

Administrative Reform in Bangladesh: Ideology, Initiatives and Obstacles

Dr. Nazmul Ahsan Kalimullah¹

Kabir M. Ashraf Alam²

M. M. Ashaduzzaman Nour³

Abstract

In response to the challenges posed by socio-economic, political and technological advancement, every developing country struggles to reform its administrative systems. Bangladesh has been trying hard to reshape its administrative system since its emergence as an independent nation. Before 1996, administrative reform programs in Bangladesh were undertaken in line with the principles of traditional public administration. These reform initiatives aimed at ensuring efficiency, professionalism, meritocracy, accountability, responsiveness and democratic control by people's representatives. In mid-1990s, international organizations and donors have emerged as influential actors for administrative reforms in Bangladesh focusing the so-called 'block' change to capitalist ideology. They put emphasis on combating bureaucratic dysfunctions in order to improve the quality of services to the citizens. In fact, it is a paradigm shift from traditional Weberian Public Administration to New Public Management in Bangladesh. However, absence of political commitments, limitation in the capacity of government, status quo of civil servants, political factionalism in the public sector, corruption, politicization of administration, lack of solid institutional framework for public management process etc have created obstacles in the implementation of these administrative reform initiatives in Bangladesh.

¹ Dr. Nazmul Ahsan Kalimullah, is a Professor of Public Administration in University of Dhaka, Bangladesh and Chairman of JANIPOP (Jatiya Nirbachon Parjabekkhon Parishad)- National Election Observation Council.

² Kabir M. Ashraf Alam, is the Director General of National Institute of Local Government (NILG) and a Ph.D Researcher of Department of Public Administration in University of Dhaka, Bangladesh.

³ M. M. Ashaduzzaman Nour, is a National Volunteer of JANIPOP (Jatiya Nirbachon Parjabekkhon Parishad)- National Election Observation Council.