic areas. It is a voice of the voiceless and a great force in building the national consensus. At this aspect, media are expected to provide a forum where a broad range of voices- opposition parties, civil society actors, independent experts and ordinary citizens can express alternative views.

TALKSHOW AND INTEREST ARTICULATION

Talk show is an electronic media show in which various topics are discussed to inform or educate the audiences. It is usually hosted by one person that focuses on interviews or audience participation. In talk shows guests are those people who are learned, highly educated or who have great experience in relation to whatever issues are discussed. (www.**slides**hare.net/xxaqib/**talk-shows**-16291269).A television show in which famous and expert people, such as authorities in a specific field, participate in discussions or are interviewed and often respond to questions from audiences. (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2009).

This part of research has been counted in two ways, 1. to find out whether the voices producing from talk show represent the voice of the people, 2. to analyze whether raising voice form public opinion, in terms of common concern in Bangladesh.

Voice Representation

Talk show voice doesn't represent the voice of the people. Corrupt people try to avoid talk show. The participants seem to be unknown regarding how corruption occurs. Especially MPs and bureaucrats, more informed about corruption, avoid the program. Though very few participate in the programs, inform people about the facts partially (KII MP 1). One of the key informant interviewees clarifies that talk show is a little bit popular among a section of middle-class urban people in Bangladesh. In that way, corruption issue is becoming a concern for a segment of people. He further adds that it is not more than three to five per cent of total citizen (KII AJ 1).

> They all come in all sizes and colors while their respect for democracy, freedom of expression, right to information and right to basic security of life is overwhelmingly not at all denounced by those so-called eminent persons; yet these are the same group of people who goes hand in hand to create social rift for their mere survival in politics. So we live in a society where people with very less qualifications are not only talking more, while doing less for people and more for themselves. We have every reason to be worried about in general and if people does not come forward, I think we are going to see not much change in our overall quality of life.: Sheikh Monirul Islam, Opee(17 October *The Daily Star*)

Talk show participants are not institutionally representatives of the people. They are the part of civil society. Definitely some voice reflects people's idea and perception. (KII EJ 5) It doesn't represent the voice of people, but plays the role of pressure group (FGD: TSA).They are making common people conscious, but raising the voice of educated people (KII AS 3). Talk show is essential in our society when we have dysfunctional parliament, no effective civil societies and there is no scope for analyzing and debating these issues. In this case, Farouk argues that cure for

democracy is only possible when the spaces of democratic practices will be extended. This space incorporates virtual democratic practices also. Talk shows are immensely popular for this reason (Farouk : 2012).

Some of the participants are doing well in talk show. But some take full advantage of such situation in creating negativity in the minds of people. Anchor persons and some investigative journalists instead of being analytical, which are their job as the journalists, start giving strong views against or in favor of someone or something, and make sure everyone believe in whatever they say (KII TAG 4).

It doesn't represent the voice of the people. The audience is more conscious than the participants. The participants talk with pre-concept ideas (KII TAG 2). In spite of having question over neutrality, talk show is playing positive role in case of voice raising. To some extent it represents the voice of the people. (KII MP 3) .Every person has some affiliation and biasness in self ideology. But the best person is the one who keeps his biasness out of argument & discussion and listen without pre-judging and pre-labeling anyone and any argument. It's based upon the public interest. Talk shows make easy the understanding of the people (KII TAG 4).

The main attraction of the talk show is the vigorous debate and discussion of certain issues. The government side, the opposition, neutral persons, experts, everyone has a chance to speak out and deliberate on the issues. And the general public participates too, calling in live over telephone. Nowhere else in Bangladesh is democracy so alive (Jahangir : 2014).

There are other difficulties that one encounters on the talk shows, at least in a large number of them. And they relate to the fact that every talk show participant seems to be an expert on nearly every subject under the sun. You

will find these known faces discussing an entire gamut of issues from hartals to the caretaker government, to crime and to corruption (Ahsan 2012).

Now every person can give his own analysis on any event which is happened. Viewers now become opinion makers. Talk shows influence the individual's life and become the source of social change. Talk show does not represent the voice of all people. Because in talk show, only some selected persons are invited. But in some exceptional cases, it can be the voice of the people like BBC Bangladesh Sanglap. It is a matter of happiness that talk shows can create consciousness against corruption among the mass people (FGD: TSA).

Debate continues with positive and negative aspects of talk show in terms of people's voice representation. At this frame of reference, we have to rely on the convictions of the respondents to validate whether talk show revealed voices represent the voice of the people.

Table 4.8 Whether voices of talk show represent the voice of people?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Fully	2	1.3	1.4	1.4
	fairly	62	40.7	41.5	42.9
	partially	45	30.0	30.6	73.5
	least	31	20.0	20.4	93.9
	not at all	9	6.3	6.1	100.0
	Total	149	98.0	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.7		
	Total	152	100.0		

According to the respondents, 40.7% opine that talk show 'fairly' represents the voice of the people. On the other hand, only 6.3% respondents reply that talk show doesn't represent the voice of the people at all. If we sum up the percentage of categories—fully, fairly and partially, we will find that more than 70% respondents imply the importance of talk show in terms of voice representation.

Foregone debate brings quarry why it doesn't represent people's voice fully. The reasons are analyzed as follows.

Chart 4.9 Barriers of talk shows in terms of people's voice representation (%)
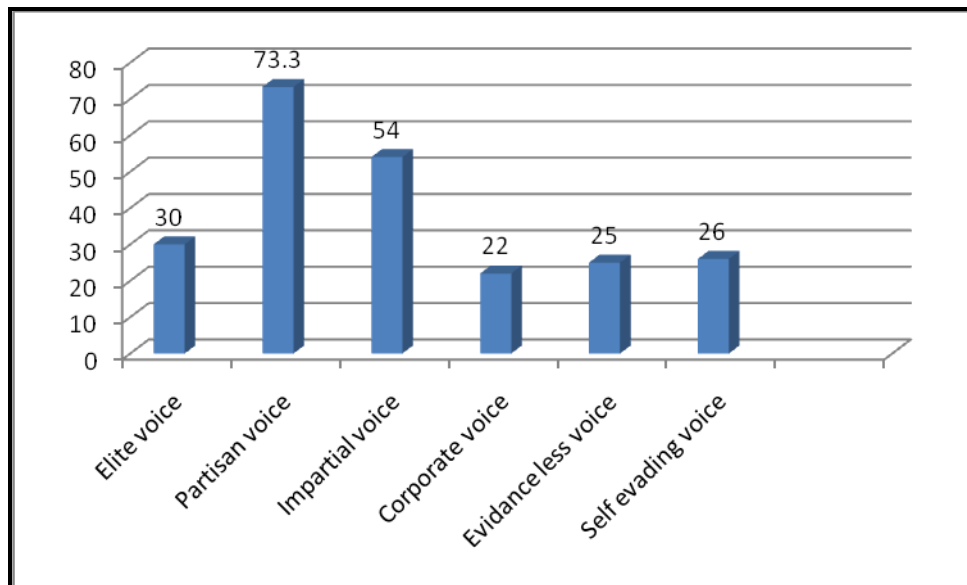
Basically the reasons impede talk show to be the voice of the people are elite voice, partisan voice, impartial voice, corporate voice, evidence less voice and self evading voice etc. Among the barriers partisan and biased voices dominate the space. More than 50% respondents support these two factors which are the hindrances to represent the people voice. More than 20% respondents said that rest of the factors—elite voice, corporate voice, evidence less voice and self evading voice, are

responsible for talk show not to be the voice of the people. Now it is time to analyze whether produced voice from talk show can form public opinion in Bangladesh.

Aforementioned arguments as to talk shows' voice representation prove that the space is significant despite having various loopholes. But it clearly substantiates that the participants of talk show are making common people conscious, but raising the voice of educated people.

Public Opinion Formation

"Talk show doesn't play any effective role in case of public opinion formation. Participants do not disclose information overtly. Produced voice has lack of information. Talkers inform people partially with self evading manner" (KII MP 1).

Talk show participants are the part of civil society. We can call it media voice also. The voice of Talk show is more powerful than print media. It has significant impact on public opinion formation. Now it is more important because of less effectiveness of representative parliamentary democracy. (KII EJ 5). I am doubtful whether the voice is going to collective voice (KII PS 5). They don't represent the values of the people of all walks (FGD: MU, Dhaka).

It has some impact on public opinion. People are listening talk show and becoming informed concerning issues. (KII TAG 2) .People are getting information and becoming conscious. But the participants must consider whether their voices are self evading ones. Despite some flaws, this ambiance helps public opinion formation. (KII MP 3) One of the key informants clarifies that:

I do not think that voice or opinion about irregularities and corruption are significantly emerging from talk show because corruption is a sensitive issue

and those who participate in talk show usually do not explain different issues which are directly or indirectly related to corruption. On the other hand, ownership of the satellite channels is primarily rooted in and depends on party affiliation. Moreover, government agencies have a form of indirect control over the broadcasting (KII PS 1).

Another key informant explains that:

Bangladeshi common people have no voice to reflect except during election. The voices on street have come from political activists; they hardly have any relations to commoners under a patron-client relationship of our political culture. Their opinion usually do not count for any policy making process at any level. All policies are the reflection of political party, key leaders in particular, at every stage of power (KII AJ 1).

Most of the talk shows participants criticize government constructively where participants can argue in favor of or against with evidence. With this People become informed about various issues from it (Ibrahim : 2012).Talk show can make a great impact on public mind. "People can get diversified information through direct participation in the shows over phone, which help forming public opinion" (FGD: TSA).

Table 4.9 Role of talk show in case of public opinion formation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Fully	3	2.0	2.0	2.0
	fairly	48	32.0	32.0	34.0
	partially	47	31.3	31.3	65.3
	least	35	22.0	22.0	87.3
	not at all	19	12.7	12.7	100.0
	Total	152	100.0	100.0	

According to the respondents, 32% opine that talk show 'fairly' produce voice to form public opinion. On the other hand, only 12.7% respondents think that talk show doesn't form public opinion at all. If we sum up the percentage of categories—fully, fairly and partially, we will find more than 65% respondents support that talk show has positive role as regards public opinion formation.

Chart 4.10 Barrier of talk show in case of public opinion formation (%)
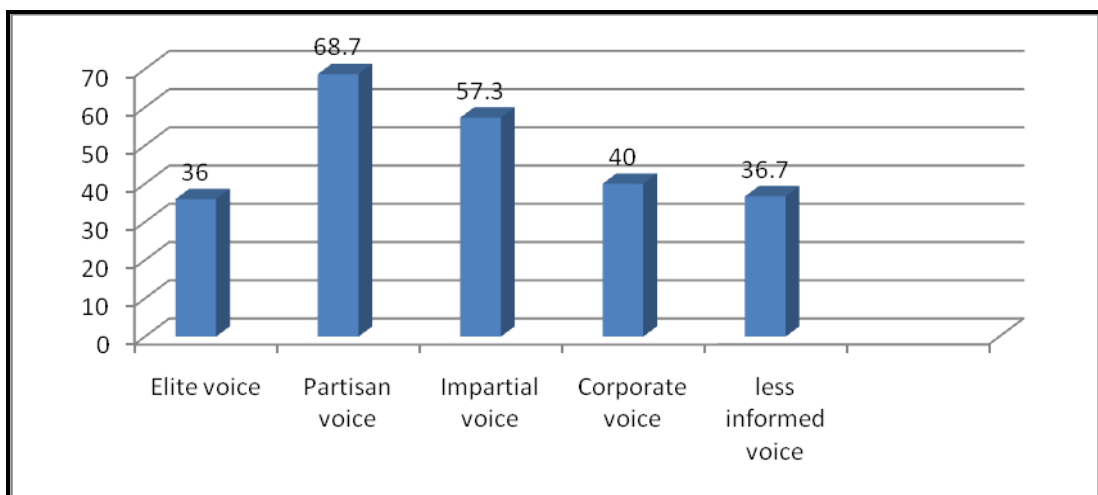
Basically the reasons impeding talk show to be the voice of the people are elite voice, partisan voice, biased voice, corporate voice, and evidence less voice. Among the barriers, partisan voice dominates the sphere. Near about 70% respondents opine that partisan voice bar the voice of talk show to form public opinion. More than 30% respondents argue rest of the factors— elite voice, corporate voice, and evidence less voice are responsible for talk show not to form public opinion in terms of corruption in Bangladesh.

Talk shows are the beauty of democracy. Moreover, the contribution of the talk shows on many important issues cannot be ignored. It is reality that some talk shows' participants are becoming agent of vested interest monger. They have great impact in creating a noise on the scene about any issue or diverting the public attention from any critical issue. So it is very important to know the biasness of the political anchor so that we do not accept everything they say but apply our own common sense and understanding to the issues and the host from which background he has come.

FACEBOOK AND INTEREST ARTICULATION

Now a day's facebook has been one of the important social media to raise voice and form public opinion. Bangladesh is not out of this purview. People are gradually participating in this social media. At this juncture, question comes, whether people can raise their voice in the public sphere and the raised voice represents the perception of the people. Finally, the voice from facebook in terms of forming public opinion and the setbacks concerning forming public opinion have been analyzed at this stage.

Voice Raising and Voice Representation

Facebook is a social media. It has potentiality to raise people's voice. In Bangladesh to raise voice is possible for few people but not for common people through facebook. Because most of the people of our country do not use facebook and they do not have any idea about it (FGD: FBU).There are about 100 'facebook' pages that are dedicated to the issue of corruption in Bangladesh (FGD: MU, Rajshahi). How many people in Bangladesh use FB? Around two millions altogether (I have not accurate official statistics, in world it is 1230 million) (KII AS 1). Facebook is not bad. We can share posts easily. 2 million families are involved. It means 10 million people are getting information from facebook (KII MP 1). Transparency International Bangladesh has a page but it is followed by only 6,008 fans. Moreover, the page is not dedicated in creating an activist community, rather it uses this to provide schedules of their programs and, post their various activities as well as share news links where the works of TIB is mentioned (KII PS 1). Even those pages whose names suggest that the 'fans' or 'followers' do not want corruption in Bangladesh, unfortunately the contents do not support so. Most of these platforms are used to criticize the politicians (KII TAG 4).

Most of the users are youths and they have no fascination to join as political activists to press their demands through street agitations, demonstration or any other means of Bangladeshi political culture (except one in Shahabagh)(KII AJ 1). They are concentrated in some cities and towns only, where all but 25 per cent of total people live. Virtually, career-driven young people raise the voices against many things including corruption. But politicians never consider those as major policy or action issues. These voices go in vain due to less influence of this virtual

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communication portal among people, administration and finally politicians. Some of the FGD participants advocated for this type of social media. Facebook has a great role to raise voice against corruption. Because, anyone can share (comment, like) such incidence easily. And its users can become conscious about corruption. (FGD: FBU).Many information we get early through facebook than that of traditional media (FGD: FBU). The following table shows the participation of people in facebook regarding the concern.

Table 4.10   Corruption related facebook pages and participants' activities

Name of facebook pages	Number of likes
Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB)	7662
দুর্নীতি দমন বাংলাদেশ/দুদ Anti Corruption Bangladesh	692
Anti Corruption Commission - Bangladesh	565
Bangladesh Anti Corruption Community	498
Stop Corruption Save Bangladesh	411
Corruption Free Bangladesh Org	393
Anti Corruption Commission Bangladesh	337
দুর্নীতি মুক্ত বাংলাদেশ চাই- Anti Corruption Of Bangladesh	265
দুর্নীতিমুক্ত বাংলাদেশ (Corruption Free Bangladesh	225
দুর্নীতি মুক্ত বাংলাদেশ (Bangladesh Against Corruption)	194

Source: Facebook pages 2014

In this table it is clearly mentioned that there are corruption related facebook pages in Bangladesh. It also indicates that people's participation (like in the facebook pages) level is low. The top rank page is Transparency international Bangladesh, but only 7662 people like this page. The number of like of the other pages is also in low

magnitude. This scenario indicates that people have low level of accessibility and acceptability in facebook pages in Bangladesh.

Table 4.11 Whether facebook is being able to raise corruption related voice

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	76	50.7	51.4	51.4
	Yes	74	48.0	48.6	100.0
	Total	149	98.7	100.0	
Missing	System	2	1.3		
Total		152	100.0		

The frequency distribution table implies that facebook is not capable of raising voice fully in case of corruption in Bangladesh. Majority of respondents think that it is not able to raise voice as regards corruption. In spite of having majority respondents' negative idea about this type of media as to voice rising, we can not negate the importance of this social media in the public sphere. Because near about 50% respondents think that it has capacity to raise voice in the public sphere. The table clearly demonstrates that it has importance in the public sphere at the event of voice raising.

At this frame of reference, quarry comes why more than 50% disagree that it cannot elevate voice. It indicates that various setbacks deter to uplift voice as to corruption.

Chart 4.11   Barriers regarding voice representation through facebook (%)
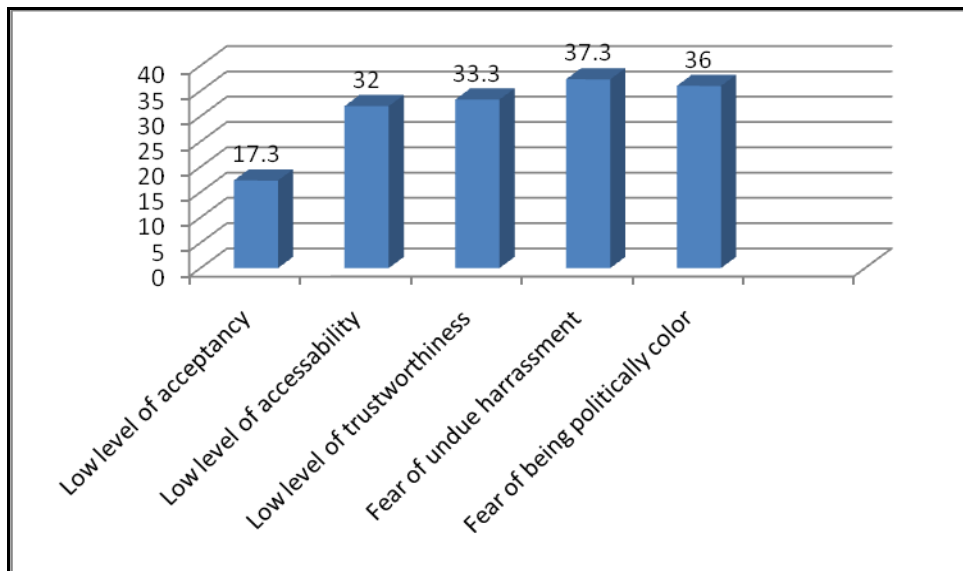
The above bar diagram demonstrates the barriers of facebook regarding performing in the public sphere of Bangladesh. The setbacks mainly are seen— low level of acceptance, low level of people's accessibility, and low level of trustworthiness, fear of undue harassment and fear of politically being color. Among the problems, fear of undue harassment and fear of political color are mostly remarkable. The respondents, 37.3% and 36% respectably, view these two are responsible for not raising voice in public sphere through facebook. The other factors like low level of trustworthiness, low level of people's accessibility and low level of acceptance also impede facebook to raise voice in public sphere.

Facebook is also legally restricted to raise voice. The below facts prove that:

VOICE expresses its serious concern over the infringement of freedom of expression and the government's control on the access to information through blocking the social networking site, Facebook. The Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) blocked access to Facebook last Saturday, 29 May 2010. Facebook is increasingly becoming a popular online medium among the youth to stay connected with important opportunities and contacts and perform their socio-cultural, family or livelihood- related activities. Close to one million users in Bangladesh now log on to facebook on a regular basis. (VOICE, Dhaka, 31 May 2010).

Research unfolds that facebook is problem ridden as to elevate people's voice in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh to raise voice is possible for few people but not for common people. Most of the people of our country do not use facebook and also they have no idea about FB. Most of these platforms are used to criticize the politicians. Majority of the users are youths and they have no fascination to join as political activists to press their demands through street agitations, demonstrations or any other means of Bangladeshi political culture. They are concentrated among cities and towns only. Virtually, career-driven young generation raise the voices against many things including corruption. But politicians never consider those as major policy or action issues. These voices go in vain due to less influence of this virtual communication portal among people, administration and finally politicians. People's participation level is low. This scenario indicates that people have low level of accessibility and acceptability in facebook in Bangladesh. It seems that facebook has low level ability to raise voice fully in case of corruption in Bangladesh. The causes of the weakness of facebook are low level of acceptance, low level of people's accessibility, and low level of trust worthiness, fear of undue harassment and fear of

politically being color. Among the problems like fear of undue harassment and fear of political color are mostly remarkable.

On the other hand, it has some positive side also. We can share posts easily. Information we can get early through facebook than traditional media. Near about 50% respondents think that it has capacity to raise voice in the public sphere. The arguments and information clearly demonstrates that it has importance in public sphere at the event of voice raising.

Finally it could be noted that facebook is an increasing space for raising voice in BD public sphere. Basically young generation use it effectively to raise voice. It is clear in any format that this space is trying to raise voice. But due to various problems like low level of people's acceptance, low level of accessibility, lack of authenticity, fear of undue harassment and apprehension of being politically color hinder facebook to raise voice in BD public sphere.

Formation of Public Opinion

The above discussion has mentioned that in spite of some setbacks regarding voice representation, facebook is raising voice in public sphere. Now it is a matter of examine whether it can form public opinion in Bangladesh. In this case, respondents' views have been considered.

Table 4.12 Role of facebook in case of public opinion formation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Fully	14	9.3	9.3	9.3
	fairly	32	21.3	21.3	30.7
	partially	37	24.0	24.0	54.7
	least	29	18.7	18.7	73.3
	not at all	40	26.7	26.7	100.0
	Total	152	100.0	100.0	

The above table shows that as per majority of the respondents, facebook cannot form public opinion. 26.7% opine that facebook can form public opinion 'not at all'. But if we sum up the idea fully, fairly and partially category of option, we will see more than 50% respondents imply the importance of facebook in case of forming public opinion in Bangladesh. Basically we see that 21.3% respondents support 'fairly' option. It indicates the importance, but due to 26.7% respondent's negative attitude, it makes us think to find out the causes why it is not capable of forming public opinion in BD public sphere.

As majority of respondents opine that facebook can form public opinion 'not at all', we have to unearth the facts remain behind the scene. The barriers of facebook as regard public opinion formation are sketched below.

Chart 4.12 Barriers of facebook in case of public opinion formation (%)
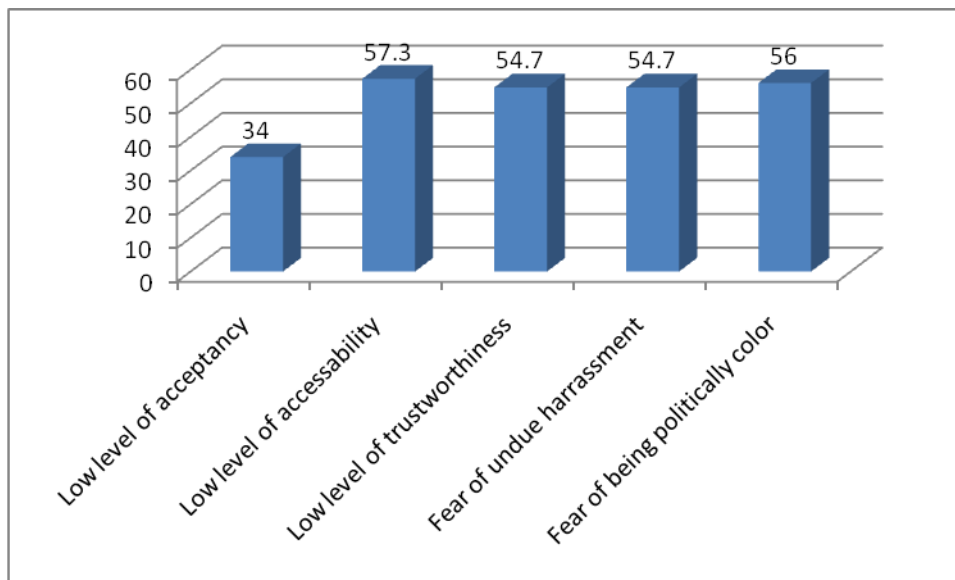
The above bar diagram shows that there are various barriers of facebook in case of forming public opinion in Bangladesh. The dominating problems are low level of acceptance, low level of accessibility, low level of trustworthiness, fear of undue harassment and fear of politically being color. Among the problems low level of people's accessibility dominates here. As per respondents opinion, the other hindrances— fear of being politically color , low level of trustworthiness , fear of undue harassment and lack of acceptances are prevailing in facebook comprising BD public sphere. These reasons are the impediments of facebook in case of forming public opinion in Bangladesh.

Facebook or fake book**?**

Facebook has been a popular social networking site. Here one can share one's views on any issue such as politics, social problems, etc. One can share pictures and subscribe to various pages. In order to acquire likes, various pages adopt various alluring techniques such as providing the users with fake news.

A few days ago, while browsing through the Facebook, I saw a status which stated that Aung San Suu-Kyi of Myanmar has converted to Islam and there was an image of her attached! I was astonished to see the status because I had not read anything in the newspapers about this. Later, I came to know that the picture was photo shopped and the information was wrong. However, some people shared the news with enthusiasm without knowing the fact and thus misled people.

We have to be cautious about the information we get from Facebook and should not believe or share any news without being sure about the authenticity of the news.

Md. Zonaed Emran ,A banker, August 13, 2014, *The Daily Star*.

The graph and the comment of the box clearly indicates that in spite of having huge prospect of facebook in case of forming public opinion in Bangladesh, the reasons— fear of being politically color , low level of trustworthiness , fear of undue harassment and lack of acceptances are creating problems in this sphere. Especially lack of authenticity is one of the major problems for facebook.

Finally the study finds that there is a limited space to raise voice in public sphere through facebook. Especially young people are more interested to use this space. It has been a flexible space to get information. But there is a question about the authenticity of the information shared through it. In case of representation, the number

of participation is limited and it is mainly attracted by the young people. Most of the people are out of this preview.

On the other hand raised voice has importance to form public opinion. But it is barred due to fear of political color, low level of trustworthiness, fear of undue harassment and lack of acceptances in case of forming public opinion in Bangladesh.

CONCLUSION

The research has found that democratic public sphere produces public opinion partially. In the context of citizens' platform, the study shows that that despite having negative perceptions—promoting donor voice, motivated voice, elite voice, voice for depoliticisation and voice for chaos rising, TIB is making people conscious, trying to promote social movement, raising voice on the basis of people's interests, opinion and experience and also creating knowledge based demand.

The research has unfolded that TIB has many problems like lack of people's participation, lack of democratic structure, lack of democratic leadership and elite representation, donor funded organization, some times. Despite the problems, TIB's voice pronuces the voice of the people and when it talks against vested forces, people get confidence. It indicates that there is a forum to raise voice against malpractices. This state of TIB implies to analyze the platform's ability to produce public opinion interms of common concern.

The research has found that TIB has made a significant contribution in moving Bangladesh to a situation where anti-corruption movement has been one of the major issues. Majority of the respondents claim that it produces public opinion partially. But

if we count fully and fairly altogether we see, more than 35% respondents support TIB's contribution to public opinion formation.

The study has also identified that lack of people's participation is the main impediment of TIB in respect to pulic opinion formation. Besides, elite representation, lack of democratic structure , , and lack of democratic leadership are the major barriers against TIB in terms of public opinion formation.

In the context of communication channel the study has explored that the standard of journalism has reached at an expected level. But overall quality status is not up to the mark. The research has also identified that the partisan nature of the media in Bangladesh has recently been greatly influenced by the protection of media owner's business interests. It is also known from the study that media's performance is hindered due to self censorship which has negative impact on democracy in Bangladesh.

The study has clarified that the nature of media's corruption coverage is awareness raising, educative, investigative, debate raising, neutral and follow up reporting. But the alarming fact is that owners of the media are clutched by hidden gang. With this every government wants to see media weak. It takes advantages from the division of media. It is also found that leaders of the media take undue facilities from govt. and try to impose unnecessary pressure on total media environment in Bangladesh.

The research has also unearthed that due to political interest some journalists are dividing the media outlets in political line. It is also know that media face plundering economic impact. It is widely found in Bangladesh that the owners of both

print and electronic media outlets are co-opts of the political and business elite. The research has clearly identified the reasons that impede media to cover corruption duely are— govt. interferance, owner's interferance, poliotical pressure, editorial or internal pressure.

The research has also unfolded that 85% respondents agree with the maxim of media's internal corruption of itself and it is the main barrier to cover political coverage. In case of relying on media, majority respondents viewed their level of relying on media is medium (scale 3).The maximum 34% of total respondents were found to be 'partially satisfied. The study has identified that corporate voice, internal corruption; political lenience, self censorship and owners' interest impede media to perform its due role. Internal corruption and owners' interest put impact negatively on Medias' role as regards satisfaction on media. As per 50% respondents' views, internal corruption and owners' interest have deterrent impact on media.

The study has identified that in spite of having ambiguous role of media, it is the only place where people can depend. It is trying to cover the state of political corruption conceding some setbacks. It is tough to disclose true facts through media, where society is politically divided. Media owners are more concern regarding their business and media leaders are busy with getting self political and economic interest. It is also found that bureaucracy never feels comfortable with the free media.

Research has also found out that media provide individuals information what other people think and give political leaders large spaces to disseminate ideology. In this way, the media make it possible for public opinion to cover large number of individuals and wide geographic areas. In this way, voiceless get voice and this voice

becomes a great force in building the national consensus. It is also identified that media are expected to provide a forum where opposition parties, civil society actors, independent experts and ordinary citizens can express alternative views.

The study has identified talk show in terms of people's voice raising that has both positive and negative sides. In the context of positive stand research discloses that some voices reflect people's idea and perception. Talk show is very important in our society because we have less effective parliament, no effective civil societies and there is no other issues based debating and discussion forum. It is also found that some of the participants in talk shows are doing well in talk show. Despite having question over neutrality, talk show is playing pro-active role in case of voice raising. The research has also unfolded that to some extent it represents the voice of the people. It makes easy the understanding of the people. It is also found that viewers of talk shows now become opinion makers. Talk shows' views impact the audiences' life and become the source of social development. Research has also found that more than 70% respondents imply the importance of talk show in terms of voice representation of the people.

The study has also unearthed some negative facts about talk shows. Mostly aware people as to common concern (corruption) don't feel comfortable to participate in talk shows. It is also found that the participants, primarily, have a few knowledge about how does corruption occur. MPs and bureaucrats, more informed about corruption, are not interested to participate in the programs. Though, very few participate in the programs, they let know people partially. The study has also identified that talk show participants do not represent people institutionally. They are the part of civil society. Despite that it doesn't represent the voice of people, but plays

the role of a pressure group. It is popular among a section of middle-class urban people in Bangladesh. The research has also explored that less qualified people in our society are not only talking more but also doing less for people and more for themselves. But some take full advantage in such a situation in creating negative impact in the minds of people. The study has also found that talk show participants start giving strong views against or in favor of someone or something, and try to make sure everyone believe in whatever they say. The research has unearthed the impeding factors— elite voice, partisan voice, impartial voice, corporate voice, evidence less voice and self evading voice which bar participants to be the voice of the people.

Aforementioned arguments as to talk shows' voice representation prove that the space is significant despite having various loopholes. But it clearly proves that the talk shows' participants are making common people conscious, but raising the voice of educated people.

The research has identified some positive notions about talk show on public opinion formation in Bangladesh. Talk show participants belong to the civil society. It is also called the voice of media. Its voice is also powerful than print media. Talk show can put a great impact on public mind. People are listening talk show and becoming informed about concerning issues. They can get a lot of information through direct participation in the shows over phone, that help forming public opinion. Now it is more important because of less effectiveness of representative parliamentary democracy. Despite some flaws, this ambiance helps public opinion formation. According to the respondents 32% agree that talk show 'fairly' produce voice to form public opinion. If we sum up the percentage of categories— fully, fairly and partially, we find that more than 65% respondents support that talk show has positive role as

regard public opinion formation. Moreover, the contribution of the talk shows on many important issues cannot be ignored. The research substantiates that it has significant impact on public opinion formation.

The research also reveals some negative ideas about talk shows. Talk show participants disseminate information overtly. They produce voice with self evading manner and it lacks of information. It doesn't turn into collective voice. The research also reveals that participants don't represent the values of the people of all walks. Voice or opinion about irregularities and malpractices are not coming sufficiently from talk shows' participants because corruption is a sensitive issue and those who participate in talk show usually do not analyze different issues which are directly or indirectly linked to corruption. It is also found that ownerships of the satellite channels are primarily rooted in and depend on party affiliation. Moreover, government agencies have a form of indirect control over the broadcasting.

It is also found that talk shows are the beauty of democracy. Most of the talk shows' participants criticize government constructively where they can argue in favor of or against evidence. But some talk shows' participants are becoming the agent of vested interest monger. They have a great impact in creating a noise on the scene about any issue or diverting the public attention from any critical issue.

 On the other hand, only 12.7% respondents opined that talk show doesn't at all form public opinion. The research finally explores that elite voice, partisan voice, corporate voice, and evidence less voice impede talk show to be the voices of the people.

Facebook is an emerging space for raising voice in BD public sphere. Young generation is very much interested to use it effectively to raise voice. But due to various problems like low level of people's acceptance, low level of accessibility, lack of authenticity, fear of undue harassment and apprehension of political color hinder facebook to raise voice in BD public sphere.

Finally it can be said that the research has explored the answer of the question 'can democratic public sphere produce public opinion in Bangladesh?' The study has found that citizen's platform, communication channels are working in Bangladesh for voice coverage, voice raising and forming public opinion. Research also has found that the state of public opinion formation in Bangladesh through democratic public sphere is partial due to various barriers.

Citizen's platform has made momentous in anti corruption movement. But lack of people's participation, lack of democratic structures, lack of democratic leadership and elite representation are the major hindrences against TIB in terms of public opinion formation. Despite various flaws communications channels are still the main space to raise voice for the people. Specially media coverage on corruption, talk show voice and vibrant presence of facebook have made public sphere active in Bangladesh. But government interferace and selfsensorship on media, lack of democratic structures and people's participation of citizen platform bar media and others to form public opinion fully. Besides elite and vested voices of talk show participants and lack of authenticity and fear of political color impede talk shows and facebook to form public opinion in Bangladesh.

Aforesaid analysis proves that Bangladeshi Public sphere produces public opinion partially within various internal and external challenges. At this state, it is important to explore whether this type of public opinion associated with common concerns can influence on non-electoral vertical accountability of the elected representatives in Bangladesh.

CHAPTER V

ACCOUNTABILITY OF ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES IN BANGLADESH

INTRODUCTION

In the ideal form of democracy, public sphere is inevitable to make the elected representatives accountable to the people. In the context of making impact on the elected representatives, the real state of accountability should be sketched out. At this juncture to explore the impact of public sphere on our elected representatives, we have to focus the views of the stake holders of democratic public sphere in Bangladesh. Mostly we have to concentrate on the understanding of the concerned people, because perception is reality. The impact of the performance of democratic public sphere primarily depends on the state of answerability and enforceability. These two indicators of democratic public sphere are pivoted through the activities of civil society and the functions of media.

French political thinker and historian Alexis de Tocqueville argued that the political element of many voluntary civil society organizations facilitated better awareness and a more informed citizenry, who could make better voting choices, participate in politics, and hold government more accountable as a result.

The public watchdog role of the media can provide a critical check on government misuse of power or incompetence, and enable citizens to demand good governance. In many societies state accountability relies upon the independence and capacity of media to investigate and interrogate government policy in the public interest. Development policy places a central emphasis on citizens' capacity to hold government accountable. An increased focus on budget support in development

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assistance strategies has added to the priority of supporting media in their watchdog roles.

To examine the state of answerability and enforceability we have to find out the explanations and justifications made by elected representatives on the basis of claim from public sphere. It has also been examined that whether democratic public sphere can create losses of reputation of the elected representatives and make the behavioral change of the elected figures on the basis of denouncing from public sphere in Bangladesh.

Claim is a substantial component of answerability. It demonstrates whether public opinion produced in public sphere can reach to the elected representatives in Bangladesh. Fundamentally the frequency of reaching voices to accountability mechanism and the problems that counteract voices in the event of making an impression on elected representatives have been discussed herein.

Explanation and justification are important indicators of answerability under the umbrella of non -electoral vertical accountability. At this stage, we have to look into whether the claim from public sphere can get explanation and justification from the elected representatives in Bangladesh. Besides, what attitudes of elected representatives toward the claim from public sphere have been analyzed here too.

Denouncing is an important part of enforceability. It indicates whether public opinion produced in public sphere can criticize the elected representatives in Bangladesh. Basically the states of criticism done through public opinion as regards to the common concern based on performance of the elected representatives have been investigated here. Loss of reputation is one of the important indicators of

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enforceability (accountability). In this part, it has been analyzed that whether denouncing from public sphere can create loss of reputation of the elected representatives in Bangladesh.

Non- electoral vertical accountability school of thought emphasizes on the notion of answerability in case of measuring impact of public sphere in terms of accountability to the people. Behavioral change is one of the momentous indicators of answerability. In this part of research it has been examined whether democratic public sphere can change the behavior of the elected representatives in Bangladesh.

In the context of examining aforesaid issues the following perception and reality have been taken into account. The public watchdog role of the communication channels can provide a crucial check on authority's misuse of power and enable people to demand accountability. In many societies, good governance relies upon the independence and capacity of the communication channels to examine government policy according to the public interest. Development strategy places core importance on citizens' capacity to make authority accountable.

In fine, it could be said that impact of democratic public sphere on accountability mechanism of our elected representatives have been analyzed herein.

ANSWERABILITY THROUGH DEMOCRATIC PUBLIC SPHERE

Answerability is an important mechanism to assess non-electoral vertical accountability. The impact of public sphere on accountability is measured through claim, explanation and justification. At this part, how or whether public opinion produced in public sphere can make elected representatives accountable to people has been examined.

Claim from Public Sphere

Claim is an important ingredient of answerability. It focuses on whether public opinion made by public sphere can reach to the elected representatives in Bangladesh. To what extent voices enter to accountability mechanism and the problems that counteract against opinion formation in the context of making an impact on the elected representatives have been discussed herein.

In modern democratic world media's activities regarding accountability claiming are highly consequential. Theory of public sphere mostly depends on media's performance as a provision against reaching concerning issues into public attention. Ali (2006) focuses that the media plays a strong and meaningful role in bringing a variety of governance concerns to public attention. Apart from attempting to regularly report news on political, bureaucratic and state-related governance failures, the media has created public awareness of these issues(19 Ali: Governance and the Media CGS WP 3).

Public sphere works on concerning issue based voice and raising awareness of the people for petitioning accountability of elected bodies. In this circumstance roles of television talk show, news of electronic and print media, face book and civil society are remarkable. In Bangladesh, talk show is a forum where this topic is regularly discussed by the commentators and political actors. The print media is the leader in corruption reporting, as this is largely unaddressed by the electronic news media. The latter only reports corruption when direct actions have been taken in regard to it, or public accusations have been made.

On and on, this type of reporting lacks credibility and is motivated by business interests. The same can be said of reports of corruption in newspaper that are branded as "party mouthpieces", as these are seen as politically motivated and lacking in complete authenticity.(KII EJ 6).

In spite of having lack of full-fledged credibility, it has repeatedly raised public voice to demand accountability from their government and other public institutions. The electronic media's provision of discursive space for political debate and discussion among various political parties, NGO representatives, civil society members, workers' unions' spokespersons, academics, etc. has expanded the diverse way to express the views of participants.

With reference to media's coverage of common concern Ali (2006) analyzes that senior journalists and editors feel that they have improved in their corruption coverage, and find that there is growing vested groups who want to see it tackled. However, reporters are more cynical, noting that corruption reporting is almost entertainment, as neither readers nor the guilty parties expect any punitive sections to result from media attention. ACC's chairman indicates media's important role in case of claiming. He explains that   media is playing a positive role for Anti Corruption Commission (ACC). He further adds that we get maximum corruption related news from media (Bodiuzzaman: 2014).

Despite ample media coverage on corruption, lack of professional media training body limits the opportunities for journalists to get formal training for professional development. It also affects negatively on mutual cooperation among the elements of public sphere. (FGD: NRA,Rajshahi).

However, the findings suggest that there is large failure on the part of the media to adequately address, investigate and compel concrete action from those responsible to address these failures. With the facts it is relevant that media in Bangladesh has succeeded in creating awareness, but failed to put adequate impact on governance outcome (Ali: 2006).

One of the key informants states the ambiguous stand of media regarding some influential NGO leaders that we see ambiguous stand of some media regarding NGO's activities. Basically the NGO leaders have close relationship with the media. There is a propensity within the media not to raise question the business activities of some NGOs alongside their social development roles or the efficiency of the development activities that are carried out. Besides large numbers of NGO leaders who have close links to the media industry try to influence over it (KII EJ 2).

In the context of claiming TIB states its stand that:

TIB started working under a political government which proved resistant to its activities and key messages on corruption. In this environment TIB exercised influence and exerted impact through engaging elites at the highest level and the general population in local level activities. Through their national research and advocacy work, TIB also made a significant contribution in moving Bangladesh to a situation where there is now a government which has anti-corruption as its headline agenda. In this supportive context at the national level, the impact of TIB's work has increased, with a positive response to their activities. The evidence shows that in both conducive and adverse political

contexts, TIB can have and has had a significantly positive impact (TIB Detail).

Moreover, civil society participation in actions concerning politics and democracy has a partisan tendency in some developing countries like Bangladesh. As a result, their prospect in contributing to democracy is not encouraging and emerging as strong vigilant forces in challenges (Tasnim 2007).

Regarding the claiming of public sphere (media) Ali clarifies that:

> While corruption reporting, and its follow-up action from concerned authorities, has been increasing, the number of corruption cases exposed by the media and the reciprocating action is still quite disproportionate. On the other hand, the reporting in the press itself is still to be as comprehensive and in-depth as seen in developed democracies with a free press. Resource mobilization from part of the media in exposing corruption also lacks, and is mostly done on individual journalistic ambitions, or based on aggrieved party information. (Ali 2006)[Details in appendix]

One key informant clarifies the role of face book in case of claiming through public sphere that:

> How many people in Bangladesh use FB? Around two millions altogether (I have not accurate official statistics, in world it is 1230 million). Most of the users are youths and who have no fascination to join as political activists to press their demand through street agitations, demonstration or any other means of Bangladeshi political culture (except one in

Shahabagh). They are concentrated among cities and towns only, where altogether 25 per cent of total people live (KII AJ 1).

Previous discussion has examined the state of prospect and reality in the context of the elected representatives' accountability claim. Reality shows that various hindrances bar public sphere to claim accountability of the elected representatives. Now it is important to find out the stand of the respondents regarding voice reaching to the elected representatives in Bangladesh.

Table: 5.1 Does the voice of public sphere reach to the elected representatives?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	always	31	20.7	20.9	20.9
	most often	51	33.3	33.8	54.7
	often	29	19.3	19.6	74.3
	seldom	36	23.3	23.6	98.0
	never	3	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	150	98.7	100.0	
Missing	System	2	1.3		
Total		152	100.0		

As per the views of the33.30% respondents, it is thought that the voice of democratic public sphere 'most often' reaches to elected representatives in Bangladesh. On the other hand only 2.0% respondents replied that democratic public sphere's voice 'never' reaches to elected representatives in Bangladesh. If we sum up

the percentage of categories—always, most often and often, we will find that more than 70% respondents imply the importance of democratic public sphere in terms of public sphere's ability to reach voices to elected representatives in Bangladesh.

Finally it could be noted that public sphere is playing important role with some practical hindrances in terms of accountability claiming. It brings variety of governance concerns to public attention. It has created public awareness on the concerning issues. Television talk shows discuss the issue regularly with a range of commentators and political actors. Public has access to diversity of views. Anti-corruption has been the headline agenda due to the stand of citizen's platform.

On the other hand, the reasons that bar public sphere to claim accountability from the elected representatives could be sketched briefly. Reporting lacks credibility and is motivated by business interests. Some news papers are branded as party mouthpieces and are politically motivated. Voice of public sphere is more cynical neither opinion leaders nor audience expect any positive result from it. Lack of professional media training body and partisan tendency of media voice add further frustration on media made public sphere. Citizens' platform has not been encouraging and emerging as strong vigilant forces. In the context of social media, most of the users of face book are youth— basically from cities and town. The users of social media have lack of fascination to join political activities.

In short, democratic public sphere, in the context of claiming, raises common concern to draw public attention through diversified ways— media coverage of common concern, issue based discussion in talk show with range of commentators and political actors, citizens' platform's repeated voice raising regarding common

concern and instant information on concerning issues from face book. In these ways public sphere tries to claim accountability from elected representatives in Bangladesh.

On the contrary, corporate and partisan stand of media coverage, pre-concept-discussion by talk show participants, low vigilance of citizens' platform and lower and sectarian participation in face book impede democratic public sphere to claim accountability from elected representatives in Bangladesh.

Responses from Elected Representatives

Responses are important indicators of answerability under the umbrella of non-electoral vertical accountability. At this stage we have to look into whether the claim from public sphere can get explanation and justification from the elected representatives in Bangladesh. Basically what the attitudes of elected representatives are shown toward the claim from public sphere that has been analyzed here.

One of the key informants explains the state of explanation and justification of our elected representatives according to the public opinion. I do not think that impact of voice on our government and opposition is significant because the government and opposition political parties still are not serious against corruption and they usually give lip service in this regard (KII PS 1).On the other hand a key informant raises its importance regarding public opinion formation. Without proper claiming from the public sphere, no democratic society can advance at the path of development. Despite some drawbacks BD public sphere is trying its level best to claim in context of elected representatives' accountability. I think the policies taken are the feedback of the public sphere's claim (KII EJ 5).He also added that talk show is a part of media voice;

it is more powerful than print and electronic media in case of reaching voice to the policy level.

A key informant clarifies the common perception of public sphere that in context of public sphere 'good news' is no news, but bad news is news. This tendency make us think that the elected representatives are reactive rather than proactive to the claim from public sphere (KII MATIB 1).Tolerance is one of the predominant characteristics of democracy. Bangladeshi democratic culture has not been able to co-opt the matter fully yet. Due to this ambiance we see our elected representatives are little bit reactive to the sphere (KII TAG 4). Due to democratic deficit it is ostensibly seen that the level of expected cooperation between the space and the elected representatives are not cooperative rather latter have tendency to control former. (FGD: PCC,Dhaka).

Due to the absence of democratic culture, we see, our leaders are not eager to flourish the sphere. On the contrary, they try to propagate against the space. Actually tendency to denying allegation or facts predominates in our democratic ambiance.

Elected representatives are responsive to political party not to public sphere. Lack of practical democracy and democratic culture hinder positive cooperative relationship between public sphere and elected representatives. Politics has been difficult for the politicians and it belongs to specific hands. Specially, it has been under businessman control. (FGD: MU,Dhaka).

In this circumstance some actions and reactions of elected representatives regarding public sphere's claim could be presented for better understanding of the

relationship between claim of public sphere and the responses of elected representatives.

In 2005, two major Bengali dailies exposed that the then state Minister for Energy, AKM Mosharraf Hossain, had taken an expensive vehicle as a present from Niko Resource, a Canadian energy company blamed for the Tengratila Gas Field Explosion in January of the year. Following the reports, the minister had to step down. It was one of the first instances of a ministerial resignation in light of corruption reporting by media. However, he remains an MP for his party. In 2006, an infamous case of corruption was exposed by a national English daily regarding corruption in a major government project to give machine-readable passports. Due to reporting, the project eventually did not get approval. [Sources: Prothom Alo 2005; New Age 2006a, as in Ali: 2006]

Suranjit Sen Gupta in his farewell conference with the press from the ministry said that he was leaving the job for fair inquiry of the incident so that his position doesn't interfere with the process of justice. He boldly expressed that he was quitting the job to uphold democracy and he was also leaving politics only to come back if proved innocent. But only a day later he was reappointed as a Minister without a portfolio by the prime Minister and Suranjit didn't refuse to join to uphold his old ideals. Mentioned two cases show actions of some elected representatives in reply to the claim from public sphere.

At this stage to show some reactions coming from political space regarding public sphere is relevant. Talk show creates bitterness and even draws flanks from Prime Minister Sheikh Hsina. Once she labeled the talk show experts as 'midnight

thieves' The then State Minister for Law expressed that the report (TIB's report on MPs) was designed to demean the government and the judiciary and to jeopardize the trial of war criminals of 1971 and warned that legal actions would be taken against the executive of TIB.

Some Members of parliament and Ministers castigated TIB's report on MPs. They raised question about the motive of the paper. They also commented on the procedure that TIB has taken to publish report. They criticized that it would jeopardize democracy and the sovereignty of the country. In this context, Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu described the survey report of Transparency International-Bangladesh on Members of Parliament as motivated. He also termed the methodology of research it followed as 'flawed and weak'. He further said, 'we expect that TIB reports would help the government in taking action against corruption'. He added the report frustrated them very much (*The Financial Express*, 11 November 2012).

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, also, castigated the TIB for publishing a survey report on lawmakers terming it "ill- motivated". She also questioned the timing of the report, as her government has only one year of its tenure left. The TIB had published a similar report ahead 2001 election, Hasina recalled (*The Daily Star* 16 October 2012).

Agricultural Minister Matia Chowdhury said the TIB report was aimed at impeding democracy and "inviting" undemocratic forces. "They (TIB) want to weaken the foundation of democracy through publishing this kind of motivated report and invite some other system," she said (*The Daily Star* 16 October 2012).

Matia asked the TIB to publish the names of the corrupt MPs. She alleged a top official of the TIB took the initiative of the survey having been failed to participate in the 2008 parliamentary election. She, however, did not name the TIB official. She also questioned TIB's taking foreign fund to publish reports against democracy.

Worker's Party's president and lawmaker Rashed Khan Menon said that the purpose of the study was to erode people's confidence in MPs and parliament and to hinder the progress of democracy.

Rejecting the TIB report outright, AL Joint General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif said, 'This survey report has been published to encourage those who want to see unelected government in power'.

AL MP Tarana Halim said there were many contradictions in the TIB report. People would get a wrong message about all lawmakers from the report, which she said was misleading.

MK Anwar, a standing committee member of the BNP, held all parties responsible for corruption. "You cannot eradicate corruption from the society if political parties do not start behaving honestly". Anwar, also a former minister, said: I am not surprised to see the report, as tentacles of corruption have gripped every organ of the society; this can be removed only by establishing the rule of law".

Mirza Fakrul Islam Alamgir, in an instant reaction, said: It is nothing new. Corruption has spread everywhere after this government took office. Now it has reached epidemic proportions. Kazi Firoz Rashid, presidium member of the Jatya

Party said: "politics are now a means of business. Political parties use the administration as a toll execution.

In the context of the accountability of TIB Iftekharuzzaman said we are not beyond accountability and we are ready to be accounted. One audience of talk show said 'we are with TIB and it is working for democracy'. Some observers commented that the report of TIB was not correctly represented by media. We find some gap between civil society and media coverage. Sometimes media reporting is attacking that makes the representatives more reactive to the voice.

Actually split news makes the ambiance uncongenial to cooperation. It is seen that the space of mutual respect and cooperation is absent. We think they (politicians) are corrupt and they consider we are jeopardizing the image of the country, that means, blame game continues. With this, language of media creates debate. Electronic and print media are responsible for creating instigation. So, concerned authority should be liberal and look the facts broadly (KII MATIB 1).

Responding to reports, TIB executive director Iftekaruzzaman said the report did not intend to single out specific political parties for providing corruption, but only described the general state of politics in Bangladesh.

He also said that political parties often manipulate corruption by using their power. He described such tendencies as serious concerns, for democratic values in politics. "Political leaders often create pressure on government officials for taking particular decisions. People have lost their faith in political parties," he added.

One of the Key informant interviewees explains public sphere (face book) and engagement of our political leaders that:

There are several politicians like Obaidul Kader, Sajeeb Wazed Joy, Saima Wajed Putul, Ashikur Rahman Shanto, Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, Barrister

Andaleeve Rahman Partho, Mahi B. Chowdhury and many more who have facebook accounts. However, not all accounts are operated by the namesakes, there are many fake accounts. Whereas officially recognized fanpages of Sajeed Wazed Joy and Barrister Andaleeve Rahman exist; there are several accounts representing Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir and Obaidul Kader. Going through their profiles, it seems like most of the politicians use face book to express their political opinions and views, as well as declare political programs and their schedules. Apparently it seems like the politicians are aware that 'face book' can play a good role to communicate with the citizens but they are not efficiently using it to fight corruption or promote their agenda (KII PS 1).

At this juncture we have to consider the stand of the respondents regarding elected representatives' stand on public sphere's claim in terms of non- electoral vertical accountability.Because, it has been clear that the response of elected representatives to public sphere claims are not up to the mark as per democratic nature. Now it is important to examine the issues according to the respondents' ideas on how the elected representatives respond to the voice of public sphere in Bangladesh.

Table: 5.2 How do the elected representatives respond to the voice of public sphere in Bangladesh?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	positive	14	9.3	9.9	9.9
	reactive	80	50.7	53.9	63.8
	tendency to control	32	23.3	24.8	88.7
	opposite propaganda	11	9.7	9.2	97.9
	No comment	3	2.0	2.1	100.0
	Total	150	99.20	100.0	
Missing	System	2	.8		
Total		152	100.0		

According to the respondents, 50.7% consider that the elected representatives respond 'reactively' to the voice of the democratic public sphere. On the other hand, only 9.3% respondents think that the elected representatives respond 'positively' to the voice of the democratic public sphere in Bangladesh. If we sum up the percentage of categories—reactive, tendency to control and opposite propaganda, we find that more than 80% respondents indicate the elected representatives are not taking the voice of public sphere positively.

It has been clear as per the views of the respondents the elected representatives in Bangladesh are not taking to the voice of public sphere positively. The ambiance claims to analyze why the elected representatives are not taking to the voice of public

sphere positively. The reasons have been drawn as per the perception of the respondents.

Chart 5.1 Why the elected representatives are not taking the voice of public sphere positively? (%)
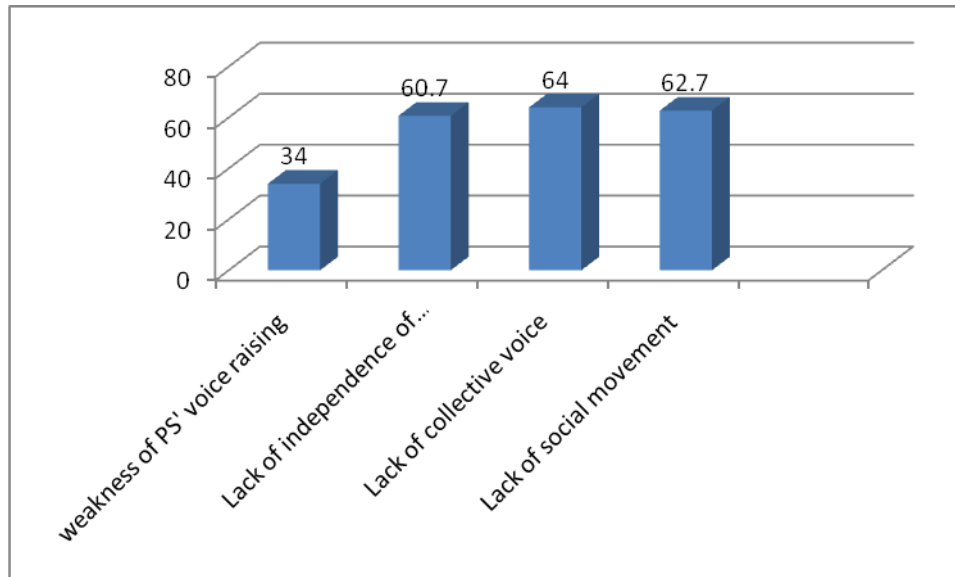
Basically the reasons which impede elected representatives to respond to the voice of public sphere are the weaknesses of public sphere voice raising, lack of independence of judiciary and Anti corruption Commission, lack of collective voice and lack of social movement. Among the barriers lack of independence of judiciary and Anti Corruption Commission and lack of collective voices are predominant. More than 60% respondents supported these two factors respectively which are the hindrances to the positive response from elected representatives. Besides, public sphere's weakness to raise voice and lack of social movement are also responsible for not being elected representatives' positive response to the claim of public sphere.

Finally it could be noted that explanation and justification of elected representatives as per the claim of public sphere are full of problem-ridden but in some cases it shows prospect also. The setbacks revealed from the space are found in

the following ways. Politicians are not serious to the claim. Elected representatives provide lip service only to the concern. It is common perception that good news is no news but bad news is news. Elected representatives are reactive rather than pro active to the claim of public sphere. It is also found that there is a lack of cooperation between public sphere and elected representatives.

Lack of tolerance and tendency to control, absence of democratic culture, and propensity to denying allegation or facts are also found in the nature of elected representatives in Bangladesh. It is a general scenario that elected representatives' are responsive to political party not to public sphere. With this, business controlled politics dominates the space. It is also identified that despite stepping down from minister ship, remain parliament membership. In spite of quitting minister ship, minister is reappointed.

The allegations disclosing against TIB are in the following ways. TIB demeans democracy. It has special motive to report against various institutions for political power and eroding people's confidence on MPs and parliament. It jeopardizes sovereignty and its activities are frustrating because it invites undemocratic forces. Misleading and attacking reports create debate and make elected representatives reactive to the voice.

Wrong message and split news hamper mutual relationship between public sphere and elective representatives. Blame game among the spheres also create negative ambiance. In the context of social media, politicians have positive realization on face book but they are not efficiently using it to fight against corruption or promote their agenda etc. Besides, elected representatives do not respond positively due to lack

of independence of judiciary and Anti Corruption Commission and lack of collective voices to the claim of public sphere in Bangladesh.

On the other hand the positive facts are found such as. Voices halt the negative tendency of elected representatives for the time being. People get information regarding the stand of elected representatives. Voice reaches to policy level. Some institutional reforms (example- formation of information act, whistle blowing act, anti corruption commission act etc) take place. Ministers' stepping down are seen (though minimal level). Politicians' awareness regarding social media is also seen.

ENFORCEABILITY THROUGH DEMOCRATIC PUBLIC SPHERE

Enforceability is an important mechanism to assess non- electoral vertical accountability. The impact of public sphere on accountability is measured through denouncing, loss of reputation and behavioral change. At this part, how or whether public opinion produced in public sphere can make elected representatives accountable to people have been examined.

Denouncing from Democratic Public Sphere

Denouncing is an important part of enforceability. It indicates whether public opinion produced in public sphere can criticize the elected representatives in Bangladesh. Basically the state of criticism done through public opinion regarding the common concern based performance of elected representatives has been investigated here.

Public sphere claims accountability and expect explanation and justification from elected representatives. If the explanation and justification are not satisfactory as per claim, it (public sphere) denounces elected representatives. Here we have

analyzed whether public sphere can criticize our elected representatives in terms of ERs' performance regarding common concern in Bangladesh.

A key informant said, despite some internal and external influences, media have great role to raise voice to the public. Basically it can criticize our elected representatives openly. Public sphere is the only option to discuss issues of common concern due to less effectiveness of parliament and weak role of opposition (KII PS 3).

Public sphere has some flaws regarding claiming accountability, but, we get information from it and can criticize responsible persons on the basis of information. It is a vibrant space for democracy. One of the key informants argues that public sphere criticizes elected representative's reluctance regarding common concern. But the very denounce does not turn into forces due to lack of collective voice. Self censorship and undue harassment have been major barriers of public sphere to denounce elected representatives in Bangladesh.

Ali (2006) explains why public sphere cannot denounce elected representatives properly? He says:

> Senior media personnel note that the exponential growth in the media sector has not been matched by commensurate growth in the human resource required, nor in the creation of a corporate culture that is the hallmark of successful industries. The media's inability to recruit qualified candidates is one of the most critical constraining factors in improving governance and corruption reporting. This shortage in human resources means that editors cannot take the decision to dedicate highly skilled correspondents to long term investigative stories, as their services.

Without full-fledged function of democracy, we cannot expect ideal performance of public sphere in the context of denouncing. It indicates that without having democracy, there is less possibility of denouncing or accountability (FGD: MU, Rajshahi). Structure of plundering economy obstructs public sphere to criticize our elected representatives openly. Because, this structure bars institutionalization of democracy .It also discourages tolerance, important characteristic of democracy (KII TAG 2).

The preceding discussion implies, despite some flaws, that public sphere has ability to criticize elected representatives in the context of common concern in Bangladesh. Now it should be examined under the views of the respondents.

Table: 5.3 Can public sphere criticize elected representatives openly in Bangladesh?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	fairly	54	36.0	36.0	36.0
	partially	44	28.7	28.7	64.7
	least	28	18.0	18.0	82.7
	not at all	26	17.3	17.3	100.0
	Total	152	100.0	100.0	

According to the respondents 36.0% agree that democratic public sphere can 'fairly' criticize elected representatives openly in Bangladesh. On the other hand only 17.3% respondents replied that democratic public sphere can 'not at all' criticize

elected representatives openly in Bangladesh. If we sum up the percentage of categories—fairly and partially, we will find that more than 60% respondents imply the importance of democratic public sphere in terms of public sphere's ability to criticize elected representatives in Bangladesh.

As Bangladeshi public sphere is problem ridden, we have to find out the reasons why the space cannot criticize our elected representatives properly. In this case respondents' views have been identified in the following figure.

Chart 5.2 Barriers of public sphere to criticize elected representatives in Bangladesh(%)
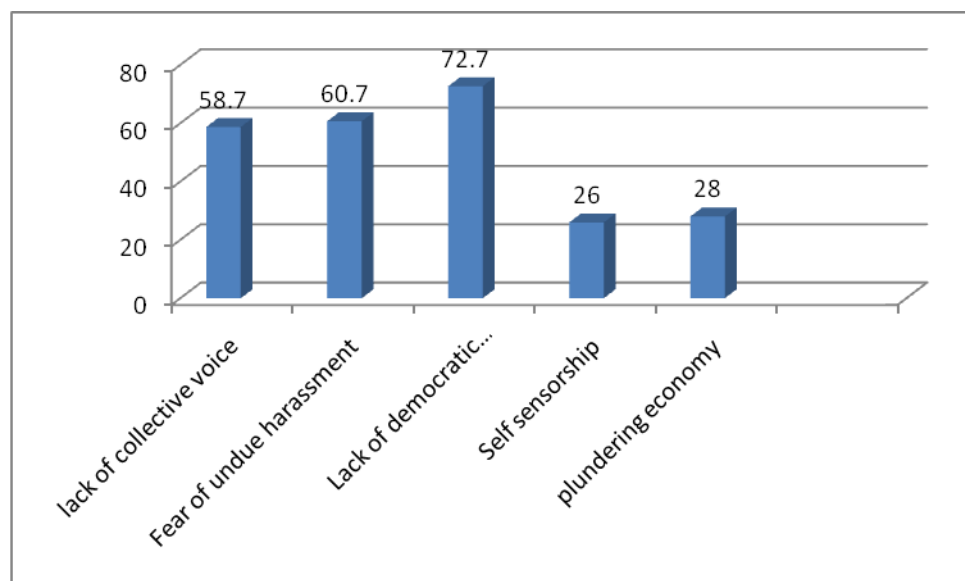
Basically the reasons which impede people to criticize elected representatives openly are lack of collective voice, fear of undue harassment, lack of democratic atmosphere, self censorship, and plundering economy. Among the barriers fear of undue harassment and lack of democratic atmosphere are predominant. More than 60% respondents support these two factors respectively which are the setbacks in case of criticizing elected representatives openly. Besides, lack of collective voice, self

censorship and plundering economy also bar people to criticize elected representatives openly.

Finally, research unfolds that public sphere is a vibrant space for democracy. It has been the prime sphere in the event of discussing common concern, where there prevails less effectiveness of parliament and weak role of opposition in Bangladesh. We get information from it and can criticize responsible persons on the basis of information. Majority respondents' positive notion as to public sphere implies the importance of democratic public sphere in terms of public sphere's ability to criticize elected representatives in Bangladesh.

On the other hand, due to shortage of human resources editors cannot take the decision to employ highly skilled correspondents to long term investigative stories. Lack of full-fledged function of democracy, self censorship, and plundering economy hamper the space to criticize elected representatives. Fear of undue harassment, shortage of tolerance bar space to criticize elected representatives openly. Criticism does not turn into forces due to lack of collective voice. Self censorship and undue harassment also block actors to perform in the sphere.

Loss of Reputation through Public Sphere

Loss of reputation is one of the important indicators of enforceability (accountability). In this part it will be analyzed whether denouncing produced by public sphere can have impact on elected representatives' loss of reputation in Bangladesh.

A key informant said that criticism should be constructive and the purpose of denouncing would not be embarrassing but correct the ones who are criticized. Only this ambiance would create real loss of reputation (KII AS 3). Evidence less and random criticisms do not bring loss of reputation of the elected representatives. Because, repeated embarrassing voices create instigation. It doesn't result in loss of reputation (FGD: PCC, Dhaka).

Because of our tendency to accept the culture of corruption, public sphere created loss of reputation has become meaningless (KII MP 3). But one respondent of FGD argues that public sphere is the only space which creates loss of reputation of the political figures who avoid denouncing created by public sphere (FGD: MU, Rajshahi).

Due to the loss of reputation created by public sphere, there is a balance between public sphere and accountability mechanism of elected representatives in Bangladesh. (KII AS 1). Basically negative attitude toward voice of public sphere tends to loss of reputation of elected representatives in Bangladesh (FGD: NRA, Rajshahi).

Cycle of corruption in democracy creates volatility of all other institutions necessary for democracy. This cycle of corruption also hampers the performance of public sphere which bar to create loss of reputation of the elected representatives (KII TAG 2). He also added that low level of political culture impedes the progress of institutional development of public sphere (KII TAG 2).

Naidoo (2008) questions the ability of civil society regarding working about the loss of reputation of elected representatives where it is infested with the same problem that:

> Critics have identified and focused on the vulnerable aspects of civil society that "they called upon civil society groups 'practice what they preach' by instituting high standards of legitimacy, transparency and accountability. It is often said civil society groups don't respect the views of anyone but themselves, and if they are accountable at all, it is usually upwards to their funders rather than downward to those they serve (Naidoo, 2008: 4)

Face book has been the most important social media to reach information, in spite of authenticity of information, to the people. It easily can create loss of reputation of elected representatives if ones do not respond to the voice of public sphere (KII FA 1).

We have found that sometimes public sphere can create loss of reputation of elected representatives. But, due to various setbacks of public sphere and its stakeholders, it fails to do that. Now we have to count the respondents' perception on whether negative attitude of elected representatives toward public sphere's voice tends to loss of reputation in Bangladesh.

Table: 5.4 Negative attitude toward voice of public sphere tends to loss of reputation of ERs in BD

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Fully	64	42.0	42.3	42.3
	fairly	55	36.7	36.9	79.2
	partially	19	12.7	12.8	91.9
	least	7	4.7	4.7	96.6
	not at all	5	3.3	3.4	100.0
	Total	150	99.3	100.0	
Missing	System	2	.7		
Total		152	100.0		

According to the respondents 42.0% consider' fully' that the negative attitude to the voice of democratic public sphere brings loss of reputation of the elected representatives in Bangladesh. On the other hand only 3.3% respondents think that the negative attitude to the voice of democratic public sphere brings' not at all' loss of reputation of the elected representatives in Bangladesh.. If we sum up the percentage of categories—fully and fairly, we find that more than 75% respondents indicate that the negative attitude to the voice of democratic public sphere brings loss of reputation of the elected representatives in Bangladesh.

On the basis of prior discourse, it is clear, on one hand, public sphere has ability to create loss of reputation of elected representatives; on the other hand, it has internal flaws also in the event of creating loss of reputation in Bangladesh.

It is the only space which creates loss of reputation of the political figures who avoid criticism. It easily can create loss of reputation of elected representatives if ones do not respond positively to denounce. Respondents indicate that the negative attitude to the voice of democratic public sphere brings loss of reputation of the elected representatives in Bangladesh

This cycle of corruption within public sphere also hampers the performance of it which bar to create loss of reputation of the elected representatives .Civil society groups don't respect the views of anyone but themselves. It is usually upwards to their funders rather than downward to those they serve. Pattern of denouncing is to embarrass not to correction. Evidence less and random criticism, repeated embarrassing voice create instigation that hampers mutual cooperation.

.   Aforesaid findings reveal that due to some internal flaws of public sphere, it can create loss of reputation of elected representatives who defy denounces come from public sphere in Bangladesh.

Behavioral Change of Elected Representatives in Bangladesh

Non- electoral vertical accountability school of thought emphasizes on the notion of answerability in case of measuring impact of public sphere in terms of accountability to the people. Behavioral change is one of the momentous indicators of answerability. In this part of research it has been examined whether democratic public sphere can change the behavior of the elected representatives in Bangladesh.

Voice of talk show and media report halt the corrupt people provisionally, but with the passage of time corruption takes the shape anew (KII MP 1). Due to the lack of effective parliamentary form of democracy, now, talk show has been an important component of media for debate and discussion. The popularity of talk show brings out its importance to the people. Due to vested interest, our elected representatives do not take, always, the voice of public sphere positively and this tendency ceases elected representatives' behavioral change (KII EJ 5).

One of the key informants argues with respect to public sphere (face book) and behavioral change of elected representatives that:

Virtually, career-driven young generation raise the voices through face book against many things including corruption. But politicians never consider those as major policy or action issues. These voices went in vain due to less influence of this virtual communication portal among people, administration and finally politicians (KII AJ 1).

Present political characteristics—mud sliding among the political parties, lack of democracy and accountability within political parties, conflicting politics deter elected representatives to change their behavioral as per censure created by public sphere in Bangladesh (KII AS 1) .It indicates that in the way democracy goes, public sphere carries out in the same manner (KII TAG 2).

Foregoing discussion connotes less effectiveness of public sphere voice with reference to elected representative's behavioral change. At this milieu, we have to find out the respondents' notion in relation to behavioral al change in the context of public sphere's voice. The respondents' views show that:

There is a general opinion that the pervasive corruption that exists at the top of the political and bureaucratic ladder, only a very small percentage of corruption stories do not have adequate impact.

Table: 5.5 Can public sphere change attitude of elected representatives in Bangladesh?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	always	4	2.0	2.0	2.0
	most often	15	9.3	9.5	11.6
	often	9	6.0	6.1	17.7
	seldom	80	53.3	54.4	72.1
	never	41	27.3	27.9	100.0
	Total	149	98.0	100.0	
Missing	System	3	2.0		
	Total	152	100.0		

As per the views of the respondents 53.30% think that democratic public sphere 'seldom' can change attitude of elected representatives in Bangladesh. On the other hand, only 2.0% respondents agree that democratic public sphere can change the attitude of elected representatives in Bangladesh. If we sum up the percentage of categories—seldom and never, it is found that more than 80% respondents view that democratic public sphere cannot change the attitude of elected representatives in Bangladesh.

It has been clear, as per the views of the respondents that democratic public sphere cannot change the attitude of elected representatives in Bangladesh. The ambiance claims to analyze why public sphere has less impact on our elected representatives in terms of behavioral change. Here the reasons have been drawn as per the perception of the respondents.

Chart: 5.3 Why democratic public sphere cannot change the attitude of elected representatives in Bangladesh? (%)
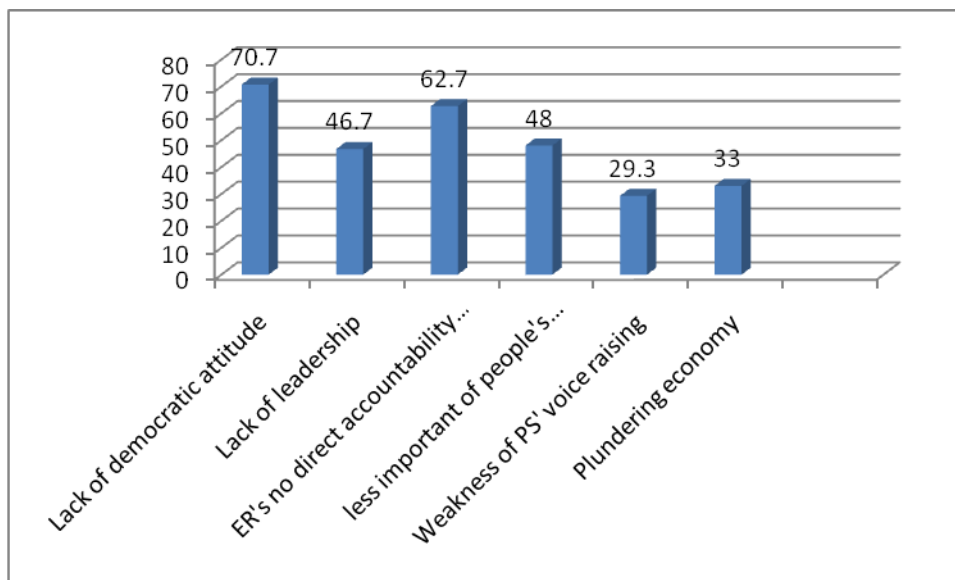
According to the respondents, the facts that impede elected representatives to change their attitude as per the claim of public sphere are— lack of democratic attitude, lack of leadership, elected representatives' no direct accountability to public sphere, less importance of people's consent, weakness of public sphere's voice raising and plundering economy. Among the barriers 'lack of democratic attitude' and 'elected representatives' lack of direct accountability' to public sphere dominate the space. More than 60% respondents support these two factors which are the hindrances to change the attitude of elected representatives in Bangladesh. Near about or more than 30% respondents said rest of the factors— lack of democratic attitude less important of people's consent, weakness of public sphere's voice raising and

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plundering economy obstruct elected representatives to change their attitude as per public sphere's demand.

Finally it can be said that in the context of behavioral change democratic public sphere can halt the corrupt people provisionally, ultimately it cannot change the behavior due to various factors in Bangladesh.

Due to vested interest, our elected representatives do not take, always, the voice of public sphere positively and this tendency ceases elected representatives' behavioral change. Politicians never consider those as major policy or action issues. These voices went in vain due to less influence of this virtual communication portal among people, administration and finally politicians. Mud sliding among the political parties, lack of democracy and accountability within political parties, conflicting politics deter elected representatives to change their behavior as per censure created by public sphere in Bangladesh

Democratic public sphere cannot change the attitude of elected representatives up to the mark in Bangladesh. Lack of democratic attitude and elected representatives' no direct accountability to public sphere, less important of people's consent, weakness of public sphere's voice raising and plundering economy obstruct elected representatives to change their attitude as per public sphere's demand.

Democratic public sphere halts corrupt people provisionally but due to Lack of democratic attitude and elected representatives' no direct accountability to public sphere, less important of people's consent, weakness of public sphere's voice raising it cannot change elected representatives' behavioral as per public opinion in Bangladesh.

CONCLUDING COMMENT REGARDING PUBLIC SPHERE VOICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES IN BANGLADESH

Despite various hurdles, public sphere is raising voice in the context of common concern and being able to have impact on public opinion. But major debate has been appeared that whether it is being able to make elected representatives accountable to the people. At this ambiance, the major argument comes without having formal mechanism between public spheres and elected representatives no accountability would be ensured. At this juncture, we have to count the views of respondents about the matter.

Table: 5.6 No institutional mechanism no accountability

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Fully	83	55.3	55.3	55.3
	fairly	52	34.7	34.7	90.0
	partially	9	6.0	6.0	96.0
	least	6	3.3	3.3	99.3
	not at all	2	.7	.7	100.0
	Total	152	100.0	100.0	

According to the respondents 55.3% agree' fully' that there is no accountability mechanism between public sphere and elected representatives, the latter are not accountable to the former in Bangladesh. On the other part, only 3.3% respondents think, 'least' absence of accountability mechanism cannot make elected representatives non electoral vertical accountable to public sphere in Bangladesh. If we sum up the percentage of categories—fully and fairly, we will find that more than 75% respondents indicate that there is no accountability mechanism between public sphere and elected representatives, the latter are not accountable to former in Bangladesh.

Foregoing findings reveal that elected representatives are not accountable to the public sphere; this ambiance is the prime barrier to make elected representatives accountable in the mechanism of non electoral vertical accountability in Bangladesh.

CONCLUSION

Answerability and enforceability— vital indicators of non- electoral vertical accountability are infested with problems in Bangladesh. In spite of having barriers, democratic public sphere is performing its level best to the influence on accountability mechanism in Bangladesh. The setbacks of democratic public sphere and the standard of impact on accountability are found in the flowing ways.

Public sphere is playing significant role with some practical barriers as regards accountability claiming. It focuses on various governance related concerns to draw public attention. It has created public awareness to the concerning issues. Television talk shows' participants analyze the issues regularly with a range of commentators

and political actors. Public has access to the diversity of views. The stand of citizen's platform has made anti-corruption movement headline agenda in Bangladesh.

The research has also explored that reporting lacks credibility and is motivated by corporate interests. Some news papers are branded as party mouthpieces and politically motivated. Sometimes, public sphere's voice is more pessimistic that neither opinion producers nor audience expect any positive result from the voice. Research has found that citizens' platform in Bangladesh has not been encouraging and emerging as strong vigilant force due to the lack of professional media training body and its partisan tendency. It is also known from the study that reciprocating action of voice is still quite disproportionate in the political sphere. In the context of social media, it is also identified that most of the users of face book are youth—basically from cities and towns and they are not interested to join political activities.

Research has identified that elected representatives' responses to the claim of public sphere are not encouraging. The setbacks disclosing from the space are shown the flowing ways. The politicians lack seriousness to the claim of public sphere. It is also found that elected authorities only provide lip service to the concerning issues. It is commonly found in the sphere that good news is not counted as news but bad news is termed as news. Elected representatives' re-activeness rather than pro -activeness to the claim from public sphere are also found here. It is also seen that there is a lack of cooperation between public sphere and elected representatives. Propensity to deny allegations or facts, absence of democratic culture and lack of tolerance deteriorate cooperation level further. It is also found that elected representatives are responsive to political party not to public sphere. It is also noticed that despite stepping down from

minister- ship, parliament membership remains and even after quitting minister- ship, they get reappointed.

The research has identified that the elected representatives are reactive to the activities of citizen platform here. The elected representatives try to demean the activities of citizen platform. We get the general comments from the representatives such as: It demeans democracy and jeopardizes sovereignty. The research has also identified the activities of citizens' platform are ill motivated and frustrating. There is an allegation that it invites undemocratic forces and weakens people's confidence on MPs and parliament. But TIB claims that they are working for democracy. It is noticed that split and misleading news on report make elected representatives instigated. The research has also identified that there is a gap between report of the organization and the coverage of media. This ambiance hampers mutual relationship between public sphere and elected representatives in Bangladesh.

The research has also found some positive facts regarding the positive impact of public sphere's voice in accountability mechanism in Bangladesh. Voices halt the negative activities of elected representatives for the time being. We can identify the stand of elected representatives regarding common concern through the space. It is also known that voice has impact on policy level. It is also found that some institutional reforms have taken place due to the impact of voice.

It is also found that public sphere is a vibrant space for democracy. It has been the main sphere in the context of discussing common concern, because of less effectiveness of parliament and weak role of opposition in Bangladesh. It is also noticed that public sphere disseminates major information which are the sources of

criticizing responsible persons. It is also identified that majority respondents' positive notion as to public sphere implies the importance of democratic public sphere in terms of public sphere's ability to criticize elected representatives in Bangladesh.

On the other hand, it is also found that long term investigative stories have been difficult task for the editors, because they suffer from the shortage of highly skilled correspondents. It is also identified that self censorship of media and lack of full-fledged function of democracy impede the space to criticize elected representatives. The study has also explored that lack of tolerance and fear of undue harassment hinder space to criticize elected representatives openly. It is also found that criticism does not turn into forces due to lack of collective voice.

The research has also found that it is the only space which creates loss of reputation of the elected representatives who ignore criticism. It has scope to make loss of reputation of elected political figures if ones do not respond positively to denouncing. Respondents imply that the negative attitude to the voice of democratic public sphere brings loss of reputation of the elected figures in Bangladesh.

The research has found that in spite of creating loss of reputation by public sphere to the elected representatives, there are various causes within the public sphere which hamper its performance. Corruption within public sphere has been a common phenomenon. Civil society groups don't respect the views of anyone but themselves. It is usually upwards to their funders rather than downward to those they serve. Evidence less random criticism and repeated embarrassing voice create instigation which hampers mutual cooperation between public sphere and elected representatives in Bangladesh.

The study has also explored the answer of the question 'whether democratic public sphere can change the behavior of elected representatives in Bangladesh?' In this context it is found from the study that because of vested interest, our elected representatives do not take always the voice of public sphere positively and this attitude bars elected representatives' behavioral change. With this it is also found that politicians consider those voices carelessly in the context of major policy or action issues. These voices went in vain due to less influence of this virtual communication portal among people, administration and finally politicians. It is also known that lack of democracy and accountability within political parties and conflicting politics prevent elected representatives to change their behavior as per criticism created by public sphere in Bangladesh.

The research has also found that democratic public sphere has less scope to change the attitude of elected representatives up to the mark in Bangladesh. Lack of democratic norms and elected representatives' lack of direct accountability to public sphere, less importance of people's consent, weakness of public sphere's voice raising and plundering economy impede elected representatives to change their attitude as per public sphere's demand.

The research, as per answerability of non-electoral vertical accountability, has explored that voice of common concern through democratic public sphere, in the context of claiming, reaches to public attention through various means— citizens' platform's repeated voice raising regarding common concern, issue based discussion in talk show with range of commentators and political actors, media coverage of common concern and instant information on common concern through face book. In

this ways voices of public sphere try to claim accountability from elected representatives in Bangladesh.

On the other side, research explores that low vigilance of citizens' platform, pre-concept- discussion by talk show participants, corporate and partisan stand of media coverage and lower and sectarian participation in face book hinder democratic public sphere to claim accountability from elected representatives in Bangladesh.

The research has also identified that response of elected representatives as per the claim of public sphere is full of problem ridden but in some cases it shows prospect also. The fundamental problems are— lack of politicians' seriousness to the claim, elected representatives' re-activeness rather than pro- activeness and lack of cooperation between public sphere and elected representatives. The research also discloses that absence of democratic values, tendency to deny complaints or facts and elected representatives' responsiveness to political party not public sphere impede elected representatives to respond positively to the claim from public sphere. It is also identified that attacking and split news, business controlled politics, absence of mutual respect and mud sliding make mutual relationship between public sphere and elected representatives uncomfortable in Bangladesh. It is also found that elected representatives' responses are not positive to the claim due to lack of collective voice of public sphere and deficit of independence of judiciary and Anti Corruption Commission in Bangladesh.

The study, according to enforceability of non-electoral vertical accountability, explores that public sphere is an important space for democracy. It has been the pivotal sphere in the event of discussing common concern. The study emphasizes the

importance of democratic public sphere as regards public sphere's ability to criticize elected representatives in Bangladesh. But criticism does not turn into forces due to lack of collective voice. It is also found that self censorship and undue harassment also block actors to perform in the sphere.

Despite some internal flaws— evidence less and random criticism, repeated instigating voice made embarrassment, style of denouncing to embarrassing not to correction,— of public sphere, it can create loss of reputation of elected representatives who defy criticism produced in public sphere in Bangladesh.

The research has found in the context of democratic public sphere's impact on elected representatives' behavioral change that it (democratic public sphere) cannot change the attitude of elected representatives up to the mark. It halts corrupt people provisionally. But lack of democratic values and elected representatives' lack of direct accountability to public sphere are main causes to change their attitude. It is also noticed that due to less importance of people's consent than electoral mechanism and deficit of public sphere's voice raising, democratic public sphere cannot change necessarily elected representatives' pre-conceived mentality as per public opinion in Bangladesh.

Preceding arguments proves that democratic public sphere has a very little bit impact on non- electoral vertical accountability because of problem infested state of answerability and enforceability. In this context, it is mentioned that only direct accountability mechanism between public sphere and elected representatives might bring non - electoral vertical accountability through democratic public sphere in Bangladesh.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

INTRODUCTION

This concluding chapter summarizes the empirical findings of the study's analysis regarding state, outcome and impact of democratic public sphere in Bangladesh. It also seeks to collect insights and address specific questions that may contribute to a broader debate concerning the role of democratic public sphere in transitional democracies in terms of representative accountability mechanism.

The chapter draws findings that directly address the aims and objectives of the study stated at the outset. The first one shows the state of the democratic public sphere in Bangladesh for analyzing to what extent it acts its due role in terms of representative accountability. The second one demonstrate the assessment whether the democratic public sphere form public opinion associated with common concern in terms of representative accountability in Bangladesh. The third one presents the findings on whether public opinion can translate people's issue into representative accountability mechanism in Bangladesh.

1. To reveal the state of the democratic public sphere in Bangladesh for analyzing to what extent it acts its due role in terms of representative accountability.

This research has identified that civil liberty— freedom of opinion, expression and assembly, is guaranteed in the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Government is bound to respect the constitutional rights of the people and it has also

rational ground to curtail the rights. But repeated imposing restrictions, abuse of existing laws and law making with ulterior motive obstruct in the path of civil liberty. It is also found out that negative influence of vested interest groups, low grade acceptance of pluralism pose threat against freedom of opinion and expression in Bangladesh. The study has also revealed that fear of physical and mental torture, censorship on publications and case and jail for expression work against the sound ambiance of civil liberty in Bangladesh. It is also identified that closing media, putting obstruction in the name of public safety hinder the smooth exercise of civil liberty in Bangladesh.

It is found out that there is a strong ground for free flow of information in Bangladesh due to enactment of RTI Act 2009. It helps to ensure transparency and accountability and break mal tradition created by the official secrecy act 1923. In spite of having facilities of the Act, culture of confidentiality, lack of balance between demand and supply sides of free flow of information, the Act has not been able functional in full- fledged yet in Bangladesh. The study has also found out that owing to lack of capacity of the officials and deficit of demand from the citizens, the state of free flow of information is not up to the mark. With this, lack of a tradition of rule of law and the existence of a culture of impunity impede free flow of information in Bangladesh. The research has also identified that negative attitude and low level awareness of government officials, lack of awareness and sensitization of citizen and deep division between the people and government officials bar people to get due information. Besides, very few application for information, lack of people's trust on government officials, media's lack of curiosity about the Act, shortage of logistic

support to practice right to know bar people to get expected level of free flow of information.

The study has identified that there is a legal ground to follow international standard in terms of citizens' platform. But the issues— misnomer regarding meaning of the CS, CSOs, NGOs and negative perception about CSOs, confuse the concept of citizens platform in Bangladesh. Owing to CSOs' serving as political client and working for the vested interest groups, division for the political purpose and organization for the economic gain, citizen platform cannot fulfill people's expectation in terms of democratic platform. Research has also identified that branding development and cultural activities oriented people as the members of civil society does not match with the real spirit of the platform. Finally indecent pressure on government and imposing restrictions by the government impede the activities of citizens' platform in Bangladesh.

The research has identified that as per constitution the media is totally free in investigating governmental and powerful institutions but various shorts coming imposed by internal and external forces hamper media's performance. There is presence of a huge number of print, electronic and social media. It is also found out that there is an ample investment in media and print media is more vibrant than electronic ones. But the concerns— divided and polarized media along political lines and lower standard of journalistic ethics influence people's trust negatively. The study has also found out that self censorship, closing media, assault and life threat of journalists bar communication channels to perform as regards common concerns. Besides, monopolistic ownership, state control by brute force and stringent laws restrict freedom of press. Finally influence of ill political motive, plethora of biased

reporting and loss of people's confidence hamper the performance of communication channels in Bangladesh.

Finally the research has found out that civil liberty is constitutionally guaranteed. But in practical ground it is under tremendous restriction. Merely formulation of the RTI Act could not ensure the free flow of information, but it necessitates meaningful implementation. Legally citizens' platforms are entitled to follow the international standard here, but their activities have been under question regarding their objectives and vested interests. Communication Channel as a mitigating catalyst is infested with shortcomings of internal flaws and external pressure which cannot play role up to the standard.

The preceding discussion postulates that theoretically democratic public sphere is encouraging in Bangladesh. But in practice, the flaws and hindrances prevailing in this country make democratic public sphere weak and mediocre type. At this situation, it is important to explore whether this type of democratic public sphere form public opinion associated with common concern in terms of representative accountability in Bangladesh.

2. To assess whether the democratic public sphere forms public opinion associated with common concern in terms of representative accountability in Bangladesh.

The research has identified , as regards citizens' platform , that notwithstanding having negative perceptions—promoting elite voice, donor voice, motivated voice, voice for de-politicization and voice for chaos rising, TIB is making people conscious,

trying to establish social movement, raising voice on the basis of people's interests, experience and opinion, and also creating knowledge based demand.

Inspite of having problems – lack of people's participation, shortage of democratic structure, lack of democratic leadership, elite representation and donor funded organizations, TIB's voice ,some times, echo the voice of the people and when it talks against established forces people get confidence. Confidence in this sense that there is a scope to raise voice against malpractices. This stage implies to examine the platform's ability to form public opinion interms of common concern.

The research has found out that TIB has made a significant contribution in moving Bangladesh to a situation where there is now a government which has anti-corruption movement as its headline agenda. Majority of the respondents claim that it produces public opinion partially. But if we count fully and fairly altogether we see that more than 35% respondents support TIB's contribution to public opinion formation.

On the other hand, lack of people's participation is the main barrier of TIB in respect of pulic opinion formation. Besides, shortage of democratic structure , lack of democratic leadership , and elite representation are the major hindrences against TIB in terms of public opinion formation.

The study, as to communication channel, has found out that the quality of journalism has reached to an expected level. But overall quality status is not up to the mark. The nature of the media in Bangladesh is inherently partisan. The research has also found out out that recently this partisanship has been greatly influenced by the protection of media owners' business interests. Due to self censorship, media is not

being able to perform its due role in the context of democratic practices in Bangladesh.

Research has also found out that media do not cover all the political corruption news due to some internal and external effects. Though media serve journalistic purposes and provide information, it also promotes and protects business interests, advance political ideologies, carrying political favor by means of financial gains and influence. It also identified there is an impression that the leading media outlets are accountable, but there is a huge "underground media". The purposes and fundings of these underground media are not beyond question.

The research has also identified that the Media's nature of political corruption coverage is investigative, awareness building, educative, debate raising, neutral and follow up reporting. Among them debate raising occupies the most spheres. Owners of the media are clutched by hidden gang. Every government wants to see media weak. It takes advantages from the division of media. Besides, leaders of the media take illegal facilities from government and try to impose undue pressure on total media ambiance in Bangladesh.

The study has also unearthed that due to political interest, some journalists are dividing journalist society. Media face the impact of plundering economy. It is widely acknowledged in Bangladesh that the owners of both print and electronic media outlets are members of the political and business elite. It is also found out that the reasons that impede media to cover corruption duely are poliotical pressure, editorial or internal pressure, owner's interferance and govt. interferance.

The research has identified that 85% respondents agree with the maxim that internal corruption of media is the main barrier to cover political corruption. In case of relying on media, majority respondents view that their level of relying on media is medium (scale 3). The maximum 34% of total respondents were found out to be 'partially satisfied'. Corporate voice, internal corruption, self censorship, biased attitude, political lenience and owners' interest impede media to perform its due role. It is also known that internal corruption and owners' interest affect negatively on Media's role as regards to satisfaction on media. More than 50% respondents support these two indicators, internal corruption and owners' interest, that have deterrent impact on media.

It is clear from the study that despite the confusion of the performance of media, it is the only place where people rely on. It is trying to cover political corruption conceding some setbacks. It is tough to disclose true facts through media, where society is divided. It is also found out that media owners are more concern regarding their business and media leaders are busy with gaining self political and economic interest. Besides, political parties' negative attitude against every critical voice has adverse impact on the performance of media in Bangladesh.

Finally it could be noted that providing individuals scope to know what other people think, the media make it possible for public opinion to encompass large number of individuals and wide geographic areas. It is a voice of the voiceless and a great force in building the national consensus. At this aspect, media are expected to provide a forum where a broad range of voices- opposition parties, civil society actors, independent experts and ordinary citizens can express their alternative views.

Research has also made clear in terms of people's voice raising that talk show has both positive and negative trend. In the context of positive stand the study has disclosed that definitely some voices reflect people's ideas and perceptions. Talk show is essential in our society because of dysfunctional parliament, in effective civil societies and basically not to having scope of issues of common concern based debate and discussion. It is also notable that some of the participants are doing well in talk show. In spite of having question over neutrality, talk show is playing positive role in case of voice raising.

The study has also found out that to some extent, talk show represents the voice of the people. It makes easy the understanding of the people. Its main attraction is the animated debate and discussion of certain complex issues. Everyone, the government side, the opposition, neutral persons, experts, has a chance to speak out and deliberate on the issues. And the general public participates too, calling in live over telephone. Now every person can give his own analysis on any event which is happened. Viewers now become opinion makers. Talk show influences the person's life and become the source of social change. Besides, research has identified that more than 70% respondents imply the importance of talk show in terms of voice representation.

On the other hand, research has found out negative arguments in the following ways. Mostly informed people as to common concern (corruption) don't come to talk show. The participants, primarily, don't know how corruption occurs. MPs and bureaucrats, more informed about corruption, avoid the program. Though very few informed people participate in the programs, they inform people partially. Talk show participants are not institutionally recognized representatives of the people. It doesn't

represent the voice of people, but plays the role of a pressure group. It is popular among a section of middle-class urban people in Bangladesh. We live in a society where people with very less qualifications are not only talking more but also creating chaos in the society. Besides, some take full advantages in such a situation to create negativity in the minds of people.

The study has also found out that nowhere else in Bangladesh is democracy so alive. Every talk show participant seems to be an expert on nearly every subject under the sun. It starts giving strong views against or in favor of someone or something, and talkers think that everyone believes in whatever they say. It doesn't represent the voice of the people. Because elite voice, partisan voice, biased voice, corporate voice, evidence less voice and self evading voice are impeding talk shows to be the voices of the people.

Aforementioned argumentations as to talk shows' voice representation prove that the space is significant despite having various loopholes. But it clearly substantiates that the participants of talk show are making common people conscious, but raising the voice of educated people.

The positive notion we get as regards talk show oriented public opinion formation in Bangladesh is that its participants are the part of the civil society. We can call it media voice also. The voice of Talk show is more powerful than that of print media. It has significant impact on public opinion formation. Now it is more important because of less effectiveness of representative parliamentary democracy. People are listening talk show and becoming informed regarding concerning issues. Despite some flaws, this ambiance helps public opinion formation. People become informed about various issues from it. It can make a great impact on public mind.

People can get a lot of information through direct participation in the shows over phone, which help forming public opinion. According to the respondents 32% agree that talk show 'fairly' produce voice to form public opinion. If we sum up the percentage of categories— fully, fairly and partially, we find that more than 65% respondents support that talk show has positive role as regards public opinion formation. More over the contribution of the talk shows on many important issues cannot be ignored.

The research has found out the negative ideas of talk show that its participants do not disclose information overtly. Lack of information is noticed in the produced voice. Talkers inform people partially with self evading manner. It doesn't turn into collective voice. They don't represent the values of the people of all walks. Voice or opinion about irregularities and corruption is not significantly emerging from talk show because corruption is a sensitive issue and those who participate in talk shows usually do not explain different issues which are directly or indirectly related to corruption. Besides, ownership of the satellite channels is primarily rooted in and depends on party affiliation. Moreover, government agencies have a form of indirect control over the broadcasting. Most of the talk shows' participants criticize government where guests can argue in favor of or against the issues with evidence. On the other hand, only 12.7% respondents view that talk show doesn't at all form public opinion. They argue that elite voice, partisan voice, biased voice, corporate voice, and evidence less voice are impeding talk show to be the voice of the people.

The research has also identified that facebook is an increasing space for raising voice in the public sphere of Bangladesh. Basically young generation use it effectively to raise voice. It is found out that this space tries to raise voice. But due to

various problems like low level of people's acceptance, low level of accessibility, lack of authenticity, fear of undue harassment and apprehension of being politically color facebook is hindered to raise voice in our country.

The study has also found out that there is a space, limited range, to raise voice in public sphere through facebook. Especially young people are more interested to use this space. It has been a flexible space to get information. But there is a question about the authenticity of the information shared through it. In case of representation, the number of participants is limited and it is mainly attracted by the young people. It indicates that most of the people are out of this purview.

On the other hand, raised voice has importance to form public opinion. But it is being barred due to fear of being politically color, low level of trustworthiness, fear of undue harassment and lack of acceptances in case of forming public opinion in Bangladesh.

Now it is clear that public sphere has both strength and weakness in Bangladesh. Citizens' platform has made a remarkable contribution to the present stand of government and conscious citizens in terms of anti-corruption movement in Bangladesh. But absence of people's participation, shortage of democratic structure, lack of democratic leadership and elite representation are the major hindrences against TIB in terms of public opinion formation.

Though there is confusion about the performance of communication channel, it is the only place where people depend on it. It is trying to cover political corruption conceding some setbacks— corporate voice, internal corruption, self censorship,

biased attitude, political lenience and owners' interest which impede media to perform its due role.

Due to popularity of talk show voice than that of print media, talk show has significant impact on public opinion formation. Now it is more important because of less effectiveness of representative parliamentary democracy. It is the beauty of democracy. But some talk shows' participants are making themselves the agent of vested interest groups. They have a great impact in creating a noise on the scene about any issue or diverting the public attention from any critical issue.

Facebook voice has importance to form public opinion. But it is being barred due to fear of being politically color, low level of trustworthiness fear of undue harassment and lack of acceptance in case of forming public opinion in Bangladesh .

Aforesaid analysis has identified that Bangladeshi Public sphere produces public opinion (not up to the mark) within various internal and external challenges. At this situation, it is important to explore whether this type of public opinion associated with common concern can ensure non-electoral vertical accountability of the elected representatives in Bangladesh.

3. To scrutinize whether public opinion can translate people's issue into representative accountability in Bangladesh.

Non- electoral vertical accountability— answerability and enforceability, is problem ridden in Bangladesh. Despite hindrances democratic public sphere is trying its level best to create impact on accountability mechanism in Bangladesh. The limitation of democratic public sphere and state of impact on accountability are found out in the flowing ways.

Public sphere is playing important role with some practical hindrances in terms of accountability claiming. It brings variety of governance concerns to public attention. It has created public awareness of the concerning issues. Television talk shows discuss the issue regularly with a range of commentators and political actors. Public has access to diversified views. Anti-corruption has been the headline agenda due to the stand of citizen's platform.

On the other hand, reporting lacks credibility and is motivated by business interests. Some news papers are branded as party mouthpieces, politically motivated and lack in complete authenticity. Voice of public sphere is more cynical that neither opinion leaders nor audiences expects any positive result from the voice. Besides, lack of professional media training body and partisan tendency of media make the impact of public opinion weak on the elected representatives in Bangladesh. Citizens' platform has not been encouraging and emerging as strong vigilant forces. Reciprocating action of voice is still quite disproportionate and most of the users of facebook are youth— basically from cities and towns and lack of fascination to join political activities.

Explanation and justification from the elected representatives as per the claim of public sphere are infested with problems, but in some cases it shows positive trends also. The setbacks revealing from the space are lack of politicians' seriousness to the claim and lip service to the concern. It is also found out among the stakeholders of public sphere that good news is considered bad but bad news is taken as good one which affect negatively on the responses of the elected representatives. Research has also found out that the elected representatives' re-activeness rather than pro activeness to the claim shows the deficit of cooperation between public sphere and the elected

representatives. It is also identified that lack of tolerance, absence of democratic culture and tendency to denying allegation or facts bar the elected representatives to respond positively to the claim of public sphere. Research has also found out that the elected representatives' responsiveness to political parties not to public sphere impedes representatives to be responsive to the claim. Besides, despite ministers' stepping down from public post, remaining parliament membership and after quitting minister ship but reappointment go against the claim from public sphere in Bangladesh.

The allegations coming from the elected representatives against citizens' platform are that it demeans democracy and jeopardizes sovereignty through motivated reports against established institutions. Research has also found out, as per the perception of the elected representatives that the reports of TIB are frustrating and motivated because it invites undemocratic forces to come to political power that erodes people's confidence on MPs and parliament. These state forward complaints against citizens' platform lessen the impact of public sphere on accountability mechanism.

The research has also identified that attacking reports as well as split news and gap between civil society's report and media coverage impact mutual respect of public sphere and the elected representatives negatively in Bangladesh. This ambiance does not build up cooperative relationship between public opinion and accountability mechanism. It is also found out that politicians have positive realization on social media (facebook) but they are not efficiently using it to fight against corruption or promote their agenda. Furthermore, the elected representatives do not respond

positively due to lack of independence of judiciary & Anti Corruption Commission and lack of collective voice to the claim of public sphere in Bangladesh.

On the other hand, the positive facts disclosing from the space, are found out the such as. Voice halts the negative tendency of the elected representatives for the time being. People get information regarding the stand of the elected representatives. Voice also reaches to the policy level. It is also found out that some institutional reforms (example- formation of information act, whistle blowing act, anti corruption commission act etc) take place in the national level. Besides, ministers' stepping down (though minimal level) and politicians awareness regarding social media etc are also noticed.

The study, as per censure of enforceability, has unfolded that public sphere is a vibrant space for democracy. It has been the prime sphere in the event of discussing common concern, where there prevails less effective parliament and weak role of opposition in Bangladesh. We get information from it and can criticize responsible persons on the basis of information. It is also found out that majority respondents' positive notion as to public sphere implies the importance of democratic public sphere in terms of public sphere's ability to criticize the elected representatives in Bangladesh.

On the other hand, owing to shortage in human resources, editors cannot take the decision to dedicate highly skilled correspondents to long term investigative stories. It is also found out that lack of full-fledged function of democracy, self censorship, and plundering economy hamper the space to criticize the elected representatives. Fear of undue harassment, shortage of tolerance also bar space to

criticize the elected representatives openly. Besides, criticism does not turn into forces due to lack of collective voice. With this, self censorship and undue harassment also block actors to perform in the sphere.

The study has further identified that it is the only space which creates loss of reputation of the political figures who avoid denouncing. It can create easily loss of reputation of the elected representatives if ones do not respond positively to censure. Respondents indicate that the negative attitude of the elected bodies to the voice of democratic public sphere brings loss of reputation of the elected representatives in Bangladesh.

The cycle of corruption within public sphere also hampers its performance and the ambiance also bars to create loss of reputation of the elected representatives. The research has also found out that civil society groups hardly respect the views of anyone but themselves. It is usually upwards (funders) rather than downward (served) oriented. Pattern of denouncing by public sphere is embarrassing not to correction oriented. It is also identified that evidence less and random criticism and repeated embarrassing voice create instigation which hampers mutual cooperation.

The study has also unearthed that due to vested interest, our elected representatives do not always take the voice of public sphere positively and this tendency ceases the elected representatives' behavior change. Politicians never consider those as major policy or action issues. It is also found out that these voices go in vain due to less influence of this virtual communication portal among people, administration and finally politicians. Mud sliding among the political parties, lack of democracy and accountability within political parties and conflicting politics deter the

elected representatives to change their behavior as per censure created by public sphere in Bangladesh.

The research has found out that democratic public sphere cannot change the attitude of the elected representatives up to the mark in Bangladesh. Lack of democratic attitude and the elected representatives' lack of direct accountability to public sphere, less importance of people's consent, weakness of public sphere's voice raising and plundering economy obstruct the elected representatives to change their attitude as per public sphere's demand.

The study, as per answerability of non-electoral vertical accountability, has unfolded the facts in following ways. Voice of common concern through democratic public sphere, in the context of claiming, reaches to public attention via diversified ways such as. Media cover various common concerns. It is also seen that talk show participants discuss concerning issues with range of commentators and political actors. Citizens' platform raises voice repeatedly regarding common concern. Besides, facebook disseminates instant information on common concern. In this way democratic public sphere try to claim accountability from the elected representatives in Bangladesh.

On the other count, the study has identified that corporate and partisan stand of media coverage, pre-concept discussion by talk show participants, low vigilance of citizens' platform and lower and sectarian participation in the facebook impede democratic public sphere to claim accountability from the elected representatives in Bangladesh.

In short the responses of the elected representatives to the claim of public sphere could be summarized the following ways. The research has found out that politicians are not serious to the claim rather they are reactive to the space. It is also found out that the elected representatives are responsive to political parties rather than public sphere. It implies there are lack of cooperation between public sphere and the elected representatives in Bangladesh. It is also found out that business controlled politics, attacking and split news, lack of mutual respect and blame game make mutual relationship uncongenial between public sphere and the elected representatives in Bangladesh. Besides, the elected representatives do not respond positively to the claim due to deficit of independence of major watchdog institutions and lack of collective voices from public sphere in Bangladesh.

On the other hand the positive facts revealed from the study are briefly shown below. Claims from public sphere work as the inputs of policies and catalysts for some institutional reforms. It is also found out that people get information regarding the stand of the elected representatives. Besides, voices halt the negative activities of the elected representatives for a while.

The research, according to enforceability of non-electoral vertical accountability, has revealed that public sphere is a lively space for democracy. It has been a main sphere in the event of discussing common concern. It implies the importance of democratic public sphere in terms of public sphere's ability to criticize the elected representatives in Bangladesh. But censure does not turn into forces due to lack of collective voices. It is also found out that self censorship and undue harassment also block actors to perform in the sphere.

Despite some internal flaws of public sphere i.e. pattern of denouncing to embarrassing not to correction, evidence less and random criticism, repeated embarrassing voice created instigation to hamper mutual cooperation, it can create loss of reputation of the elected representatives who defy criticism produced in the public sphere in Bangladesh.

The research has also found out that democratic public sphere cannot change the attitude of the elected representatives up to the mark. It halts corrupt people for the time being but due to lack of democratic attitude, the elected representatives' lack of direct accountability to public sphere, less importance of people's consent, and weakness of public sphere's voice raising, it cannot change the elected representatives' behavior as per public opinion in Bangladesh.

Preceding arguments substantiate that democratic public sphere has limited impact on non- electoral vertical accountability due to problem ridden state of answerability and enforceability. Only direct accountability mechanism between public sphere and the elected representatives might bring non - electoral vertical accountability through democratic public sphere in Bangladesh.

MAJOR FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS AND AREA OF FURTHER RESEARCH

MAJOR FINDINGS

Mediocre state of democratic public sphere in Bangladesh

The state of democratic public sphere in Bangladesh is of mediocre type. The research has found out the current status of democratic public sphere through examining the differences between constitutional or legal state and practical condition of democratic public sphere in Bangladesh. Constitutionally civil liberty is guaranteed in Bangladesh, but practically it is found out that the rights of freedom of opinion and expression are restricted very often for the protection of vested interests. Status of free flow of information is not up to the mark. Despite-legal guarantee of free flow of information, long tradition-of secrecy and people's negative perceptions regarding service providers' mentality impede in the path of free information dissemination. Citizens' platform cannot perform its activities up to the standard due to gap between the international standard and practical atmosphere of it in Bangladesh. Basically, due to large scale confusion from various groups regarding structure and intentions of the organization, the apparent positive activities of that platform come under questions. In the context of legal ground, communication channels have great scope to work in Bangladesh. But internal and external negative influences bar communication channels to perform its proper role.

Major causes collected from KII, SLR and FGD sources which are linked to making democratic public sphere mediocre type have been assessed on the basis of Majority respondents' views here.

Table 6.1 Causes and Effects Nexus as Regards Mediocre State of Democratic Public Sphere

Major causes excavated from SLR,KII & FGD sources	Majority respondents'	Effects
Negative impact of vested interests as regards freedom of	64.70	Adverse effect on civil liberty
Very difficult to access govt. information	46.00	Negative impact on free flow of information
Lack of voluntary information disclosure of govt. officials	58.90	Hindrance of free flow of information
Lack of democratic structure of citizens' platform	27.30	Barrier to be people's platform
Elite voice representation of citizens' platform	47.70	Impediment to people's voice representation
Debate creating nature of	70.10	Adverse impact on media
Political pressure on media	68.70	Negative impact on its role
Internal corruption of media	50.80	Loss of people's confidence in media
Partisan voice of talk show	70.00	Barrier to people's voice raising
Fear of undue harassment	37.70	Negative impact on facebook

The preceding discussion and causal effect table postulate that theoretically democratic public sphere is encouraging in Bangladesh. But in practical ground the flaws and hindrances prevailing in this country make democratic public sphere weak and mediocre.

Partial Public Opinion Formation through Democratic Public Sphere

Democratic public sphere forms partial public opinion in Bangladesh. Media coverage is one of the important sources of public opinion formation. Presence of huge number of print and electronic media in Bangladesh provides scopes to disseminate

information. But due to predominately negative tendency of media coverage and people's less confidence in media circulated information, media news has limited impact on public opinion formation. Despite common concern oriented functions of citizens' platform, it cannot form public opinion fully or fairly. Basically lack of democratic nature and top down structure of citizens' platform impede the formation of public opinion up to the expected level. Due to less effectiveness of parliamentary democracy in Bangladesh, talk-show is playing a significant role as regards voice raising. But due to partisan and elite representation, the voices do not turn into public opinion fully. Social media, basically facebook, has been an important medium to raise voice here. But repeated restrictions on freedom of opinion and expression, inaccurate information dissemination and lower level of people's participation have ceased facebook voice to form public opinion fairly in Bangladesh.

Table: 6.2   Major grounds as regards partial public opinion formation

Components of public	Major causes excavated from SLR, KII, FGD and QS sources	Kind of public opinion formation according to
Citizens' platform	Lack of people's participation, deficit of democratic structure, lack of democratic leadership and promoting elite voice	Partial (32%)
Media news	Promoting and protecting business interests, partisan and debate creating nature of coverage, politically divided journalist society, internal corruption and self-	Partial (34%)
Talk-show	Elite voice, partisan voice, biased voice, corporate voice, evidence-less voice and self	Fair (32%)
facebook	Lack of people's acceptance, lack of people's acceptability, deficit of authenticity, fear of undue harassment and fear of political	Partial (24%)

The foregone discussion and table demonstrate that democratic public sphere is producing public opinion in Bangladesh. But the level of public opinion formation is partial.

Limited Impact on Non-Electoral Vertical Accountability of the elected representatives

Public opinion produced by democratic public sphere has limited impact on non-electoral vertical accountability of the elected representatives in Bangladesh. The answerability and enforceability, indicators of non-electoral vertical accountability, are problems ridden here. Due to partisan nature of media coverage and confusion over the functions of citizens' platform, the claims from public sphere become impotent. As a result of impotence, claim from public sphere influences on responses of the elected representatives mildly. It implies that the explanations and justifications from the elected representatives as per the claims from public sphere are not up to the mark. But this lack of seriousness of the elected representatives to the claims produces criticism in public sphere. This censure has insufficient impact on loss of reputation of the elected representatives. Due to this ambiance, democratic public sphere has limited impact on behavior change of the elected representatives in Bangladesh.

Table: 6.3 **Causes and Effects Nexus As Regards Limited Impact of Non-Electoral Vertical Accountability on The elected representatives in Bangladesh**

Causes collected from SLR,KII, FGD & QS sources	Respondents' views (%)	Effects
Public sphere's voice reaching to The elected representatives (ERs)	33.30	Shows connection between public sphere and ERs
The elected representatives' 'reactive' response to public sphere's voice	50.70	Deficit of cooperation between public sphere and ERs
Public sphere's criticism to ERs 'fairly'	36.00	Loss of reputation of ERs
The elected representatives' loss of reputation by public sphere 'fully'	42.00	The elected representatives' seldom behavior change
The elected representatives'	54.40	Limited accountability
Lack of institutional mechanism between public sphere and the	55.30	Absence of full-fledged non-electoral vertical accountability

The preceding discussion and causes and effects nexus table show that democratic public sphere has limited impact on non-electoral vertical accountability of the elected representatives in Bangladesh.

IMPLICATIONS

1. Bridging Gap Between Demand and Supply Sides of Free Flow of Information

Free flow of information makes people informed about the rights and responsibilities. These informed people are the core players in the domain of public sphere. Without people's access to information it is not possible to bring transparency in public culture. For securing people's access to information the simultaneous effective

function of demand and supply sides of the free flow of information is a must. In spite of having Right To information Act- 2009, the lack of required preparations of demand and supply sides, it is not being made able fully functional in the realm of democratic public sphere in our society.

The steps should be taken to meet the gap between demand and supply sides are: To attract people in terms of using the Act, an important challenge is to convince them that the government really wants to see the law to be successful in promoting their participation to monitor the way government offices are run.

GOs, NGOs and INGOs should come up with pragmatic awareness campaigns with an integrated and understandable communication policy for sensitizing demand side's right to information. It is relevant that informed or conscious public is hardly deceived.

Very few people believe that public officials would indeed provide them the information. Because past bitter experiences regarding information disclosure may discourage them. The age-old culture of official secrecy and non-disclosure of official information has created such deep distrust in the minds of the people that they are naturally skeptical about it. The real challenge is to remove it. To remove this perception from the mind of the demand side, supply side should be rained up with the motto that they (supply side) are recruited predominately to serve demand side.

2. Strengthening the role of media forum in terms of the elected representatives' accountability in Bangladesh

Media make it possible for public opinion to encompass large number of individuals and wide geographic areas. It is a voice of the voiceless and a great force in building the national consensus. Media are expected to provide a forum where a broad range of voices- opposition parties, civil society actors, independent experts and ordinary citizens can express alternative views.

The nature of the media in Bangladesh is inherently partisan, although recently this partisanship is greatly influenced by the protection of media owner's business interests. Due to self censorship media is not being able to perform its due role in the context of democracy in Bangladesh.

In spite of the confusion of the performance of media, it is the only place where people can put through their trust. It is trying to cover political corruption conceding some setbacks. It is tough to disclose true facts through media, where society is divided. Media owners are more concern regarding their business and media leaders are busy with getting self political and economic interest.

But during infectivity of parliamentary accountability mechanism, it is supposed that media—print, electronic and social play the role of relation maker between the accounter and the accounted. In our country we see the plethora of media. In the context of authoritarian regime, the media in Bangladesh is remaining in far better position. But in case of democratic governance, the standard of communication channels is not up to the mark. Due to the external pressure and internal flaws in

media management and activities, communication channels are not being able to perform its role properly.

However, if we like to get due benefit from media made public sphere afore discussed matters should be resolved to strengthen the role of media forum in terms of the elected representatives accountability in Bangladesh is imperative.

3. Institutionalizing the relationship between public sphere and accountability mechanism of the elected representatives in Bangladesh

It is clear from the study that people desire of direct accountability mechanism of the elected representatives. In this context, the democratic public sphere acts as a catalyst in making the elected representatives accountable. The concept itself highlights that 'citizens and their representatives ought to publicly justify the decisions they make and the rules they institute in order to establish a legitimate democratic bond.

However, we hardly see such legitimate connections between the people at large and their elected representatives in particular. The elected representatives in all spheres of governance structures in Bangladesh seem to be alien from the mass people after election and people suffer from lack of proper connection.

In spite of various hurdles of public sphere, it is raising voice in the context of common concern and being able to create public opinion. But major debate has appeared that whether it is being able to make the elected representatives accountable to the people or not. At this ambiance the major argument comes that without having formal mechanism between public spheres and the elected representatives no accountability would be ensured. It indicates that there should have a strategy to institutionalize the relationship between public sphere and accountability mechanism

of the elected representatives in Bangladesh. Indeed it implies to analyze deliberative democracy critically to find out the process how to the relationship between public sphere and accountability mechanism could be made institutionalized in Bangladesh.

AREA OF FURTHER RESEARCH

Role of Civil Society in Forming Public Sphere in Bangladesh

Civil society and the public sphere are closely related, but conceptually not synonymous. Civil society is constituted by organizations and activities that have no primary political or commercial character, and are not motivated by profit or power. Under certain circumstances they can become part of the public sphere. A vibrant civil society supports citizens' demand for accountability and participation in the public sphere. Civil society organizations organize and promote the citizen agenda.

Researcher has used civil society as a segment of public sphere in Bangladesh. But civil society exclusively can form public sphere. So, in further research, role of civil society in forming public sphere in Bangladesh could be analyzed.

Talk Show and Public Sphere in Bangladesh

Talk show is an electronic media show in which various topics are discussed to inform or educate the audience. It is usually hosted by one person that focuses on interviews or audience participation.

It is examined that talk show has been as an ingredient of public sphere in Bangladesh. But just at present talk show itself can form public sphere in Bangladesh. So, talk show and public sphere in Bangladesh could be an important research topic.

Facebook and public sphere in Bangladesh

Now a day's facebook has been one of the important social media to raise voice and form public opinion. Bangladesh is not out of this purview. People are gradually taking part in this social media day by day.

Researcher has used facebook as a section of public sphere in Bangladesh. But facebook itself can form public sphere. So, in further research, facebook and public sphere in Bangladesh could be a substantial research issue here.

Deliberative democracy: theory and reality in Bangladesh

Deliberative democracy is compatible with both representative democracy and direct democracy. Some practitioners and theorists use the term to encompass representative bodies whose members authentically deliberate on legislation without unequal distributions of power, while others use the term exclusively to refer to decision-making directly by common citizens, as in direct democracy.

Deliberative democracy could be critically analyzed to find out the process how to the relationship between public sphere and accountability mechanism could be made institutionalized in Bangladesh. So, 'Deliberative democracy: theory and reality in Bangladesh' could be a time worthy research topic for next.

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ANNEXURE

Annexure List 1.1	Key Informants
MP	Members of Parliament
MP 1	Golam Maula Roni
MP 2.	Azharul Haq Mollah
MP 3	Rasheda Begum Hira
MP 4.	Sah Md Abu Jafor
YP	Young Politician
YP 1	Seikh Rejaul Islam, Former president of BSL, SM hall unit University of Dhaka
EJ	Editors and Journalists
EJ 1	Faijus Salahein, *The Daily Ittefaq*
EJ 2	Faijul Islam, *The Daily Ittefaq*
EJ 3	Md Jamal Uddin, *The Daily Ittefaq*
EJ 4	Riaj Ahmed, *News Today*
EJ 5	Mahbub Hossain , *The Daily Jugantor*
AJ	Academics from Journalism
AJ 1	Sohidul Islam, Associate Professor, Journalism, CU
AS	Academics from Sociology
AS 1	Dr. Sultana M. khanom , Professor, Sociology, RU
AS 2	Dr. Jahangir Alam, Associate Professor, Sociology,
AS 3	
TAG	Talk show Anchors and Guests TAG
TAG 1	Ferdous Hossain, Guest
TAG 2	Sahin Reza Nur, Anchor, BTV
TAG 3	Dr. Nelufar Parveen, Guest
TAG 4	Minar Rashid, Guest
MATIB	Members and Associates of TIB
MATIB 1	Iftekharuzzaman

MATIB 2	Hussain Toufiq Chowdhury
MATIB 3	Najma Begum
MATIB 4	Rumana Begum
PS	Political Scientists
PS 1	Dr. Fariduddin Ahammed, Professor, Political Science, DU
PS 2	Dr. Sohrab Hossain ,Associate Professor, Political
PS 3	Dr. Shantunu Mujumdar Professor, Political
PS 4	Mahbub Hasan, Associate professor, Political
FBA	Facebook Admin
FBA 1	K M Robbani, BCS Education Group
FBA 2	Mofijul Islam Bhuiya, BCS Education Group
LE	Legal Experts
LE1	Salauddin Ahmmed, Advocate, Bangladesh Supreme
LE2	Ashabur Rahman, Advocate, Bangladesh Supreme

Annexure Table 1.2:   FGD Places and Number of Participants

Category of FGD participants	Number of FGD	Places	Number of Participants
News Readers and Audience (NRA)	2	Dhaka+Rajshahi	11 + 12
Talk -Show Audience(TSA)	1	Dhaka	11
Facebook Users (FBU)	1	Dhaka	12
Multiple Users (MU)	2	Dhaka + Rajshahi	12 +11
Politically Conscious Citizens(PCC)	2	Dhaka+Rajshahi	10 +11

Annexure 2.1: Rights Watch

Right to information: A right yet to be informed

Right to information is considered to be a fundamental human right within the rubric of freedom of speech and expression guaranteed by the Constitution of People's Republic of Bangladesh. It also enlightens the term" people's republic of Bangladesh". The term "People's Republic" itself mandates a state obligation to engage all people meaningfully for the attainment of true essence of democracy, and by then the constitution as a supreme law can reflect the solemn expression of the will of the people. With this end, Right to Information Act 2009 is one of the important legislation to establish the "culture of the transparency and accountability" of all public, autonomous and statutory organisations and of other private institutions constituted or run by government. The term "culture of the transparency and accountability" deserves attention as it becomes foreign to get the practice transparency and accountability especially in public bodies where corruption, politicisation and criminalisation are replacing. In this regard, Right to information can be instrumental by empowering people's right to know in all public spheres and this should be granted to an educated man living in the city as well as to an illiterate villager living in the rural area being deprived from many advancement facilities. In Bangladesh there is still a huge gap between rural and urban people in terms of their entitlements and this facilitates the urban people to suppress the rural people keeping them unlettered from their guaranteed right and by this the practice of corruption can be exercised smoothly which completely disregards the constitutional pledges of empowerment of all people. Here Right to information is an important tool to know how the government is performing or where is the money that he or she gives as tax going?

Coming to the Right to information Act 2009, it is found that it enables every citizen access to information from the authority and the authority shall, on demand from a citizen, be bound to provide him with the information. Here it implies that everybody should aware of their information and if any kind of information is necessary he have to make a demand for it by making an application.

How to seek information?

-Under this Act, people have to apply to the concerned Designated Officer (DO) of the concerned authority directly requesting for information either in writing or through electronic means or through e-mail.

-All information requests must provide the applicant's name, address and other particulars for a response in prescribed format as mentioned in the Rules.

-Description of the information sought for should be as correctly and clearly as possible.

-One can express a reasonable preference for the mode you wish the information to be supplied, for example, making inspection, having copy, taking note or any other approved mode like e-mail.

-For obtaining information one must pay fees as determined by the DO as prescribed in the Rules.

-The designated officer shall, on receipt of a request by fulfilling the above mentioned criteria, provide the information to the applicant within 20 (twenty) working days from the date of receiving the request. But if more than one unit or authority are involved with the information sought for, such information may be provided within 30 (thirty) working days.

-If the designated officer, due to any reason, fails to provide the information sought for, he shall inform the applicant the reasons thereof in writing within 10 (ten) working days.

-If any person fails to receive information within the aforesaid time or is aggrieved by a decision of the designated officer, within 30 (thirty) days from the expiry of such period or, as the case may be, from the receipt of such a decision, prefer an appeal to the appellate authority.-The appellate authority will settle the appeal either by making direction to the concerned designated office to supply the appellant the requested information or dismiss the appeal if it is not considered fit for acceptance.

However the right to seek information from a public authority is not absolute. Sections 7of the Act enumerates the categories of information which are exempt from disclosure such as information which would prejudicially affect the sovereignty and integrity of Bangladesh, information that may affect relationship with foreign country and many others described under this section and schedule to

the Act. These are made to make a balance between the freedom of information and individual privacy as well as state integrity. But here, in defining state interest or integrity due sincerity and good faith must be ensured otherwise the misuse of the exemption particularly by the government can make the whole purpose vitiated.

Despite continuous efforts by the concerned authorities, the benefits of right to information are not achieved even after three year of its journey. It is still an alien concept to millions of rural people as they are unaware or in other words reluctant as well as indifferent to know about their rights. Here state can only ensure their right to know by creating mass awareness program and strengthening local implementing units to attain the mandate of the RTI Act. The meaningful implementation of this Act will surely contribute to build the capability approach of common people and make them able for assertion of their entitlements. Only then, the Right to information can be turn into a vehicle towards the journey of empowerment process.

-From Law Desk.

Annexure 2.2: Right to Information Act, 2009

Act. No. XX of 2009

An Act to make provisions for ensuring free flow of information and people's right to information.

Whereas freedom of thought, conscience and speech is recognized in the

Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh as one of the fundamental rights and right to information is an inalienable part of freedom of thought, conscience and speech; and Whereas all powers of the Republic belong to the people, and it is necessary to ensure right to information for the empowerment of the people; and Whereas if the right to information of the people is ensured, the transparency and accountability of all public, autonomous and statutory organizations and of other private institutions constituted or run by government or foreign financing shall increase, corruption of the same shall decrease and good governance of the same shall be established; and

Whereas it is expedient and necessary to make provisions for ensuring transparency and accountability in all public, autonomous and statutory organizations and in other private institutions constituted or run by government or foreign financing; it is hereby enacted as follows:

Chapter 1

Introductory

1. **Short title and commencement.**–(1) This Act may be called the Right to Information act, 2009.(2) Of this Act– (a) all the sections except sections 8, 24 and 25 shall be deemed to have come into force on 20 October, 2008; and (b) sections 8, 24 and 25 shall come into force on 1 July, 2009.

2. **Definitions.** In this Act, unless there is anything repugnant in the subject or context,–(a) "Appellate Authority" means– (i) in case of and information providing unit, the administrative head of its immediate superior office; or (ii) if there is no superior office of such unit, the administrative head of that unit;(b) "Authority" means– (i) any organization constituted in accordance with theConstitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh; (ii) and ministry, division or office established under the Rules of Business made under article 55(6) of the Constitution of thePeople's Republic of Bangladesh; (iii) any statutory body or institution established by or under anyAct; (iv) any private organization or institution run by government financing or with aid in grant from the government fund; (v) any private organization or institution run by foreign aid in grant; (vi) any organization or institution that undertakes public functions in accordance with any contract made on behalf of the Government or made with any public organization or institution; or (vii) any organization or institution as may be notified in the official Gazette from time to time by the Government; (c) "officer" shall also include and employee; (d) "information providing unit" means– (i) head office, divisional office, regional office, district office or upazila office of any department, directorate or office attachedto or under any ministry, division or office of the Government; (ii) head office, divisional office, regional office, district office or upazila office of an authority;(e) "Information Commission" means the Information Commission established under section 11; (f) "information" includes any memo, book, design, map, contract, data, log book, order, notification, document, sample, letter, report, accounts, project proposal, photograph, audio, video, drawing, painting, film, any instrument done through electronic

process, machine readable record, and any other documentary material regardless of its physical form or characteristics, and any copy thereof in relation to the constitution, structure and official activities of any authority: Provided that it shall not include note-sheets or copies of note sheets;(g) "right to information" means the right to obtain information from any authority;(h) "Schedule" means Schedule to this Act;(i) "third party" means any other party associated with information, other than that applying for information or any authority providing such information;(j) "officer-in-charge" means any officer appointed under section 10;(k) "prescribed" means prescribed by rules or regulations;(l) "regulations" means regulations made under section 34;(m) "Selection Committee" means the selection committee constituted under section 14;(n) "rules" means rules made under section 33.

3. Act to override.—of any existing law—(a) the provisions of providing information shall not be affected by the provisions of this Act; and(b) the provisions of creating impediment in providing information shall be superseded by the provisions of this Act if they become conflicting with the provisions of this Act.

Chapter 2

Right to, Preservation of, Publication of and Access to Information

4. Right to information.—Subject to the provisions of this Act, every citizen shall have the right to information from the authority, and the authority shall, on demand from a citizen, be bound to provide him with the information.**5. Preservation of information.**— (1) In order to ensure right to information under this Act, every authority shall prepare catalogue and index of all information and preserve it in an appropriate manner.(2) Every authority shall, within a reasonable time-limit, preserve in computer all such information as it thinks fit for preservation in computer, and shall connect them through a country-wide network to facilitate access to information.(3) The Information Commission shall, by regulations, frame instructions to be followed by every authority for the preservation and management of information and all authority shall follow the instructions.**6. Publication of information.**—(1) every authority shall publish and publicize all information pertaining to any decision taken, proceeding or activity executed or proposed by indexing them in such a manner as may easily be accessible to the citizens. (2) In publishing and publicizing information under sub-section (1), no authority shall conceal any information or limit its easy access.

(3) Every authority shall publish a report every year which shall contain the following information, namely:— (a) particulars of its organizational structure, activities, responsibility of the officers and employees, or description and process of decision making;(b) lists of all laws, Acts, Ordinance, rules, regulations, notifications, directives, manuals, etc. of the authority including the classification of all information lying with the authority;(c) description of the terms and conditions under which a citizen may get services from the authorities in obtaining any license, permit, grant, consent, approval or other benefits and of such conditions that require the authority to make transactions or enter into agreements with him;d) particulars of the facilities ensuring right to information of the citizens, and the full name, designation, address, and, in cases where applicable, fax number and e-mail address of the assigned officer.(4) If the authority frames any policy or takes any important decision, it shall publish all such policies and decisions and shall, if necessary, explain the reasons and causes in support of such policies and decisions.(5) The report prepared by authority under this section shall be made available free of charge for public information and its copies shall be stocked for sale at nominal price. (6) All the publications made by the authority shall be made available to the public at reasonable price. (7) The authority shall publish and publicize the matters of public interest through press note or through any other means. (8) The Information Commission shall, by regulations, frame instructions to be followed by the authority for publishing, publicizing and obtaining information and all the authority shall follow them.7. **Publication of or providing with certain types of information not mandatory**.—notwithstanding anything contained in any other provisions of this Act, no authority shall be bound to provide with the following information,namely—(a) any such information that may, if disclosed, cause a threat to the security, integrity and sovereignty of Bangladesh;(b) any such information relating to any aspect of foreign policy that may affect the existing relationship with any foreign country or international organization or any regional alliance or organization;(c) any secret information received from a foreign government;(d) any information relating to inherent secrets of commercial or business nature, copyright or intellectual property right that may, if published, affect the intellectual property right of a third party.(e) any of the following information that may, if disclosed, be gainfulor damaging to any particular individual or organization, namely :─(i) any advance information about income tax, customs, VAT and law relating to excise duty, budget or change in the tax rate; (ii) any advance information about changes relating to exchange rate and interest rate;(iii) any advance information about the management

and supervision of the financial institutions including banks;(f) any such information that may, if disclosed, obstruct the enforcement of law or incite any offence; (g) any such information that may, if disclosed, endanger the security of public or impede the due judicial process of a pending case; (h) any such information that may, if disclosed, offend the privacy ofthe personal life of an individual; (i) any such information that may, if disclosed, endanger the life or physical safety of any person;(j) any such information given in confidence to any law enforcement agency by a person; (k) any matter pending before any court of law and which has been expressly forbidden to be published by any court of law or tribunal or the disclosure of which may constitute contempt of court; (l) any such information that may, if disclosed, impede the process of investigation; (m) any such information that may, if disclosed, affect any investigation process of offence and the arrest and prosecution of offender; (n) any such information which is, according to law, liable to be published only for a certain period of time; (o) any such information that is generated through technical or scientific experiment, and is expedient to keep secret for strategic or commercial reasons; (p) any such information pertaining to a purchase process before it is complete or a decision has been taken about it; (q) any such information that may be prejudicial to the special rights of the House of the Nation; (r) any secret information of a person which is protected by law; (s) any advance, information relating to question papers of an examination or marks given; (t) any document including summaries to be placed before the Cabinet or, as the case may be, before the Council of Advisers and information relating to discussions and decisions of such meetings : Provided that after taking any decision by the Cabinet or, as the case may be, by the Council of Advisors, the reasons of taking such decisions and the basis upon which the decisions are taken may be disclosed : Provided further that the concern authority shall take prior approval from Information Commission for withholding information under this section;8. **Request for Information.**–(1) Under this Act a person may apply to the officer-in-charge requesting for information either in writing or through electronic means or through e-mail.(2) The request made under sub-section (1) shall include the following information, namely :– (i) name, address of the person making request, in applicable cases, his fax number and email address;(ii) correct and clear description of the information sought for; (iii) other related information so that the location of the information sought for may be easily found out; (iv) description of the modes how he wants to have the information, that is making inspection, having copy, taking note or any other approved method.

(3) The request for information under this section shall be made in a form printed by the authority, or as the case may be, in prescribed format: Provided that if the form is not printed or is not easily available or if the format has not yet been prescribed, request may be made for information by inserting information mentioned in sub-section (2) on a piece of white paper, or in electronic form or through e-mail.(4) In the case of obtaining information under sub-section (1), the person making the request shall pay reasonable fees as may be prescribed by the officer in- charge for such information.(5) The Government may, in consultation with the Information Commission, fix the fees for having any information by notification in the official Gazette, and, if necessary, may fix the price of information, or as the case may be, may exempt an individual or a class of individuals or any other class from paying such price.(6) Every authority shall prepare and publicize a list of information to be supplied free of cost upon an instruction of the Information Commission.9. **Procedure for providing information.**−(1) The designated officer shall, on receipt of a request under sub-section (1) of section 8, provide the information to the applicant within 20 (twenty) working days from the date of receiving the request. (2) Notwithstanding anything contained in sub-section (1), if more than one unit or authority are involved with the information sought for, such information may be provided within 30 (thirty) working days.(3) Despite anything contained in sub-section (1) and (2), if the officer-incharge, due to any reason, fails to provide the information sought for, he shall inform the authority.

Annexure 2.3: Let's talk about talk shows

Wednesday, October 17, 2012

Ground Realities

Syed Badrul Ahsan

There used to be a time, in this country, when we could not imagine having to buy water to drink. And yet we pay for water today. There was a time when we didn't have any idea that something called the mobile phone would be there. You must thank those in the mobile phone business, for they had the foresight to know that a day would soon arrive when the traditionally talkative Bengalis would talk even more through those futuristic mobile phones. Look around you today; observe the water and the mobile phone. And you will know.

If you have noticed, a fairly good number of people have lately been talking about talk shows. They wouldn't have if the prime minister had not first talked about it. Whether Sheikh Hasina was right or wrong in her assessment of talk shows on the many television channels is a question we choose not to answer, for the good reason that it could throw up a whole new crowd of responses. But what is certainly important is that the head of government appears to be among those people who watch talk shows with a fair degree of regularity. If she didn't, she wouldn't be pronouncing judgment on them.

Seriously speaking, though, it is time for us to reflect on the nature and quality of all the talk shows we are treated to every evening by all this ubiquity of television channels in the country. We will begin with an assertion of a basic principle here, which is that in a land where parliament does not function because of the opposition boycott of it and because of which boycott citizens are never privy to the stimulating debate that energises life in a democracy, television talk shows fulfill, or should fulfill, a certain public need. To suggest that talk shows be done away with would be naïve, a sign of the very intolerance democracy eschews all the time.

That said, there are all the huge holes in talk shows that need plugging before we are persuaded into believing that such discussions on the electronic media can serve a serious purpose. Among those holes is the propensity on the part of the television people to rope in, day in and day out, the same faces we have seen and heard on innumerable talk shows and on public occasions for years on end. You might suggest that there is hardly anything wrong in bringing in these eminent people to your living room every night, seeing that a small country like Bangladesh always suffers from a paucity of intellectual or fairly knowledgeable men ready to throw wisdom our way. We understand your argument, up to a point. Beyond that comes the question: haven't these people we see on television all the time become rather predictable in their expression of opinions? Once the camera focuses on them, you know what they are likely to say on the issue under discussion. And that is when talk shows lose their glitter.

There are other difficulties you encounter on the talk shows, at least in a large number of them. And they relate to the fact that every talk show participant seems to be an expert on nearly every subject under the sun. You will spot these venerable men discussing an entire gamut of issues from hartals to the caretaker government to crime to corruption. Men who have retired from the bureaucracy are ready and willing to proffer

advice on how politics ought to be conducted. Superannuated military officers, having served martial law regimes, speak up vociferously for democracy. Academics, having tried distorting history at the behest of certain political parties, find nothing wrong in defending moral politics. Journalists who commit historical wrong by refusing to address Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as Bangabandhu wax eloquent on the path the nation must take to the future. Former caretaker advisers who might have ignored their responsibilities during their stint in office are forever ready to let you in on where the politicians are going wrong. Of course the politicians are going wrong all the time, but should the compere at the talk show not do his or her homework and ask such advisers why they could not oversee a proper production of school textbooks on their watch or why they linked up with a caretaker chief who had manifestly violated the constitution in taking up his job?

Which brings you up against the role of the comperes or presenters you see every evening and every night on television. Quite a few of them, once a talk show gets under way, quickly lose the initiative to their guests. Impoliteness takes over and the one whose fair turn it is to speak finds himself rudely interrupted by another. That is not civilised behaviour. And when the compere is unable to restore order or inform his or her guests of the rules of the game before the show begins, it is only natural that a talk show will descend into chaos, that the country will learn nothing from it. There are talk shows where the compere grins and watches helplessly as his guests slug it out, each one accusing the other of every kind of perfidy in the world. When that happens, your children and mine, watching with us at home, are quite at sea about the state of our politics. This is not adult behaviour, they seem to say.

Speaking of comperes again, there are some who have developed the outrageous habit of interrupting the individual who is trying to answer their questions. The result is an asinine affair: the original question has remained unanswered and the television audience has only had the experience of seeing the compere hear his or her voice on screen. The moment a compere decides to be the centre of the show, much of the enthusiasm associated with watching a talk show goes out the window. It is for the management of the television channels to ensure that their comperes do their homework, go through a fact check on their guests, ask questions in brevity and then wait for the guests to respond. Don't let television talk show hosts make statements of their own.

Finally, talk shows get to be spoilt when in an hour-long programme you have a compere hosting three guests as well as taking calls from outside. And within it all there are the "short breaks" for commercials. By the end of the hour, the audience is not quite sure what it has learnt from the show. It is as confused as the three guests who suddenly realise that they had a lot more to say to their audience than the programme gave them scope for.

Ah, but we have talked enough already. Give the reader some space, now. **The writer is Executive Editor,** *The Daily Star*.

Annexure 2.4: Cancel the Broadcasting Policy

Muhammad Jahangir Aug 15, 2014, Prothom Alo

If the policy comes into effect, the ever- so popular talk show (discussion programmes, as the policy terms them) would lose their appeal. The main attraction of the talk show is the animated debate and discussion of certain issues. The government side, the opposition, neutral persons, experts, everyone has a chance to speak out and deliberate on the issues. And the general public participates too, calling in live over the telephone. Now where else in Bangladesh is democracy so alive.

Debate in parliament is one-sided. Politically savvy people have no interest in the parliamentary proceedings. After all, it's all about lauding the leaders in power, and bashing opposition. The academic discussions and debate on TV are far more constructive and engrossing. Admittedly, there is room for improvement in the TV talk shows. The structure, guest selection, choice of topics can be developed further. Technology can be used for being these programmes even closer to the people.

Managing Director of Ekattor TV Mozammel Haq said, AUGUST 07, 2014,DAILY STAR

"Nobody wants to demean them and we give our utmost efforts to maintain a balance on the talk shows," he said, adding that the media had come to the present state after overcoming many hurdles.

Annexure 2.5: People's online perception regarding TIB report

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Annexure 2.6: Public sphere (media) and accountability (governance) Mechanism in Bangladesh

The relationship between the media and civil society was also a point of comment for all respondents interviewed. The print media has also created a space for civil society representatives, mainly think tanks, research organizations and NGOs to raise public awareness about their chosen issues and areas of work, as well as to engage in debate regarding socio-political concerns. They have utilized the media as a strategic partner, and as elaborated by a leading think tank member, intend to continue using the media as a means of reaching the people. The media, especially a few leading dailies, have also partnered with various NGOs to run awareness campaigns and activities regarding issues such as acid violence, help for the blind, improving education and legal aid. This has meant taking on a new social activism role for the media, one that an editor of a leading daily says is consonant with the task of the media worldwide – to not merely be a means of information, but to be a means of transformation. However, media observers comment that while these goals are admirable and lofty, they find the majority of media outlets, save one or two, failing to perform their public service function as spaces for debate or activism, and instead becoming mouthpieces for specific NGOs or think tanks. Interestingly, the majority of correspondents also remarked that they felt that some

sections of the media behaved as mouthpieces for the "so-called civil society movement", uncritically praising and being co-opted by NGOs without looking into the corruption that exists within them or questioning the motives of the donors who fund them. They felt that NGOs should be subject to the same scrutiny that as the political actors, as they are delivering services to the people and claiming to speak for the public. Understandably, this view was not championed by NGO management and representatives interviewed, or by senior media practitioners such as editors who felt that the media's role in highlighting NGOs activities has been deserved.

Robust media provides people with the political and economic information they require to effectively participate in democratic decision making (2003). This information is vital for the public to be aware of the government's actions and make political decisions accordingly. Stiglitz argues the presence of a "natural asymmetry of information", where the public is separated from the government by the latter's possession of greater information (2002). As the incentives for the government may be very strong to keep information from the people, the mass media can enable citizens to monitor the actions of their government (Besley et al 2002; Stiglitz 2002). Without this information, people cannot demand change or accountability from their government and social institutions. According to Kim et al (2003), the media creates "opinion climates" which influence the public's perception of political actors and events, and their desire to voice opposition and demand change. Thus, the media acts as a catalyst for creating positive governance outcomes as people, and in turn governments, are motivated to enact changes in the institutional structure that enhance democracy. In addition, an effective media also provides policy makers and governments with information vital to addressing a nation's policy and development needs (Hudock 2003; Temin and Smith 2002). So, the type and validity of the information provided by the media regarding governance and the political process can shape people's perceptions and generate impetus for change.

An extremely important area where the provision of critical information by the media can change governance outcomes is in the area of corruption (Kaufman 2006). This is a pervasive problem in many developing counties where state and economic institutions are not yet sufficiently developed and differentiated, or dysfunctional. The media, by raising corruption as an important governance issue creates a space for discussion about it and also a public consensus to fight it (World Bank 2002). So theoretically, an effective press works to curtail corruption by increasing the risk of exposing corruption and by

extension, the penalties for corruption for institutional actors. Kaufman argues that nations with greater press freedom have less corruption (2006). Evidence from Peru and Mozambique suggests that exposure of bribery and other forms of corruption in the media can spur governments to undertake either legislative and institutional reforms or new drives to eradicate corruption (World Bank 2002; Seleti 2000).

The positive correlation between media and governance can only be created if the media itself functions independently, provides news and information of a high quality and is able to reach large sections of the population (Islam 2002; World Bank 2002). If the media is free from undue pressure from the state or commercial interests, and can function under a liberal framework, they are more likely to tackle governance issues successfully. In order to provide useful information to the public, the media needs to have access to information, and also the capacity to utilise it (Krug and Price 2002). Lastly, the media must be able to reach a large percentage of the population in order to educate them regarding governance failures, and to motivate them to demand change. This reach is not possible without technological capacity or within a restrictive environment (Owen 2002).

… Or Lack Thereof?

However, there remains debate among scholars whether there is enough empirical evidence that strongly links media with actual voting outcomes or institutional change, and whether the media actually does act as a democracy-boosting force. International financial institutions emphasize that a strong media is one of the cornerstones of economic development and democracy (Kaufman 2006; World Bank 2002). However, the evidence from research is limited at best and suggests that whether the media has a positive influence on people's political perceptions and governance is strongly dependent on the type of media that exists and what strata of people have access to them. Studies in Ghana, Canada and South Africa question the role and impact of the media in voting patterns of the public and in enhancing government performance. The former concludes that despite the continued "romanticising of the role of the media" in reaching poor, rural populations, the media had the strongest impact on urban, educated elites who were more likely to follow campaign coverage and electoral analysis (Temin and Smith 2002:603-04). The Canadian study concludes that while the media temporarily moved voting intentions over the course of an election campaign, it did not appear to have a direct impact on the final vote (Dobrzynska et al 2003). In South Africa, the media is seen to be

effective in strengthening democracy only when it is constructively engaged in a nuanced and helpful manner with the state, rather than merely being critical (Kuper and Kuper 2001). Kim et al. (2003), a study of North Korea, finds that people are only willing to speak out and demand better governance when the media is able to create an atmosphere that seems to support dissenting opinions. As Gitlin (1983: 3) claims, while people look to the media for "concepts … and guiding information", the presence of a media that cannot adequately provide these will result in maintenance of the status quo.

In fact, there are strong arguments that portray media as an anti-democracy force. Putzel and van der Zwan (2005) claim that in fragile states, the media can do more hard than good if it is not prepared to undertake the burden of responsible information dissemination. They state that if the media does not possess a strong professional ethos and is not regulated by an implementable system of laws, it may utilise its power negatively. Scholars also claim that the media can create a cycle of "bad governance" by focusing on the negative aspects of politics by using an overly interpretive style of journalism (Patterson 1996). Cappella and Jamieson (1996) argue that the media's framing of political news can create cynicism about policy and governance. An unfortunate outcome of this is "media cynicism", whereby the public distrust the media in additions to the politicians and bureaucrats the media reports on. Needless to say, the outcomes for democracy – a suspicious and disinterested polity - are negative. McChesney (1999) contends that as the media becomes more corporate and concentrated the prospects for participatory democracy lessen. The media's interests shift away from providing readers and viewers politically discursive material and to appeasing commercial interests. The media thus runs the risk of "capture" by political-economic system (Besley et al 2002, as in Ali: 2006). Title reshuffled by researcher, original was Media and Governance in Bangladesh.

APPENDICES

Appendix 2.1   Questionnaire of Sample survey

(Translation from Bangla)

Section A-Personal Details

Gender: 1. Male   2. Female

Department: Year of graduation:

University:

    Contact number:

Section B Thesis information

      Please circle   the option/ options:

1. Is media independent in covering political corruption in Bangladesh?

      A. Yes   B. No

1.1 If the answer is 'No' please show the reason or reasons

A. Political pressure   B. Editorial or internal pressure

   C. Owners' interference   D. Governmental interference

   2. How the nature of political corruption coverage in Bangladesh?

 A. Investigative   B. Awareness raising   C. Educative,

D. Debate raising,   E. Neutral,   F. Follow up reporting

3. Do you think that the corruption of media itself is the main obstacle for raising voice against corruption?

A. Fully	B. Fairly	C. Partially agree	D. Least	E. Not at all

4. How much do you rely on media in case of corruption related voice raising?

Lowest   --   --   --   Highest

1   2   3   4   5

5. What do you think regarding media's ability to produce public opinion in Bangladesh?

A. Fully	B. Fairly	C. Partially	D. Least	E. Not at all

6. Are you satisfied with the performance of media in context of corruption related reporting in Bangladesh?

A. Fully satisfied	B. Fairly satisfied	C. Partially satisfied	D. Least satisfied	E. Not at all satisfied

6.1 If the answer is from C to E please show the reason or reasons

A. Corporate voice   B. Internal corruption   C. Self censorship

D. Impartial   E. Political lenience   F. Owners' interest

7. How difficult it is to access government information in Bangladesh?

A. Fully	B. Fairly	C. Partially	D. Least	E. Not at all

7.1 If the answer is from C to E, please show the reason or reasons

A. Unfriendly law   B. Culture of secrecy   C. Lack of voluntary

information disclosure   D. Political pressure

8. Whether voice of talk show represents the voice of people?

| A. Fully | B. Fairly | C. Partially | D. Least | E. Not at all |

8.1. If the answer is from C to E, please show the reason or reasons

A. Elite voice   B. Partisan voice   C. partial voice

D. Corporate voice   E. Evidence less voice   F. Self-evading

voice

9. How much role talk show plays in case of public opinion formation in Bangladesh?

| A. Fully | B. Fairly | C. Partially | D. Least | E. Not at all |

9.1. If the answer is from C to E, please show the reason or reasons

A. Elite voice   B. Partisan voice   C. Impartial voice

D. Corporate voice   E. Less informed voice

10. Whether TIB represents the voice of people?

| A. Fully | B. Fairly | C. Partially | D. Least | E. Not at all |

10.1. If the answer is from C to E, please show the reason or reasons

A. Elite voice   B. Donor voice   C. motivated voice

D. Voice for de-politicization   E. Voice for chaos raising

11. Whether TIB can be the platform of the people in case of voice raising

A. Yes   B. No

11.1. If the answer is NO please show the reason or reasons

A. Lack of people's participation   B. Lack of democratic structure C. Lack of democratic leadership   D. Elite representation,

12. How much role TIB plays in case of public opinion formation?

A. Fully	B. Fairly	C. Partially	D. Least	E. Not at all

12.1. If the answer is from C to E, please show the reason or reasons

A. Lack of people's participation   B. Lack of democratic structure

 C. Lack of democratic leadership   D. Elite representation

    13. How would you evaluate the role of TIB in case of corruption related voice raising?

A. Awareness raising   B. Serving donors' interest   C. Raising discussion and debate   D. De-politicization   E. Strengthening democracy   F. Jeopardizing sovereignty

14. Whether facebook is being able to raise corruption related voice?

                    A. Yes   B. No

14.1. If the answer is ' No' please show the reason or reasons

A. Lack of acceptability   B. Lack of accessibility   C. Lack of authenticity

D. Fear of undue harassment,   E. Fear of being politically color

15. How much role dose face book play in case of public opinion formation

A. Fully	B. Fairly	C. Partially	D. Least	E. Not at all

15.1. If the answer is from C to E, please show the reason or reasons

A. Lack of acceptance   B. Lack of accessibility   C. lack of authenticity

D. Fear for undue harassment   E. Fear of being politically colored

16. Which one, among the flowing, is the most important regarding voice raising?

A. News   B. Talk shows   C. TIB

D. Face book   E. Demonstration/ Human chain

17 Whether voice of public sphere turns to social movement

A. Fully	B. Fairly	C. Partially	D. Least	E. Not at all

17.1. If the answer is from C to E, please show the reason or reasons

A. Lack of platform for movement   B. Lack of leadership   C. people feel problem
but not own   D. Undue harassment   E. politically divided society

18. 'Popularity of public sphere is increasing due to the unexpected performance of

the parliament of Bangladesh'—do you agree with this idea?

A. Fully	B. Fairly	C. Partially	D. Least	E. Not at all

19 Does the voice of public sphere reach to the elected representatives?

A. Fully	B. Fairly	C. Partially	D. Least	E. Not at all

20. How do the elected representatives respond to the voice of public sphere in

Bangladesh?

A. Positive	B. Reactive	C. Tendency to control	D. Opposite

20.1. If the answer is from B to D, please show the reason or reasons

A. public sphere's weakness regarding voice raising   B. lack of independence of judiciary and ACC   C. Lack of collective voice   D. Lack of social and political movement

21. 'Negative attitudes toward voice of public sphere tend to lack of reputation of elected representatives in Bangladesh'----Do you agree with the idea?

A. Fully agree	B. Fairly	C. Partially agree	D. Least agree	E. Not at all

22. Does Public sphere can change the attitude of elected representatives in Bangladesh?

A. Fully	B. Fairly	C. Partially	D. Least	E. Not at all

22.1. If the answer is from D to E, please show the reason or reasons

A. Lack of democratic attitude   B. No accountability to public sphere's voice by ERs in BD   C. electoral mechanism is important than people's consent   D. weakness of PS's voice raising   E. plundering economy

23. 'Elected representatives are not accountable to public sphere because there is no accountable mechanism to make elected representatives accountable to public sphere'—Do you agree so?

A. Fully	B. Fairly agree	C. Partially agree	D. Least agree	E. Not at all

24 Can Public sphere criticize elected representatives openly?

A. Fully	B. Fairly	C. Partially	D. Least	E. Not at all

23.1. If the answer is from C to E, please show the reason or reasons

A. lack of collective voice   B. fear of undue harassment   C. Lack of democratic

atmosphere   D. self censorship   E. plundering economy

25. People cannot enjoy fully democratic right in BD---Do you agree so?

A. Fully agree	B. Fairly agree	C. Partially agree	D. Least agree	E. Not at all

25.1. If the answer is from A to C, please show the reason or reasons

A. abuse of existing law   B. negative influence of vested interest groups   C. fear of

undue harassment   D. restriction in the name of public security

26. Do you think that information act has made the information free in Bangladesh?

A. Fully agree	B. Fairly agree	C. Partially agree	D. Least agree	E. Not at all

26.1 If the answer is from C to E, please show the reason or reasons

A. Culture of secrecy   B. lack of voluntary information disclosure

C. lack of people's awareness   D. lack of trust on govt. officers

E. Govt. officers do not abide law.

Thank you

Appendix 2.2 Checklists for KII & FGD

1. As per articles 116, 117, 118 of 1980's penal code, in the name of national security, public order, public peace or the assault on religion, govt. can curtail the freedom of the media ---------please explain the present scenario of that in Bangladesh.

2. The Printing Press and publication (Declaration and registration) Act 1973' section 12 explains that district magistrate will authenticate the declaration of the press. But now home ministry plays vital role in this case— please explain the impact on flourishing media specially regarding opposite views.

3. As per Special power act 1974--- In the name of prohibition of prejudicial act govt. can ban publication and impose pre-censor , in short, in the name of prohibition of prejudicial acts govt. can curtail liberty of the press – please explain the impact on media in case of performing people's interest related functions.

4. As per official secret act 1923--- was termed as sets back against free flow of information. How much facilities people are getting through Right to Information Act (RTIA) 2009— please explain.

5. Number of media is increasing, but quality of reporting is not beyond question— please explains.

6. It is alleged that in the name of providing broadcasting frequency, and registering printing facilities, selective advertisement government can control over media content— please explain.

7. Please explain people's trust on our media.

9. Whether corporate media can raise the voice of the people in case of common concern in Bangladesh. If yes how? If not why? Please explain.

10. Please explain the impact of online media Act 2013 on freedom of expression in Bangladesh.

11. Please explain the internal problems of media critically.

12. Please explain on division of media community?

13. Whether the corruption related voice raised or rising from talk show represents the voice of the people? If yes how? If not why? Please explain.

14. Whether the corruption related voice raised or rising from TIB represents the voice of the people? If yes how? If not why? Please explain.

15. In case of voice raising, can TIB be a platform of the people. If yes how? If not why? Please explain.

16. Please explain the impact of the mentioned voice on public opinion in Bangladesh.

17. Please explain the impact of the mentioned voice on our govt. and opposition. How they respond to the voices? If they consider, how? If not why?

18.. Please explain the role of facebook in case of corruption related voice raising in Bangladesh? How politicians respond to the voice rising from facebook in Bangladesh.

19. Please explain the role of talk show in case of public opinion formation in Bangladesh?

20. How would you evaluate the role of TIB in case of corruption related voice raising?

21. Whether face book is being able to raise corruption related voice?

22. .How much role dose facebook play in case of public opinion formation in Bangladesh?

23. Whether TIB can be the platform of the people in case of voice raising. If yes how? If not why? Please explain

24. Whether TIB can play role in case of public opinion formation? If yes how? If not why? Please explain.

25. How would you evaluate the role of TIB in case of corruption related voice raising?

26. Whether facebook is being able to raise corruption related voice? If yes how? If not why? Please explain

27. Whether facebook can play role in case of public opinion formation. If yes how? If not why? Please explain.

28. Whether voices of public sphere turn to social movement. If yes how? If not why? Please explain.

29. Whether the voices of public sphere reach to the elected representatives? If yes how? If not why? Please explain

30. Whether elected representatives respond to the voice of public sphere in Bangladesh? If yes how? If not why? Please explain.

31. Whether negative attitudes toward voice of public sphere tend to loss of reputation of elected representatives in Bangladesh' If yes how? If not why? Please explain.

32. Whether public sphere can change the attitude of elected representatives in Bangladesh? If yes how? If not why? Please explain.

33. What would you explain regarding that elected representatives are not accountable to public sphere because there is no accountability mechanism to make elected representatives accountable to public sphere.

34. Please explain whether public sphere criticize elected representatives openly? If yes how? If not why?

35. Whether people can enjoy democratic right in BD fully .If yes how? If not why? Please explain.

36. Whether information act has made the information free in Bangladesh? If yes how? If not why? Please explain.

Thank You