

Perceptions on the Effectiveness of National Integrity Strategy in Promoting Good Governance: A Study on Ministry and Department Levels in Bangladesh

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Abstract

The Government of Bangladesh is committed to establish rule of law, human rights, corruption free society, freedom of citizens according to the constitution, equality and justice in the country. Government believes that an inclusive approach based on values, morals, ethics and integrity is necessary for good governance. In this regard, the Government approved a ‘National Integrity Strategy’ (NIS) in 2012. It is a comprehensive set of goals, strategies and action plans aimed at increasing the level of independence to perform, ensure accountability, efficiency, transparency and effectiveness of state and non-state institutions in a sustained manner over a period of time. The Ministries/Divisions and their departments, constitutional authorities and statutory bodies are executing the NIS in their offices. The present study intends to find out whether all areas of the NIS are being covered in the selected ministry and department levels, what are the contributions of the NIS towards promoting good governance and what are the challenges in implementing the NIS.

Keywords: NIS, Effectiveness, Good Governance, Corruption, Service Simplification, Bangladesh.

1. Introduction

Bangladesh has made extraordinary progress in reducing poverty, supported by sustained economic growth. Life expectancy, health care, literacy rates, women empowerment and per capita food production have increased significantly. Progress has been underpinned by steady growth in GDP. Bangladesh reached the lower middle-income country status in 2015 (World Bank, 2020). The Government cherishes to turn

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the country into a 'Digital' one by implementing the Vision 2021 and thus a middle income country by 2021 (GoB, 2015). The Government also desires to make Bangladesh a Smart one by 2041 that means inclusiveness of the people and Smart Bangladesh will be built based on 4 pillars- Smart Citizens, Smart Government, Smart Economy and Smart Society. Smart Bangladesh is regarded as a major step on the road to realize Bangabandhu's dream of Golden Bangladesh (GoB, 2023). Vision 2021 places strong emphasis on establishing a legacy of good governance by focusing on three fundamental principles of governance: ensuring the rule of law, avoiding political partisanship and building a society free from corruption. Government also aspires to have a developed Bangladesh by 2041 with per capita income of over USD 12,500 in today's prices for which requires (i) governance; (ii) democratization; (iii) decentralization and (iv) capacity building (GED, 2020a). The Government is also committed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 of the United Nations as per mandate.

The country has a long term visionary plan known as 'Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100' for achieving a safe, resilient and prosperous Bangladesh and ensure a bright future for generations to come (GED, 2018).

The second Perspective Plan 2021-2041 of the Government creates the way to make Bangladesh an upper middle income country by 2031 and a prosperous country by 2041 when the country will celebrate the platinum jubilee of its birth (GED, 2020a). The Eighth Five Year Plan (July 2020-June 2025) strives for completing the agenda of achieving the social as well as economic transformation that has been visualized in the second Perspective Plan of Bangladesh 2021-2041, attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and realizing the Delta Plan 2100 to create a smooth transition after the LDC graduation (GED, 2020b).

Despite enormous improvement in different areas corruption, misuse of public money, lack of transparency and accountability, harassment of citizens by service providers etc. are very frequent since the emergence of Bangladesh. In general, corruption erodes the institutional capacity of government and ruins democratic values, discourages investment, damages fair competition, raise up business operational costs, discards corporate reputation, diverts essential public resources away from their rational uses and damages development activities which all together impose direct costs on society and increase the sufferings of the mass-people (GoB, 2013).

Therefore, there are concerns for ethics and standards in public life, and strategies to control corruption are now almost global and central to democratic governance and

management of public services (OECD, 1999 & 2000; Hoddes et al., 2001). There are now increasing recognitions in governments around the globe to combine measures for combating corruption into their governance agenda. The Government of Bangladesh has also realized and recognized that corruption is a major deterrent against growth and development and is inhibiting the achievement of the commitment. Hence, the Government of Bangladesh believes that an inclusive approach based on values, morals, ethics and integrity is necessary (GoB, 2012a). The National Integrity Strategy captures this approach to help prevent corruption and enhance good governance. Keeping these in mind Government of Bangladesh has approved the National Integrity Strategy (NIS) in October 2012 with a view to establishing a ‘happy-prosperous Golden Bengal’ as dreamt by the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and that is the ultimate destination as a nation and society.

2. Background of the Study

Corruption of public institutions has a significant impact on overall performance and improvement of governance. The economy of Bangladesh appears to have reached a stable state but governance deficits have significant implications for installing an effective national integrity system. The Government recognizes that corruption has emerged as a key barrier against growth

and development in the country and is inhibiting the success of the nation (GoB 2012b). According to Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), Bangladesh taking the 3rd position in 2006, 7th position in 2007, 10th position in 2008, 13th in 2011 and 15th in 2016 (TIB, 2017). It is mentionable that Government of Bangladesh refused the report of TIB and raised question of its neutrality. The present Government takes ‘Zero’ tolerance approach against corruption and wants to reducing corruption in every sector. Subsequently, the Government thinks that the report of TIB did not reflect the real scenario.

On the other hand, Government views that fight against corruption cannot be conquered by prosecution alone, an inclusive approach based on values, morals, ethics and integrity in addition to laws is requisite. Bearing these in mind Government has adopted the NIS that aims to prevent corruption in the society and the state. In facilitating application of NIS, the Government wishes to engage not only the state institutions but also the non-state institutions. The Government has opted for NIS as a policy and strategy document that deals with a rational choice of vision-driven and goal-oriented strategies across institutions, making use of good practices tested elsewhere (GoB, 2008).

Government has been practicing integrity at different areas. Ministries and departments are executing the strategy at their levels and also in the field offices. Already many years have passed after approval of the NIS; therefore, it is time to find out the effectiveness of the NIS towards promoting good governance at ministry and department levels.

3. Rationale of the Study

Governance is a process that takes place at different levels where institutions and their actors play the critical roles (World Bank Group, 2017). UNDP also stresses on building capacities for development (UNDP, 2015). Nobel laureate economist Douglass North (1991) abridged the role of institutions, “institutions are the humanly devised constraints that structure political, economic and social interaction. They consist of both informal constraints (sanctions, taboos, customs, traditions, and codes of conduct), and formal rules (constitutions, laws, property rights)” (GED, 2020a).

Promotion of good governance based on certain generally accepted core principles is a major responsibility of the government. These core principles include accountability, transparency, fairness, efficiency, participation and decency (ESCAP, 2008). Effectiveness of government organizations is crucial for good governance through which a country can attain its policy targets as well as development goals. The governance issues, predominantly the quality of government institutions, have central implications for long-term economic growth and poverty reduction in Bangladesh. The institutions of the state and administration, therefore, should be freed from partisan influence and from corruption. For all these the Government is keen to ensure all out efforts to enhance competence and professional ethics in the civil service using sanction for performance during the Perspective Plan period and thus the basis of appointment and promotion will be performance, commitment, efficiency, honesty and loyalty to the Republic (GoB, 2012b).

The 7th Five Year Plan (2016-2020) stressed on strengthening public administration, public institutions and governance issues. As it states, “Effective implementation of programmes and policies in the 7th Plan demands focused attention to good governance, by raising public administration capacity and productivity, while ensuring effectual monitoring and evaluation of public sector programmes”. The 8th Five Year Plan intends to further strengthen the democratic governance process with view to ensuring participation of all the citizens as well as the in-depth functioning of entire democratic institutions (GED, 2020b).

Precisely, to fulfill the dreams of the nation requires good governance and corruption free administration with a view to managing huge population, best use of natural and

human resources, managing public and private sector as well as executing Governmental development agenda. Therefore, to achieve the set goals and objectives Government has undertaken certain reform agenda like NIS to strengthen the governance and thus a corruption free country where citizens will enjoy democratic rights and receive services easily. Government expects to ensure good governance through strategies like NIS. The study intends to find out the effectiveness of the NIS in ensuring good governance.

4. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to-

- i. examine whether the areas of the National Integrity Strategy are being included at ministry and departmental levels for promoting good governance;
- ii. identify the contribution of the National Integrity Strategy in reducing corruption, promoting integrity and service simplification; and
- iii. determine the challenges in implementing the National Integrity Strategy appropriately at ministry and department levels.

5. Methodology and Sample Framework

Both primary and secondary data has been used for the research. Qualitative and Quantitative approach has been adopted to explore a variety of issues related to the National Integrity Strategy. Primary data has been collected through a semi-structured interview schedule. The interview schedule for collection of data has been finalized after a pre-test. Observation technique has also been adopted for data collection. Furthermore, 2 Focus Group Discussions have been held combining all sorts of stakeholders in addition to the sample for data collection.

Data has been collected from Ministry of Education (Secondary and Higher Education Division, and Technical and Madrasa Education Division), and Ministry of Health and Family Planning (Health Services Division, Medical Education and Family Welfare Division), Ministry of Social Welfare, and the Local Government Division of LGRD Ministry and from their departments. A total of 131 respondents have been interviewed as primary sources of data. Among them, 37 were from the 4 ministries/divisions, 49 from department level officials of the selected ministries/divisions and 45 were from the service recipients. Among the service recipients, 10 from ministry of Education (Directorate General of Secondary and Higher Education, Directorate of Technical Education, Directorate of Madrasa Education, Education Engineering Department, BANBEIS, Bangladesh Technical Education Board); 7 from Ministry of Health and Family Planning (Health Services Division, Health Education and Family Welfare Division); 24 from Local Government Division (Dhaka South City

Corporation, Dhaka North City Corporation, Barishal City Corporation, Rajshahi City Corporation, Dhaka WASA, Rajshahi WASA, NILG and LGED) and 4 from Ministry of Social Welfare (National Foundation for Disability Development, National Social Welfare Council). The interview from service recipients were taken when they came to get services from the mentioned institutions during the study.

To have the real representation necessary information has been collected from their various documents and websites. Purposive Sampling Technique has been used for data collection. All data have been quantified and thereafter analyzed through frequencies, tables and diagrams. Statistical software SPSS has been used in the research work.

6. Limitation of the Study

The study has been carried out with a view to finding out the effectiveness of the NIS towards promoting good governance at ministry and department levels. Due to time and budget constraint all the ministries and their departments have not been possible to cover. As NIS is a new concept in Bangladesh, many of the respondents do not have clear concept and therefore, it was difficult and challenging to find out detail data.

7. Literature Review

7.1 Implementation of Integrity Strategy around the World

Many countries of the world have adopted integrity strategy in diverse names. Such as Japan has enacted National Public Service Ethics Act 1999, Malaysia has its National Integrity Plan 2004, Brazil has formulated Public Sector Integrity in 2010, Canada has formed Public Sector Integrity Commission in 2007, Uganda has formulated National Strategy to Fight Corruption and Rebuild Ethics & Integrity (2008-2013) and Kenya has formulated Kenya Integrity Plan 2015-19. Singapore has turned into a country of the lowest levels of corruption in the world and could change its image into a symbol of good governance in Asia because mainly of its National Integrity Strategy.

7.2 Bangladesh Perspectives

Article 11 of the Constitution of Bangladesh states “The Republic shall be a democracy in which fundamental human rights and freedom and respect for the dignity and worth of the human person shall be guaranteed” (GoB, 2010). The present Government of Bangladesh has adopted the challenge of establishing good governance and fighting corruption critically as part of its election pledge realization as it came to the power in 2009.

The Government approved the NIS in October 2012 which visions 'Happy-prosperous Golden Bengal' through its mission on 'establishment of good governance in the state

institutions and society'. Inspired by the achievement of the National Integrity Strategy in other Asian countries and around the globe as well as from the commitment to its people and as a signatory to UNCAC, the Government of Bangladesh has opted for its first NIS policy document (GoB, 2013). Simultaneously, the Government is committed to the resolutions of United Nations on anti-corruption.

All these issues encouraged the Government to adopt the NIS for promoting good governance and integrity as well as prevention of corruption. Government believes that only legal aspects cannot ensure good governance and diminish corruption, rather it requires a holistic approach combining integrity at state and non-state institution level. The NIS has thus become an integrated approach to promote good governance and shrink corruption in the country.

7.3 Institutions Covered in the NIS

National Integrity Strategy covers 10 state institutions and 6 non-state organizations. State institutions are: (1) Executives and Public Administration, (2) Parliament, (3) Judiciary, (4) Election Commission, (5) Attorney-General, (6) Public Service Commission, (7) Comptroller and Auditor-General, (8) Ombudsman, (9) Anti-Corruption Commission, and (10) Local Government Institutions. Non-state organizations covered in this strategy are (1) political parties, (2) industrial and commercial organizations in the private sector, (3) NGOs and civil society, (4) family, (5) educational institutions, and (6) media.

7.4 Institutional Arrangements for Implementation of NIS

To oversee the implementation of the NIS, a National Integrity Advisory Council (NIAC) has been formed headed by the Honourable Prime Minister of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Other members of the NIAC are a number of Ministers, a few parliament members, representatives of Constitutional Organizations, Cabinet Secretary, a

number of Secretaries, representatives of NGO and Civil Societies, Mass Media and a few members of commerce and industries sector. To assist the NIAC there is an executive committee headed by the Finance Minister. The Cabinet Division has a National Integrity Implementation Unit headed by the Secretary (Coordination and Reforms). The unit is responsible to monitor the implementation of the NIS at different levels.

There is an Ethics Committee chaired by the Secretary in every ministry/division level. There is also an Ethics Committee at department/organization levels comprising of 3 to 5 members for execution of NIS headed by the head of the department/organization. Among the members one-member works as Focal Point. The field level offices also have separate Ethics Committee consisting of 3 to 5 members as per circular of the Cabinet Division.

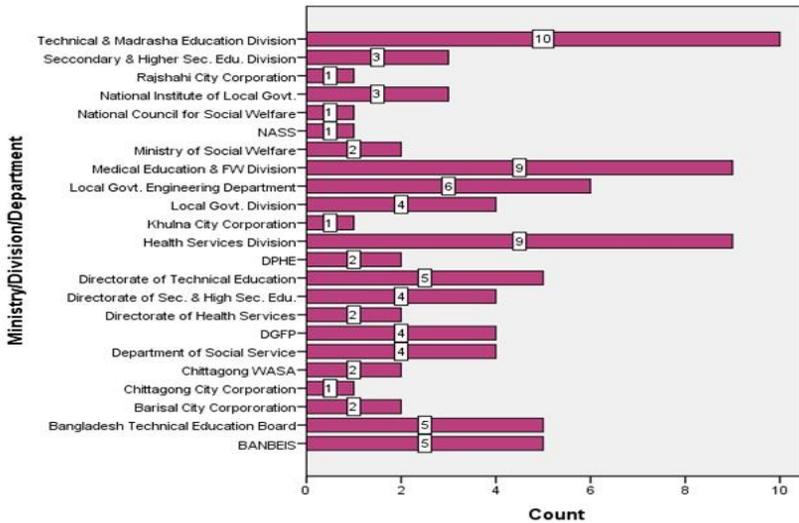
The Cabinet Division’s responsibility is to monitor the results from ministries, divisions, and selected institutions and check the overall advancement of the NIS. Monitoring is to be done at every three months. The report is to be sent to Cabinet Division. The Cabinet Division sends report combining feedback to the Executive Committee of the National Integrity Advisory Council.

8. Discussion and Analysis

8.1 Sample and Gender Distribution of the Study

Total number of respondents was 131 for primary source of data collection. Among them 86 were the officials of Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Welfare, Ministry of Health and Family Planning and Local Government Division of LGRD Ministry and their Departments and 45 were the service recipients of the ministries and their departments. The distribution of the sample size of officials is shown in Figure 1. To make the study more valuable and effective, 45 service recipients were also interviewed. They have received services before and after the introduction of NIS or usually receive services from the selected ministries and departments.

Figure 1: Ministry and Department wise representation of the respondents

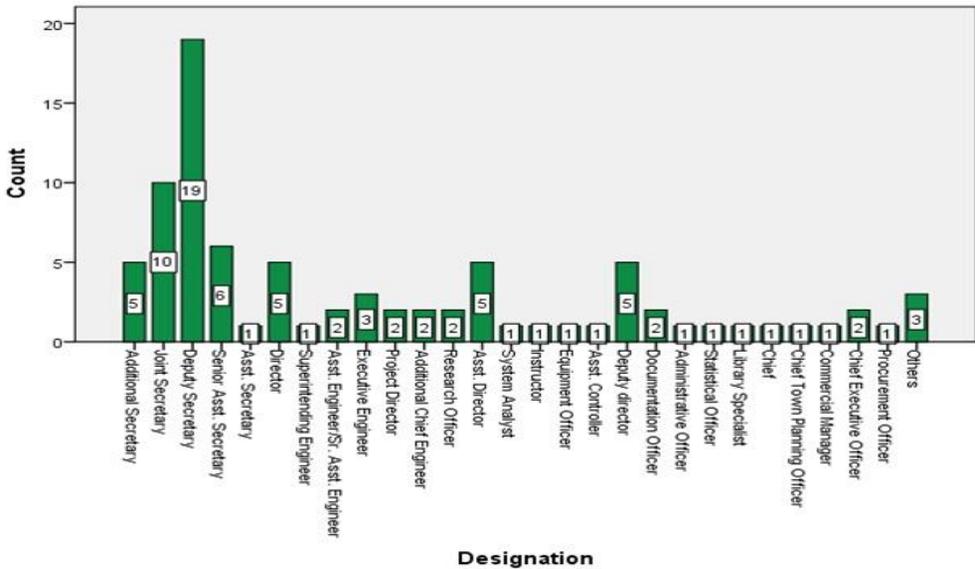


Both male and female officials and service recipients were covered to make the sample representative. Among 86 officials of the ministries/divisions and departments 81.40% were male and 18.60% were female while 93.33% service recipients were male and 6.67% were female.

Among 86 official respondents, there is Assistant Secretary to Additional Secretaries, Directors, Superintending Engineer, Senior/Assistant Engineers, Executive Engineers,

Project Directors, Additional Chief Engineers, Research Officers, Assistant Directors, System Analyst and from other designated officers (Figure 2). On the other hand, among the service recipients there were employee, student, teacher, soldier, business man, contractor, house caretaker, housewife, mayor municipality and UP Secretaries.

Figure 2: Designation wise representation of the officials



Source: Interview of Ministry and Department Level Officials, 2017

8.2 Officials’ View on NIS Areas Coverage at Ministry and Department Levels

The NIS has identified 116 action plans for different state and non-state organizations with view to improving the overall condition of governance of public organizations (GoB, 2012a). Among them 12 areas have been identified for public administration and among the 12 areas 8 areas are related to the selected 4 ministries/division and their attached departments of the study. The other 4 areas not-related with the selected ministries/divisions are promulgation of whistle blowers protection act, introduction of separate inquiry unit, modernization of land management and implementation of land use plan and prevention of food adulteration.

With a view to have an idea, the officials were asked whether the areas of the NIS are being covered or not in their ministries/divisions and departments with view to promoting good governance. Amongst the officials, 95.35% of them replied that the areas of the NIS have been covered in their ministries and departments while 4.65% respondents replied negatively.

The officials were also asked to identify the areas of the NIS covered in their ministries and departments. It is found from their responses that among the 86 respondents highest 83.72% officials identified the area (among 6 areas marked in Table 1) submitting income and asset statement to the concerned authority as per law has been covered in the ministry and department level and then the second highest 80.23% officials identified establishing infrastructure for ICT with a view to introducing e-governance areas as covered in their organizations. And among the related 8 areas (Table 1 serial 7 to 14) highest 90.70% respondents identified the area increase of responsiveness towards public requirement and demand as covered in their Ministries/Divisions and Departments.

Table-1: Coverage of NIS areas at Ministry and Department level*

| Sl. No. | Areas of NIS | Local Government Division & Dpts | Ministry of Education & Dpts | Ministry of Social Welfare & DPTS | Ministry of Health & Family Welfare & Dpts | Total No. of Responses | Percentage |
|---------|---|----------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|------------------------|------------|
| 1. | Development of career plan | 12 | 15 | 13 | 9 | 49 | 56.98 |
| 2. | Introduction of annual participatory performance evaluation system | 6 | 14 | 10 | 9 | 39 | 45.35 |
| 3. | Submitting income and asset statement | 12 | 20 | 17 | 23 | 72 | 83.72 |
| 4. | Higher salary and facilities for officials and staffs | 6 | 15 | 13 | 24 | 58 | 67.44 |
| 5. | Establishing infrastructure for ICT with view to introducing e governance | 12 | 21 | 14 | 22 | 69 | 80.23 |
| 6. | Introduction of grievance redress system | 10 | 16 | 13 | 23 | 62 | 72.09 |
| 7. | Use of ICT and service simplification | 17 | 22 | 16 | 22 | 77 | 89.53 |
| 8. | Ensuring appointment in | 12 | 18 | 13 | 16 | 59 | |

| Sl. No. | Areas of NIS | Local Government Division & Dpts | Ministry of Education & Dpts | Ministry of Social Welfare & DPTS | Ministry of Health & Family Welfare & Dpts | Total No. of Responses | Percentage |
|---------|--|----------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|------------------------|------------|
| | the vacant posts of officials and staffs | | | | | | 68.60 |
| 9. | Conducting on the job training and enhancing capacity of training institutions | 14 | 19 | 15 | 22 | 70 | 81.39 |
| 10. | Mobilization against corruption and monitoring anti-corruption activities | 13 | 20 | 12 | 21 | 66 | 76.74 |
| 11. | Development of rules and regulations | 11 | 21 | 15 | 22 | 69 | 80.23 |
| 12. | Change of laws and methods and formulating new laws (if necessary) | 8 | 19 | 14 | 21 | 62 | 72.09 |
| 13. | Increase of responsiveness towards public requirement and demand | 19 | 21 | 15 | 23 | 78 | 90.70 |
| 14. | Activation of Ethics committee and NIS Focal Point | 17 | 19 | 15 | 23 | 74 | 86.04 |

*Note: Multiple answers have been considered.

Source: Interview of Ministry and Department Level Officials, 2017

8.3 Contribution of NIS in Promoting Integrity

One of the major aims of the NIS is to promote integrity of the public employees as laws alone cannot ensure good governance and prevention of corruption. From this perspective the respondents were asked how the NIS is contributing in promoting integrity at ministry and department level. Among the 86 officials 91.86% responded positively while 6.97% replied as no comment and 1.16% as no contribution (Table 2).

Table-2: Officials' view on contribution of NIS in promoting integrity at Ministry and Department level*

| Sl | Opinion of the Respondents | Number of Responses | Percentage |
|-----|--|---------------------|------------|
| 1. | Creating awareness and motivating employees in coordination meeting to perform responsibilities with honesty and integrity | 55 | 63.95 |
| 2. | Increasing dutifulness of the employees | 14 | 16.27 |
| 3. | Inspire for time bound activities/work plan | 12 | 13.95 |
| 4. | Increase scope of capacity development through training | 10 | 11.63 |
| 5. | Reduce/prevent corruption of the employees through awareness building against corruption | 10 | 11.63 |
| 6. | Change traditional mindset for quick service delivery to the citizens | 8 | 9.30 |
| 7. | Increase the sense of responsibility, accountability and transparency | 20 | 23.26 |
| 8. | Increasing accountability in the activities of the employees | 7 | |
| 9. | ICT based/online service/automation for quick service delivery to the clients like e-tender and Service simplification | 8 | 9.30 |
| 10. | Monitoring and evaluating strictly the activities of the employees and NIS work plan | 12 | 13.95 |

*Note: Multiple answers have been considered.

Source: Interview of Ministry and Department Level Officials, 2017

Simultaneously the service recipients were also asked whether NIS is contributing or not contributing in promoting integrity in the service providing organizations they received/receive services. Amongst the respondents, 80% of them replied positively and 15.56% participants did not reply, 2.22% had no comment and 2.22% said that it had no contribution. Amongst those replied positively, 26.67% of them bear the perception that NIS motivates employees in creating positive mindset to quick service delivery to the citizens and 24.44% think that NIS encourages service simplification and e-service (Table 3).

Table- 3: Service recipients' view on contribution of NIS in Promoting Integrity at Ministry and Department Level*

| Sl. | Service Recipients' View | No. of Responses | Percentage |
|-----|--|------------------|------------|
| 1. | Motivate employees in creating positive mindset to quick service delivery to the citizens | 12 | 26.67 |
| 2. | Encourage service simplification and e-service like online tender | 11 | 24.44 |
| 3. | Develop ethics and increase dutifulness of the employees | 8 | 17.78 |
| 4. | Creating awareness to public about NIS | 8 | 17.78 |
| 5. | Pay attention to service recipients on giving information to solve problems and direct help/increase responsiveness of the employees | 5 | 11.11 |
| 6. | Ensure transparency and accountability of the employees | 4 | 8.88 |
| 7. | Develops honesty, aware people against corruption and focus citizen | 5 | 11.11 |
| 8. | Reduce tadbir, time, cost, visit and friendly work environment | 8 | 17.78 |

*Note: Multiple answers have been considered.

Source: Interview of Service Recipients, 2017

8.4 Respondents' View on Service Simplification

Service simplification helps in reducing steps, time, costs, visits and hassles of the service recipients. Amongst the officials, 90.70% of them opined that service simplification has taken place to promote good governance and prevention of corruption in their ministries and departments while 9.30% respondents replied negatively. On the other hand, 62.22% service recipients replied positively and 37.78% replied negatively as they think that service simplification has not taken place in the organizations they received/receive services.

8.5 Role of Service Simplification in Ensuring Integrity and Preventing Corruption

Simultaneously, the official respondents were asked on how service simplification helps in ensuring integrity and preventing corruption. A variety of answers have been found from the respondents which have been summarized in Table 4. Among the officials replied positively, highest 34.88% opined that service simplification reduces face to face interaction or human attachment which reduces corruption and hassles.

Table- 4: Officials' view on how service simplification helps in ensuring integrity and preventing corruption*

| Sl. | Officials' View | No. of Responses | Percentage |
|-----|--|------------------|------------|
| 1. | Reduces face to face interaction or human attachment | 30 | 34.88 |
| 2. | Reduce time | 23 | 26.74 |
| 3. | Reduce the steps of service delivery | 18 | 20.93 |
| 4. | Reduce cost | 15 | 17.44 |
| 5. | Reduce visits | 11 | 12.79 |
| 6. | Reduce middle man | 11 | 12.79 |
| 7. | Discourage employees to do corruption | 9 | 10.47 |
| 8. | Rapid responsiveness for solution of any problem | 5 | 5.81 |
| 9. | Taking services to the doorsteps of the people | 4 | 4.65 |
| 10. | Change traditional mind set of the employees | 3 | 3.49 |

*Note: Multiple answers have been considered.

Source: Interview of Ministry and Department Level Officials, 2017

Concurrently, the service recipients were also asked to give opinion on how service simplification helps in ensuring integrity and preventing corruption in the service providing organizations (Table 5).

Table- 5: Service recipients' view on how service simplification helps in ensuring integrity and preventing corruption *

| Sl. | Service Recipients' View | No. of Responses | Percentage |
|-----|---|------------------|------------|
| 1. | Reduce face to face interaction that reduce corruption | 25 | 55.55 |
| 2. | Reduce time, cost and visit that reduce harassment/hassle | 19 | 42.22 |
| 3. | Reduce steps in service delivery | 16 | 35.55 |
| 4. | Rapid responsiveness of the organization (e.g. help desk) | 5 | 11.11 |
| 5. | Develop ethics and reduce tadbir | 4 | 8.88 |
| 6. | Ensure accountability and transparency | 1 | 2.22 |

*Note: Multiple answers have been considered.

Source: Interview of Service Recipients, 2017

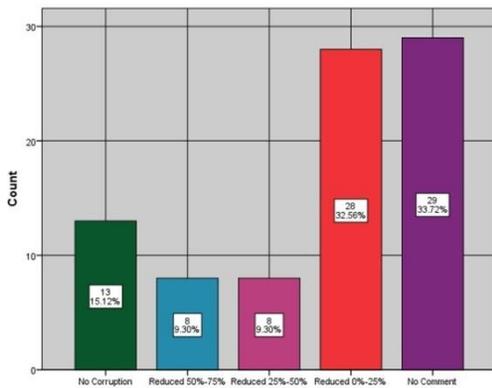
It is to be noted that use of ICT for service simplification in the service delivery process reduce face to face interaction or human attachment which reduce corruption and hassles of the citizens and the respondents both officials and service recipients have the same opinion on it. For instance, the use of ICT like notice/office order/circular/Government Order/tender/registration, admission, result publication, Monthly Payment Order application for teachers and in other cases can easily reduce or even remove corruption absolutely.

8.6 Respondents’ View on Reduction of Corruption after Implementation of NIS

The study intends to find out the contribution of the National Integrity Strategy in reducing corruption at ministry and department levels. 15.12% of the officials believe that there is no corruption in their organization, 9.30% of the officials think that corruption has been reduced around 50 to 75%, similar number officials think that corruption has been reduced around 25 to 50% while the highest number of officials 33.72% placed no comment over the matter (Figure 3).

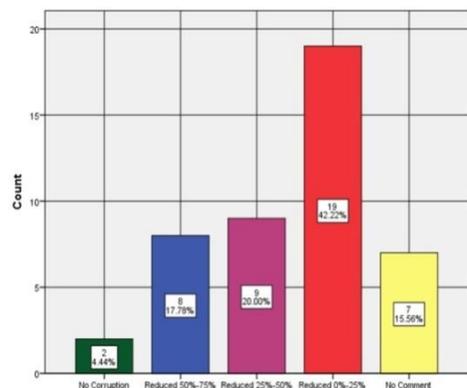
On the contrary, 4.44% of the service recipients think that there is no corruption in the organizations from where they have received or receive services while 17.78% think that corruption has been reduced around 50 to 75% and 20% think that corruption has been reduced around 25 to 50% and the highest number service recipients 42.22% think that corruption has been reduced less than 25%. 15.56% of the service recipients said that they had no comment over the issue (Figure 4).

Figure 3: Officials’ view on reduction of corruption after formulation and implementation of NIS



Source: Interview of Ministry and Department Level Officials, 2017

Figure 4: Service recipients’ view on reduction of corruption after formulation and implementation of NIS



Source: Interview of Service Recipients, 2017

Figures 3 and 4 indicate that corruption has been reduced in the ministries and departments. There is a similarity regarding opinions of the officials and service recipients on reduction of corruption which is a good sign for the country. But what is significant is that a large number of

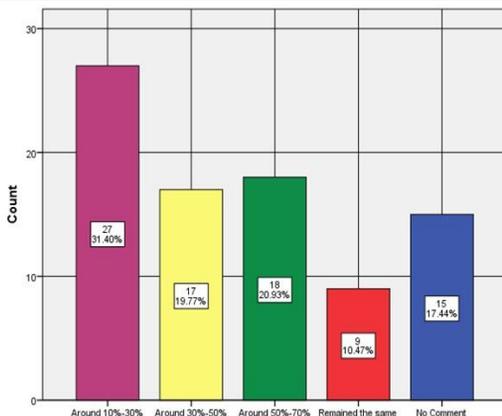
officials (33.72%) placed no comment over the issue and 32.56% of the officials think that corruption has been reduced less than 25 which are very marginal and the range is high. On the other hand, 42.22% of the service recipients think that corruption has been reduced less than 25% and the same remark is applicable here.

8.7 Increase of Dutifulness and Honesty of the Public Employees after NIS introduced

One of the purposes of introducing the NIS is to increase dutifulness and honesty of the public employees, precondition for integrity practices which expedite good governance and anti-corruption activities. Figure 5 shows that 19.77% of the respondents think that the increase is around 30 to 50% and 20.93% respondents think that the increase is around 50 to 70% while 10.47% respondents think that the dutifulness and honesty of the public employees remained the same compared to the time.

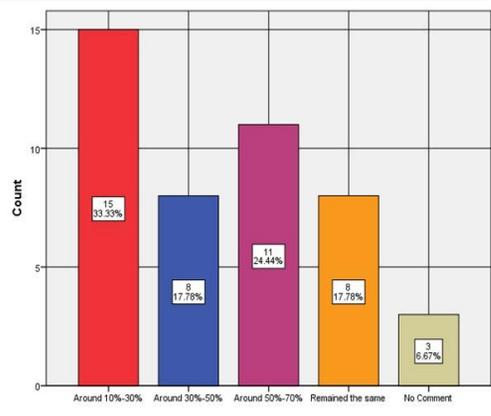
On the other hand, 17.78% of the service recipients think that the increase is around 30 to 50%, 24.44% of the service recipients think that the increase is around 50 to 70% while 6.67% service recipients had no comment over the matter (Figure 6).

Figure 5: Officials’ view on increase of dutifulness and honesty compared to times when NIS was incepted



Source: Interview of Ministry and Department Level Officials, 2017

Figure 6: Service recipients’ view on increase of dutifulness and honesty compared to times when NIS was incepted



Source: Interview of Service Recipients, 2017

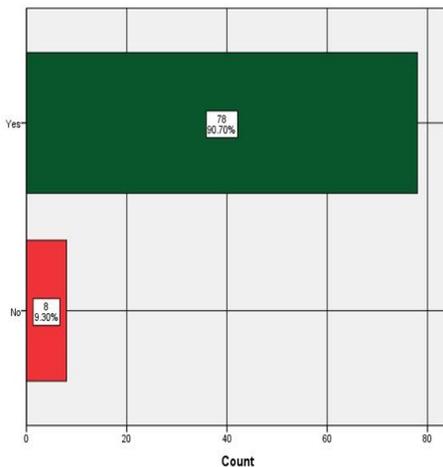
It is found that the perception of the officials and the service recipients regarding increase of dutifulness and honesty of the public employees are almost the same and it is a good signal for the nation and may be thought that NIS has some contribution to the achievement.

8.8 Respondents’ View on Having Ethics Committee and Focal Point

‘Ethics Committee and Focal Point’ of ministries/divisions and department are supposed to play key role in preparing and implementing NIS activities in line with their work plan mentioned in the strategy. The effectiveness of the NIS depends largely on the ‘Ethics Committee and Focal Point’ in any organization. Therefore, the officials were asked whether there is any ‘Ethics Committee and Focal Point’ or not in their organizations.

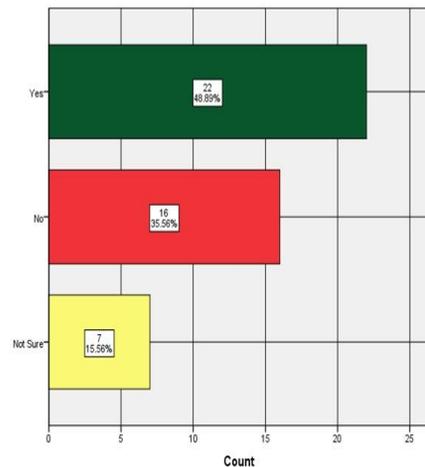
Figure 7 shows that 90.70% officials responded that they have ‘Ethics Committee and Focal Point’ in their organizations while 9.30% respondents replied that they do not have any ‘Ethics Committee and Focal Point’ in their organizations. Correspondingly, 48.89% of the service recipients replied positively and 35.56% told that they did not found or heard about having ‘Ethics Committee and Focal Point’ in the ministries/divisions and departments from where they received or receive services while 15.56% viewed that they are not sure or do not have any idea about the matter (Figure 8).

Figure 7: Officials’ view on having Ethics Committee and Focal Point



Source: Interview of Ministry and Department Level Officials, 2017

Figure 8: Service recipients’ view on having Ethics Committee and Focal Point



Source: Interview of Service Recipients, 2017

Bangladesh revealed that 92.72% respondents (Government officials of the rank of Joint Secretaries and Deputy Secretaries) know about the NIS Focal Points of their respective ministries/divisions (ADSL, 2014). The finding of the present study is almost similar to the baseline survey. One thing creates very optimism that half of the service recipients (48.89%) have found or heard about having ‘Ethics Committee and Focal Point’ in the ministries/divisions and departments.

The officials who replied positively (90.70%) as saying that they have ‘Ethics Committee and Focal Point’ in their ministries/divisions and departments were also asked how the ‘Ethics Committee and Focal Point’ help or contribute towards implementing the NIS and thus in promoting good governance. The responses have been summarized in Table 6.

Table- 6: Officials’ view on contribution of ‘Ethics Committee and NIS Focal Point’ towards implementing the NIS*

| Sl. | Officials’ View | No. of Responses | Percentage |
|-----|---|------------------|------------|
| 1. | Discuss irregularities and NIS issues in the quarterly meeting and monthly coordination meeting for awareness building of the employees | 47 | 54.65 |
| 2. | Organize views exchange meeting/seminar/workshop to follow NIS | 28 | 32.56 |
| 3. | Organize training | 22 | 25.58 |
| 4. | Advise to keep NIS in training session | 6 | 6.98 |
| 5. | NIS work plan preparation, implementation and regular monitoring | 9 | 10.46 |
| 6. | Ensure work done by specific time limit | 2 | 2.33 |
| 7. | Truly reporting and make recommendations on NIS implement | 3 | 3.48 |

*Note: Multiple answers have been considered

Source: Interview of Ministry and Department Level Officials, 2017

The Consultancy Service (Baseline Survey) Final Report conducted by IC Net, Japan and ADSL, Bangladesh revealed that 48.18% respondents reported that awareness raising meetings are organized in their ministries/divisions/organizations (ADSL, 2014) and the present study indicates that awareness meetings have been increased compared to the period of base line survey.

8.9 Service Recipients’ View on Complain Lodge

The ministries and departments are supposed to introduce ‘Grievance Redress System (GRS)’ as it is one of the key areas of the NIS. Responsiveness of the public employees to service recipients’ grievances or complains is a major issue for good

governance. Out of 45 service recipients 13.33% replied positively that they have lodged written or verbal complain for not getting any service on time while 86.67% did not lodge any complain.

Service recipients who complained for not getting any service in time were also enquired to tell that what sort of steps did the organizations or the 'GRS Focal Points' take on their complain. In reply, 2 service recipients told that they tried to solve problem but no result, 1 said that he did not get desired result and 3 respondents (50%) said that they have taken steps instantly and redressed the grievances. It is significant to note that 50% of the grievances solved instantly by the concerned authority or by the GRS Focal Point. But conversely 50% of the complainants did not get desired result. Therefore, there is ample opportunity to improve the GRS in the ministry and department levels.

8.10 Respondents' View on Effect of NIS on building 'Happy-prosperous Golden Bengal'

In line with the set vision, the officials and the service recipients were asked whether NIS has any effect on building happy and prosperous 'Golden Bengal'. 97.67% of the officials replied that NIS has effect on building happy and prosperous 'Golden Bengal' while only 2.33% officials replied negatively. Contrarily, 93.33% of the service recipients think positively while 6.67% think that NIS has no effect on building happy and prosperous 'Golden Bengal'. It is found that both the officials and the service recipients have almost the same opinion regarding effects of the NIS on building happy and prosperous 'Golden Bengal'.

The officials who think that NIS places effect on building happy and prosperous 'Golden Bengal' were consequently asked how the NIS put effect on building happy and prosperous 'Golden Bengal'. Their answers have been summed up in Table 7.

Table- 7: Officials' view on effect of the NIS on building 'Happy-prosperous Golden Bengal'*

| Sl. | Officials' View | No. of Responses | Percentage |
|-----|---|------------------|------------|
| 1. | Reducing corruption and thus establishing corruption free society through changing mindset | 41 | 47.67 |
| 2. | Developing moral standard and ethics of the employees through motivation and increasing honesty | 24 | 27.91 |
| 3. | Increasing dutifulness of the employees | 22 | 25.58 |
| 4. | Making service delivery easier, at door steps and on time | 21 | 24.42 |

| Sl. | Officials' View | No. of Responses | Percentage |
|-----|---|------------------|------------|
| 5. | Reducing time, cost, harassment in service delivery and achieving service recipients satisfaction | 19 | 22.09 |
| 6. | Making organizations transparent and accountable | 16 | 18.60 |
| 7. | Best use of Government allocation and sustainable development | 16 | 18.60 |
| 8. | Service simplification and introduce e-service/service delivery | 7 | 8.14 |
| 9. | Increasing employee efficiency and patriotism | 12 | 13.97 |

*Note: Multiple answers have been considered

Source: Interview of Ministry and Department Level Officials, 2017

9. Challenges in Implementing the NIS at Ministry and Department Level

Implementing the NIS is not a hurdle free task; rather it is a very challenging and a mammoth task. Out of 86 officials, 53.49% replied that they face challenges in implementing the NIS in their organizations while 46.51% replied negatively. On the other hand, 75.56% of the service recipients found challenges in implementing the NIS in the organizations they received/receive services and 20% found no barriers in implementing the NIS and the rest 4.44% had no comment over the issue. Subsequently, they were asked to identify the barriers they face in executing the NIS in the organizations. Responses have been summarized in Table 8.

Table- 8: Officials' view on Challenges they face in implementing the NIS at ministry and department level*

| Sl. | Challenges Faced by the Officials in implementing the NIS | No. of Responses | Percentage |
|-----|--|------------------|------------|
| 1. | Long standing traditional mind set of the employees | 16 | 18.60 |
| 2. | Lack of awareness/insufficient knowledge on NIS of the employees | 11 | 12.79 |
| 3. | Low motivation for employees (like low salary of the staffs) | 9 | 10.47 |
| 4. | Lack of information sharing/information gap on services, fees and time | 5 | 5.81 |
| 5. | Lack of commitment/inspiration of senior officials | 4 | 4.65 |

| Sl. | Challenges Faced by the Officials in implementing the NIS | No. of Responses | Percentage |
|-----|--|------------------|------------|
| 6. | Inbuilt corruption attitude of some employees | 3 | 3.49 |
| 7. | Speaks about integrity but activities are full of anti-integrity | 3 | 3.49 |
| 8. | Lack of technical knowledge/technical person and coordination | 4 | 4.65 |
| 9. | Leadership leads very much politically rather than rules of official function and getting wrong man in the wrong place | 4 | 4.65 |

***Note:** Multiple answers have been considered.

Source: Interview of Ministry and Department Level Officials, 2017

The Consultancy Service (Baseline Survey) Final Report conducted by IC Net, Japan and ADSL, Bangladesh revealed that 26.36% respondents expressed opinion that traditional mind set of officers and staff is the main challenge in the implementation of NIS (ADSL, 2014). The present study have expressed that 18.60% officials have identified long standing traditional mind set of the employees as the most critical barrier they face in implementing the NIS. It indicates that the situation is improving.

Similarly, the service recipients found a wide range of challenges in executing the NIS in the service providing organizations. 44.44% of the service recipients have identified traditional mind set of the employees, 22.22% have identified lack of training both employees and public representatives, 8.89% have identified political and local intervention, 6.67% have identified indifference of the high officials and the same number have identified low salary of the staff and 4.44% in each case have identified lack of ethics, improper supervision, corruption, lack of proper monitoring of NIS activities, non-availability of information and law publicity of the NIS as major barriers.

10. Findings from the FGD

In order to gather supplementary and more information in the study 2 FGDs have been organized where officials of different ministries, their departments and service recipients have participated actively. The participants opined that many of the employees including senior officials and public representatives do not have clear idea about the NIS, therefore, it requires wide circulation among the employees, public representatives and the general public by the Ministry of Information and the concerned Ministry through TVC, Filler, Social Media promotion etc. They also viewed that intensive training is urgent so that all employees feel encouraged and become motivated to perform duties and responsibilities with dutifulness, honesty and

practicing integrity. They thought that top authority should own the NIS and need to ensure transparency and accountability of the employees. They also suggested that the matter of practicing integrity of the employees may be depicted in the ACR by the ACR initiator which may ensure better results in implementing the NIS. They opined that there should be a link amongst responsibilities, NIS, APA and ACR. The participants also opined that political commitment is crucial for better effectiveness of the NIS. As per their belief, concerted effort and integrity practice can increase the image of the country in the Corruption Perception Index and ensure good governance in the country and thus a 'happy-prosperous Golden Bengal'.

11. Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

It is found from the study that NIS has been contributing in promoting integrity, expediting service simplification and reducing corruption at ministry and department levels covering many areas for ensuring good governance in Bangladesh. The uncovered areas need to be included that requires utmost intervention and attention of the Government at top level. Implementing the NIS is not an easy task rather it is a gigantic, intricate, and challenging task. To overcome the identified challenges and to ensure better effectiveness of the NIS in the ministries/divisions and departments in line with the findings, policy recommendations for promoting good governance in the state and non-state institutions are as follows:

- All the areas of the NIS for the Executive and Public Administration need to be covered strictly in the ministries/divisions and departments and establish strong system to monitor. High officials should watch over seriously the implementation of the NIS work plan in the Quarterly meeting and coordination meeting of the ministries/divisions and departments. Need to ensure transparency and accountability of the employees.
- More emphasize need to be given in establishing infrastructure for ICT including faster and uninterrupted internet connection and software issues with view to accelerating e-governance/online service along with simplified service. Smart Help Desk and One Stop Service Centers should be introduced in all organizations for service recipients.
- The capacity of the training institutions needs to be enhanced to create efficient employees along with imparting training on NIS. Need mobilization against corruption through training, workshop, seminar and publicity along with the high activation of the ethics committees as well as NIS Focal Points.

- Should have a slogan on NIS at every organization. Worthy incentives should be given to those who are greatly practicing integrity.
- Need to include more chapters on morality, religious education and ethical education in text books of schools and develop code of ethics or code of conduct for each profession like doctors, engineers, social workers, teachers, cadre services in line with integrity, etc. Steps ought to be taken to aware family members of the employees to practice integrity in day to day life.

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