

Governance and Democracy in Bangladesh: A Critical Juncture

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Abstract

Bangladesh's political trajectory has experienced a sharp inflection point on 5 August 2024. Sheikh Hasina led Awami League government forced to halt its power exercise by mass revolution and Hasina fled to India with the help of Bangladesh Armed Forces. Awami league government was extremely involved in taking decisions which often limits the freedom of other key constitutional organisations. There were formal local and national elections but political violence, public instability, rampant corruption and serious restrictions on free speech have a magnificent impact on democracy. This study is based on the pre and post of August 5, 2024 and examines the changing political and governance scenario in Bangladesh. The study examines the consequences of these changes on democratic governance and institutional integrity through a comparative analysis based on secondary data. Through the governance indicators, policy directions and institutional behaviour, the study examines the challenges and opportunities that have been created. In the pre-period, Political news from Bangladesh often focused on the hype of development work, routine government activities, conflicts between ruling and opposition parties but after August 5, the scenario was completely changed in some areas but badly affected by political instability, bad management and mob violence. Initial observations suggest that news began to highlight such as accountability, the role of students and youth, demands for reform and concerns for justice and human rights. The change is seen with the signal of increasing tension between authoritarianism and democratic hopes. The study considers a governance model with accountability is pivotal for sustainable development and governance of Bangladesh. Some suggestions have been made with a view to constructing resilient institutions, building accountability and regaining the trust of the citizens which are the main pillars of democratic Bangladesh.

Keywords: Governance Transformation, Democratic Governance, Institutional Development, Executive Consolidation, Bangladesh Politics, August 5, 2024.

Introduction

Governance in Bangladesh has been shaped by the confluence of authoritarian choices, development aims and democratic values. On 5 August 2024, there was an announcement of resignation made following huge protests that were organised by the students and civil society. The Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina who had more than fifteen years of rule was

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forced to submit resignation letter to president that proved to be turning point in nation's life. This was a historic moment in many ways. The people of this region had undergone a lot of change in various echelons of politics with a view to setting up democracy (Yasmin, 2024:13). An interim government led by Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus was established to pave the way for political and institutional reform.

The pre-August 5 was a time of growing centralization of executive authority, debilitation of opposition forces and repeated accusations against election practices. That time the ruling Awami League, led by Sheikh Hasina, continued to dominate and repeatedly wiped-out opposition parties and shut down dissent. The 2018 general election which resulted in a landslide victory for the Awami League, was plagued with accusations of voter suppression, violence and disqualification of opposition candidates. These problems led to concerns over the health of Bangladesh's democracy and the effectiveness of its political institutions. Devolution is a condition for democratic practice and good governance (Amin, 2023: 166).

Democratic governance is *sine qua non* for a peaceful society (Mollah, 2019:1). At present, democracy is predominantly regarded as the sole legitimate form of governance globally (Ahamed, & Abid, 2025:3). In July 2024, there was civil unrest generated by controversy over a court ruling reinstating controversial quotas in the public sector jobs. It ignited the movement with an immense demand for condemnation, an end to corruption and reform of politics. The protests resulted in the resignation of Prime Minister Hasina and the appointment of an interim government. With this transition, people hope that it represents a new beginning for Bangladeshi democracy, an opportunity to confront chronic ailments and restore faith in political institutions by completing necessary reforms.

Good governance in Bangladesh has been hindered by systemic corruption, weak institutions, and a lack of accountability. The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and the Election Commission (EC) have often been criticized for their inefficiency and susceptibility to political influence. The absence of robust checks and balances has allowed the concentration of power and the erosion of democratic norms. Against this background, the interim government headed by Muhammad Yunus has announced reforms in various government wings. Political commitment for implementation of those reforms and strong monitoring is a prerequisite for the success of the reforms.

The economic consequences of the political development, which has seen a beating before August 5. It has unmoored industries and spooked investors. The Interim government's interventions to instil stability, spur growth of economic measures aim at injecting stability into the economy and stimulate long-term growth. The main goals are to attract foreign investment, construct infrastructure and public services. The government also pledged to strengthen environmental sustainability and social inclusion, and without inclusion and fairness, sustainable development cannot be achieved. The pursuit of true democracy, good governance and sustainable development remains unfinished business. It will be up to politicians, civil society and institutions to make whatever success of it they can.

Now, as Bangladesh goes through the process of regeneration, reform democracy and good governance will no doubt play a significant part. This article analyses the governance landscape in Bangladesh since then and examines its impact on democracy, institutions and inclusive socio-economic development.

The aim of this study is to attempt to investigate:

- To analytically review the reforms in the governance system of Bangladesh in the aftermath of August 5, 2024 and to assess its effect on democratic governance, institutional growth and socio-economic advancement.
- To compare the major development indicators with the types of governance quality before and after August 5.
- Explore obstacles and opportunities for consolidating democratic governance and inclusive development in the context of recent political changes.

Research Questions

The key research questions guiding this study are:

- What were the political developments or processes before or after August 5 that changed democratic institutions and dynamics in Bangladesh?
- How did political changes, including pre-August 5 and post, shape development indicators around economic growth, education, healthcare or infrastructure?

- What are some of the key challenges and opportunities for upholding democratic governance and advancing inclusive development in Bangladesh in the wake of the political changes that began on August 5?

Literature Review

A cohort of researchers attempted to analyse how democracy, governance and development have evolved in Bangladesh compared to pre-1971 era. Before August 5, 2024, the Hasina regime has been criticized for being authoritarian, driven by suppression of the opposition, media gagging, and election manipulation. This dearth of effective governance was compounded by the dominance of business elites in policy formulation which tended to take precedence over public interest. Only the forms differed across generations (Sowdagar, 2013). As suggested by Rahman (2021), an overfocusing of business interests in sectors such as public transportation, prompted by governance crises, have thwarted the performance of public institutions. good economic achievements were made during this period, manifested in the increase of GDP growth and development indicators like poverty reduction or enrolment of education. Yet these benefits were not evenly spread, and suspicions about corruption and accountability lingered. The only other previous such transitions had taken place in 1991, 1996 and 2001 but they had faced common problems of weak political institutions, highly corrupt politicians, high degree of immaturity among politicians and leaders (Islam & Khatun, 2015:52). The pre-August 5 period was one of clientelism and a lack of genuinely political competition. The two main parties, AL and BNP, were often caught in zero-sum game, with power struggles can only detract from the quality of governance. Parties in Bangladesh are often accused of practicing dynastic leadership, which contravenes democratic principles and the ruling parties often manipulate electoral processes in order to keep their grip on power (Mahmud, 2020:211).

As 5 August 2024 was a grand turning point in the political history of Bangladesh - which has been studied by the second group of scholars. A coalition of students, "Students Against Discrimination" protested and campaigned against the government's "anti-people" policies, which quickly grew to develop mass protests demanding Hasina step down. In the aftermath, an interim government led by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus was established, focusing on constitutional reforms and the restoration of democratic norms. The new administration emphasized on transparency,

freedom of media, freedom of speech and the decrease of rampant corruption. The new government's approach marks with a shift towards more participatory and accountable governance. In terms of governance, the period after August 5 is marked by an increased centralization of authority. Despite the growing uncertainties about the democracy and governance, Bangladesh's development vehicle continued to run a progress in some sector after August 5, 2024. A new concept under the transitional government comes grooming governance strategy. Design legislation to mainstream a new attitude. August 5 was a political period of authority becoming more and more concentrated. On August 5, the country's development processes slowly continued but instead went in one hand direction and the other hand direction because call for aid called upon subsidies, doping projects not only provided jobs for people by creating temporary employment opportunities. In the year, the country continued to develop economically. With RMG sector and the service industry driving this GDP growth. Along with this further development in economic activity there was also a continuing fall in poverty levels, with the percentage of people living below the line down markedly over previous years. The government's development program continued to give first priority poverty alleviation and infrastructure development. By a good governance, which will benefit the majority of nations and overcome a variety of development problems at home (Rahman 2023:205). This is what many experts today believe.

3rd group of analysts evaluates the difficulties and opportunities for maintaining democratic governance and inclusive development in Bangladesh following the recent political transition. The comparison revealed the two periods to be mirror opposites. Hasina's government was characterized by autocratic rule, a curtailment of political freedoms, and the undermining of institutions. While there was development progress, concerns about human rights and the rollback of democracy began to emerge. Post August 2024 will be a year of contradiction: the central government will be transcended as responsibility for various areas of public affairs shifts to local institutions. But at present there is no way forward, as this violates an independent state neutrality. In contrast, however, the pursuit of democracy and inclusive development still provides hope for Bangladesh. One of the main issues facing the realization of good governance core integrity is the size of corruption (World Bank, 2017).

According to scholars (Ahmed, 2019), the bureaucracy in Bangladesh is heavily conditioned by corrupt practices, which diminishes the

effectiveness of state institutions (Ul-Alam, 2021:137). In Bangladesh, implementation capabilities in public institutions are low, and lack of accountability within these organizations allows governance failure to continue. A Perception Survey discovered that ineffectual governance and inadequate measures for vulnerable populations endangered the security of the public (Shanmi et al. 2020, Ul-Alam, 2021:137).

As such, some other scholars pointed out it is important to notice the connection between the growth outcomes of Bangladesh and governance. A local government system is an essential part of good governance (Islam & Haque, 2015:46). This is where one of the most common anomalies in international comparisons lies: as income disparities increase, government institutions become further away from their people's lives; their services and natural government. These inequalities are clearly visible in the distribution of poverty, access to education and basic health care facilities throughout rural and coastal areas across Bangladesh. Citizens are usually treated as subjects rather than customers and also transparent and accountable administration is yet to be achieved in the public sector (Khan, 2018:17). Furthermore, the lack of institutional reforms and persistent governance issues contribute to the slow pace of development (Hossain, 2019:116). Good governance requires that citizens have access to public authority and that there be a monitoring system in place to ensure that authority is used appropriately.

After a thorough reflection on the above research, we found that, to our best knowledge, the existing literature on democracy, good governance, and development in Bangladesh has examined a range of themes, but there remain significant gaps that need further investigation. Despite, a big literature lacuna still exists: in Bangladesh comparisons do not critically consider the political transformation that occurred with the events of 5 August 2024. Either authoritarian tendencies of pre-2024 authority or the immediate aftermath of political protests were most living studies on this divide; however, these changing dynamics and their impact on building institutions, Democratic consolidation, and equitable development have rarely been examined. Further, civil society in transformation can barely be seen by now -there were military and other politically marginalized forces participating in the construction of a politics space. This gap also highlights the urgency for robust evidence-based research that examines the ways in which we might theorize pre and post-2024 governance of Bangladesh, in relation to broader democratic theory and development discourse.

Research Method

This study employed comparative research and compared how the politics of Bangladesh was before and after August 5, 2024 to govern. It is a study conducted with secondary data sources—government files, international think tank papers, academic studies, mainstream news stories—and yet they all reflect a life-world political situation, an institution in transformation and the socio-economy at two points in time. We will use descriptive statistical analysis to process the quantitative information extracted from government publications on development statistics and a variety of databases, in order to understand trends in this kind of indicator and how these have been developing over time during those periods. Most of all, secondary data from policy documents, scholarly literature and media reports covering both periods will be scrutinised using content or thematic analysis to make inferences about the context, political stability gains and losses involved in them as well as changes in governance and institutions and their implications for political process and development. The comparative periods are organized around the focal point of August 5, 2024, as a heuristic for interpreting the differences and implications following a political peak-point shift in Bangladesh's governance reform. By analyzing the two periods, the study aims to understand the nature and changes in governance and its implications in the political process and development sector.

Findings and Discussion

The research section examines Bangladesh's democratic development and governance quality through an analysis of obstacles to democratic consolidation and their effects on development results.

Political Changes and Events

When government security forces brutally attacked protesters in July 2024, the student-led demonstration came to its peak. Hasina resigned and fled to India after demonstrators targeted the prime minister's official house, Ganabhaban, in Dhaka on August 5. On August 6, President Mohammed Shahabuddin dissolved parliament after the resignation of Sheikh Hasina and ordered to form an interim government. Muhammad Yunus became the interim government's Chief Advisor. After that, the interim government expanded from time to time. In keeping with its goal to inclusive governance, the 23-member provisional cabinet includes representatives from the ex-military, civil society, and student activists. On August 10, 2024, Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan and five senior justices resigned in response to public calls for

accountability. Then the interim government appointed Sayed Refaat Ahmed as the new Chief Justice. The new government announced its plan to hold a constitutional assembly to create an inclusive constitution and begin electoral reforms to ensure free and fair elections in order to allay long-standing concerns about electoral integrity. The Cyber Security Act-2023 was repealed by the interim administration on May 21, 2025, because it was known to impede freedom of speech and the press. However, the Government later issued the Cyber Security Ordinance-2025, which is widely considered as a copy of the Cyber Security Act-2023 (Daily Star, 2025). Event timeline is below:

Table 1: Timeline of Key Political Events Post-August 5, 2024

Date	Event
August 5, 2024	Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina resigns and flees
August 8, 2024	Nobel Laureate Dr. Muhammad Yunus is sworn in as the Chief Adviser of the interim government
September 11, 2024	The interim government announces the formation of six major reform commissions (Constitution, Election, Police, Anti-Corruption, Public Administration, and Judiciary).
February 12, 2025	A UN report accuses the former Awami League administration of "crimes against humanity" during the July 2024 crackdown.
February 28, 2025	The National Citizen Party (NCP) is launched by student leaders as a new political force.
May 10, 2025	The Awami League and its affiliated organizations are officially banned under anti-terrorism laws.
October 17, 2025	24 political parties signed the July National Charter
February 12, 2026	13 th National Elections & referendum on the July charter (Scheduled)

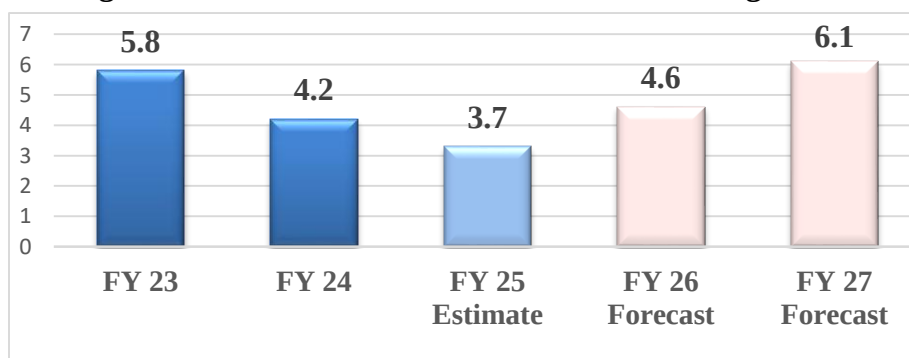
Source: BBC News 2024; BSS News 2025; and Joya & Mannan 2024.

- **Impact on Democratic Institutions and Political Dynamics:** Beyond the establishment of a temporary government and the launch of constitutional and electoral modifications is an essential first step in restoring democratic rule to Bangladesh. The student takeovers were a sign of how the young

are least beginning to become politically aware and turn into things. Their partaking in the reform process and actions of shaping a provisional government expressed their political transparency. However, their implementation did not prevent the country from remaining in a state of political stability due to the non-readiness of previous ruling parties to make effective and meaningful reforms and its selectivity.

- **Impact of political changes:** This chapter describes the ways in which Bangladesh's politics has altered things not just in the country but also within its systems, education, and economy.
- ❖ **Economic Growth:** Bangladesh's economy might have been humming along before Aug. 5; it had grown by 5.8% in FY 2023, But the economy was in very bad shape and the slow down of growth speed started gradually 4.2% in FY 2024 and 3.7% in FY 2025. Average inflation rate 9.73% in FY 2023-24 and 10.03 in FY 2024-25, and the Government expected inflation rate 6.5% in the current FY 2025-26. The World Bank stated that the political instability along with discipline turmoil in big companies was the main reason for the slowdown in GDP Growth Rate and expected for FY2026-27 is 6.1% (The Business Standard, 2025).

Figure 1: GDP Growth Rate Before and After August 5, 2024



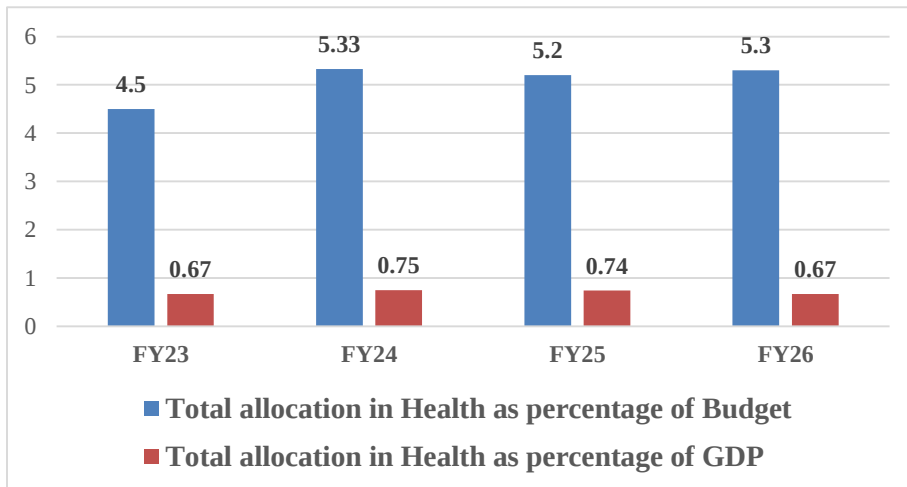
Source: O'Neil, 2025; The Business Standard, 2026; World Bank, 2026

- ❖ **Education:** The Education sector has also received huge blows from political changes. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recommends that a country should allocate 6 percent of its total GDP or at least 20 percent of its budget to the education sector. In 2024-25 fiscal year, the total allocation for education was 1.69% of the GDP, down from 1.76% in the 2023-24

fiscal year. However, FY 2025-26 has seen slightly increase to 1.72% to GDP, (Daily Star, 2025-26).

- ❖ **Healthcare:** Investments in health care are also too low. Allocation on health in FY 2023 was at only 0.67 percent of the GDP, well below the minimum recommendation of 3 (UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report, 2024). A lack of funding has produced expensive out-of-pocket costs for consumers and risked the whole population. The following chart shows allocation percentage for Healthcare to Budget and GDP.

Figure 2: Government Health Allocation as Percentage of Revised Budget & GDP



Source: Khatun et al., 2024; *The Business Standard*, 2026

People expected the government might increase the allocation on healthcare in the Yunus era, but that expectation was never fulfilled.

- ❖ **Infrastructure:** The transitional government has prioritised the infrastructure construction. In April 2025, Bangladesh agreed to an \$850 million plan with the World Bank aimed at improving its trade capacity and social protection. According to plan \$650 million for the Bay Terminal Marine Infrastructure Development Project in Chittagong, which seeks to develop port infrastructure and increase market access for more than a million people and \$200 million for managing various social protection programme which shows the govt.'s positive intention in social protection. The deal reflects the

govt. efforts to tackle the economic slowdown and ameliorate port operational efficiency.

Table 2: Infrastructure Investment Post-August 5, 2024

Project	Investment (\$ million)	Key Objectives
Bay Terminal Marine Project	650	Modernize ports, reduce transport costs
Social Protection Enhancement	200	Provide aid, skills training, and support

Source: Reuters, 2025

Political Instability and Democratic Governance: When former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina announced 12th national election on 7 January 2024, opposition political parties boycotted the polls, citing fears of rigging as a result nationwide strikes and violence intensified. The election, held amid protests and allegations of coercion, which was widely criticized by domestic and international observers as neither free nor inclusive. Despite low and disputed voter turnout and opposition absence, the Awami League secured an overwhelming majority, enabling Hasina to assume a fourth consecutive term and marking the consolidation of authoritarian governance. Political crisis continues to severely limit the effectiveness of democratic institutions in the country, in this way political stability and democratic governance further deteriorated in Hasina's regime.

After July revolution interim govt. endeavored to bring political stability and democratic governance but had to face huge challenges. Maintaining law and order is one of them as the police was unable to function properly. There was increase in criminal cases, including direct murders, robberies, kidnappings and arson (Dhaka Tribune 2025, 10 January). To tackle the law and order the Army's commissioned officers were authorized to act as executive magistrates. The situation slowly improved, but had not yet returned to normalcy yet.

Challenges and Opportunities for Sustaining Democratic Governance and Promoting Inclusive Development in Bangladesh Post-August 5, 2024

The interim period is marked by cycles of revenge, mob violence, religious extremism, and only superficial institutional change, limiting real democratization and rule of law. Popular uprising toppled the regime, but survival of democracy depends on strengthening parliaments, judiciary,

election management, and robust security forces. Prior electoral manipulation, power abuses and elite factionalism have eroded public trust so rebuilding procedural, performance, and moral legitimacy is essential. (Hassaan, H., Bloch, F., & Ali, M. 2024). Interim judicial reforms mix genuine goals (independence, backlog reduction, transparency) with politically charged, transitional-justice measures that could re-weaponise courts. (Das, J., & Abdul, M. 2025). Corruption, low capacity, and weak citizen engagement still constrain responsive local government, despite some positive post-uprising opening. High youth unemployment, informal work, low female participation and skills mismatch threaten SDG-aligned inclusive growth. (Aktar, K., Islam, T., Uddin, M., & Faruk, O. 2020).

Bangladesh's post-uprising context offers real but fragile opportunities: durable democracy and inclusive development will depend on rebuilding institutions (judiciary, elections, local government), constraining revenge politics and extremism, and re-centering SDGs, especially inclusive growth and social protection. The govt. priorities include credible elections, independent election management, and constitutional safeguards limiting executive dominance. Judicial reform should focus on transparent appointments, due process in transitional justice, and depoliticization of prosecutions (Ahmed, S. 2025). Failures in handling the anti-quota movement reflect authoritarian crisis management and weak governance capacity. Security sector reform, accountability for power abuses, and early mediation mechanisms are central (Ali, S., Mazhar, M., & Bhuiyan, U. 2025). Institutionalized dialogue with agitated group can channel contention into policy rather than street violence. Post-uprising, local governments show both entrenched corruption and new space to reduce partisan capture. Depoliticized local elections, performance evaluations, participatory budgeting, and mandatory public disclosure can enhance accountability (Sarkar, M., Okitasari, M., Ahsan, M., & Al-Amin, A. 2022). Youth employment needs to increase. High youth unemployment threatens both stability and inclusion. Skills policies, FDI that creates decent jobs, and product diversification are key.

Major reform commission's recommendations are as follows:

- **Constitution Reform Commission:** National Parliament will be formed with two houses - Lower and Upper. The lower house will have 400 seats and the upper house will have 105 seats.

- **Judiciary Reform Commission:** The commission gives emphasis on a separate judicial secretariat, forming an independent commission for the appointment of judges (excluding the Chief Justice).
- **Electoral Reform Commission:** The commission suggested to bring political parties under the Right to Information Act to increase their accountability.
- **Police Reform Commission:** It gives importance on forming a Police Commission to protect the force from political influence.
- **Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Reform Commission:** it advocates granting constitutional status to the ACC and emphasises on preventing corruption both at the national level and within the ACC itself.

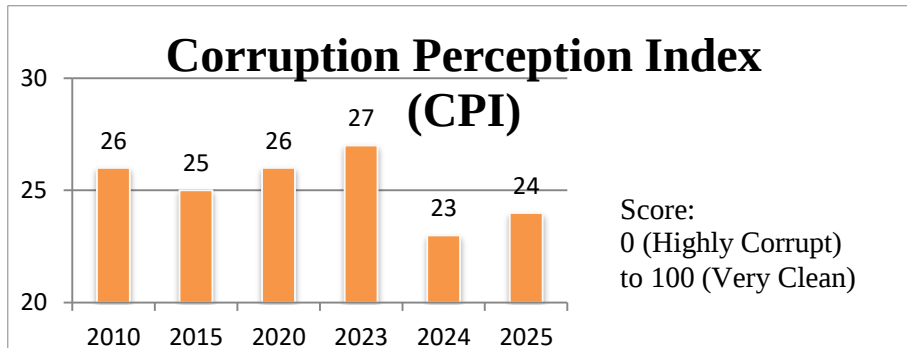
Weak Governance Structures and Development Challenges:

Although there has been improvement in the democratic process, problems in governance hinder sustainable development. Bangladesh's score in the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) has not improved for several years and reflects well-established corruption in governance. Although the democratic reforms have improved, persistent corruption is undermining development initiatives in the education, health, and infrastructure sectors by eroding trust in the government.

Corruption and its Impact on Governance and Development:

The findings of this study indicate that at both the level of political and administration service delivery is undermined, policy making processes are distorted, development decomposition results in unattainable outcomes for rampant corruption. It robs essential services — in health, education and infrastructure especially — of desperately-needed resources, and fuels social inequality. The following chart represents high CPI persistence in both pre and post August 5, indicating corruption remains a core culprit towards achieving good governance, democracy and sustainable development in Bangladesh.

Figure 4: Bangladesh's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) Score (2010-2025)



Sources: CPI 2025.

Policy Recommendations for Enhancing Democracy, Good Governance, and Development in Bangladesh

On August 5, 2024, Bangladesh was thrown into chaos. It marked the end of Hasina's 15-year term, during which the country's economy flourished while authoritarianism rose. Then Muhammad Yunus formed an interim government to restore democracy, good governance, and sustainable development.

According to the above findings and discussion of the research, we may conclude that Bangladesh is facing a huge number of constraints. Some specific policy recommendations may be made to promote democracy, good governance, and development further.

❖ Strengthen Institutional Independence

- Ensure the independence of the judiciary, the election commission, and other oversight bodies to prevent political interference.

❖ Promote Inclusive Governance

- Involve civil society, youth and marginalized groups in the processes of decision-making so that policies reflect diverse needs.

❖ Enhance Transparency and Accountability

- Adopt effective anti-corruption measures, such as creating an independent anti-corruption agency with the power to investigate and prosecute independently.

❖ Foster Economic Development

- Prioritize job creation, particularly for the youth, and invest in education and vocational training to equip the workforce with necessary skills.

❖ Ensure Press Freedom

- Protect journalists and media outlets from harassment and censorship, and promote a diverse media landscape to facilitate informed public discourse.

In addition to the aforementioned actions, the following regulations are suggested to ensure good governance in Bangladesh:

- Implement the recommendations of the Electoral Reform Commission to ensure a transparent and accountable electoral process.
- Adopt constitutional amendments that promote the separation of powers and strengthen democratic institutions
- Enhance the capacity of anti-corruption agencies to investigate and prosecute corruption cases effectively.
- Develop vocational training programs to equip youth with skills for employment.
- Implement policies that promote gender equality in education, employment, and political participation.
- Ensure the appointment of judges based on merit and independence.
- Review and amend laws that restrict fundamental freedoms to align with international human rights standards.
- Introduce digitalization of public services (e-government initiatives) to make services more accessible, transparent, and efficient, particularly in rural areas.

Finally, we need to build a strong commitment from all stakeholders to work together towards a common goal of building a more democratic, transparent, and prosperous society.

Concluding Remarks

Bangladesh is at the threshold of a general transition from all-out authoritarianism to a timid democratic revival. The Observer's view of Bangladesh has enjoyed significant economic growth under Sheikh Hasina

as prime minister but the country is more authoritarian and repressive with weakened democratic institutions. Government use of disproportionate force against political opponents, including its mobilization of elite forces such as the RAB to suppress dissent, contravened democratic principles and human rights. Academics (Rahman, 2021:79) argue that political instability and the decline of democratic culture negatively influence development results. The country has effectively reduced its poverty rate from over 40% in the early 1990s to approximately 21.2% by 2025 (World Bank, 2025). The time is ripe for them to play a more assertive and proactive role in governance for the voiceless and the marginalized (Khan, 2013:279).

The student-led rebellion that forced Hasina to step down and created an interim government was seen as a landmark. The interim regime began reforms to end the undemocratic excesses, including voiding the Cyber Security Act, which was described as a free speech buster that stifled political opposition. Formation and taking steps to implement the reform commissions' recommendations are a good sign for creating democratic governance in Bangladesh.

Good governance is a determinant of societal well-being that has become a part of the development institutions (Zafar & Ali, 2017:71). It is about the institutional environment that means the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented by governments (Siddique, 2017:10). Though 54 years have already passed since independence, the constitutional right remains a dream of the patriotic people. The benefits of growth have not been equally distributed, and marginalized groups, particularly women, remain excluded from political and economic processes (Rahman & Islam, 2016). It is crucial to reduce the socio-cultural and institutional barriers to eliminate gender discrimination, (Kaiser & Nabila, 2024:10) and the government should ensure effective participation of the private sector in public services delivery by policy reforms.

The newly elected government must prioritize the institutional reforms to usher in new hope for good governance in people's hearts as reforms aimed at decentralization, reducing corruption and enhancing political inclusivity to foster sustainable development and strengthen democratic governance. These reforms will not only work as fuel for growth but also spread the fruits of this growth more widely. The course of the country's history will largely be determined by how well the transitional government manages to handle reform, accountability, and promote a culture of dialogue and consensus-building as prerequisites for democratic deepening.

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