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Chapter

# Curbing Corruptions in Government Sectors: The Role of Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) in Bangladesh

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## Abstract

This book chapter attempts to investigate the major prevailing corruptions in government sectors of Bangladesh and explore the roles of Anti-Corruption Commissions (ACC), Bangladesh, to combat these corruptions. Bangladesh has multidisciplinary development projects, and it also witnesses some corruption in both private and government sectors. This study could contribute with regard to make a small insight about the corruption in Bangladesh. This is a qualitative study which has basically been made the secondary sources of data which has been collected from the recent publications, reports, articles, and annual reports of Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), Bangladesh, as well as other secondary sources of information. The research ethics has been maintained properly in this study. This study will be helped to the policy-makers of Bangladesh to understand the trends and factors associated with corruption as well as the role of the ACC in Bangladesh to a large scale. Researchers would also find the scope of further study through this chapter.

**Keywords:** corruption, governance, Anti-Corruption Commission, Bangladesh

## 1. Introduction

*“Corruption has seeped into all levels of society. No government can prevent such corruption. The masses and students will put an end to corruption; the young people and peasants must take action to prevent corruption. Otherwise, we have to wage a war against corruption.”*

*-On 17 February 1974, at the reunion of the Bangladesh Chhatra League in Dhaka, [1] (Bangladesh Betar).*

Bangladesh is a developing country (with a GDP of over \$409 billion) that has the world's 37th largest economy and forecasts suggest that the scale of the economy could double by 2030 [2]. It has distorted itself from an economic “basket case” into one among the world's fastest-growing economies. In spite of development in

Bangladesh, corruption also exist in all aspects. Despite efforts, corruption is pervasive in Bangladesh. Despite the administration's rhetoric condemning corruption at all levels, reports continue to surface of prominent political figures being implicated in a wide range of scandals involving allegations of wrongdoing. Given the preexisting state of corruption and poor management in Bangladesh's health care system, the COVID-19 pandemic has only increased the pressure on this sector [3]. However, public sector departments in Bangladesh are the most corrupt due to bribery, rent-seeking, misuse of public funds, excessive lobbying, delays in service delivery, theft, recklessness on the part of government officials, and bureaucratic excess [4, 5].

To combat the corruption, Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) plays vital role investigating the cases all over the country. The ACC is a constitutional independent body. Currently, according to ACC [6], this government organization employs a total of 978 people. There are a total of 248 officials, including deputy directors, assistant directors, and sub-assistant directors, who are involved in the investigation process. Also, 230 of the 248 officials are employed directly by the ACC. The remaining 18 ACC employees are deputized from other government agencies, such as the White House. The ACC received 21,371 allegations in 2019 but only recommended 1710 for investigation. The remaining 19,661 allegations were not forwarded. Of the 16,606 allegations submitted to the ACC in 2018, only 1265 were approved for investigations. In 2017, the commission accepted 937 allegations into cognizance out of a whopping total of 17,983 [6]. In 2020 and 2021, the ACC received a combined total of 113,773 calls to its Hotline-106, of which 2449 were found to be credible allegations requiring further investigation. Additionally, the commission received 232 graft allegations from the media via email and social media, and 213 from the media via electronic and print outlets. There were a total of 732 anti-graft drives conducted by the commission, 487 in 2020, and 245 in 2021. [7, 8]. However, in 2019, the percentage of ACC cases where punishment was handed down rose to 63%, from 37% in 2015.

Nonetheless, the corruption and ACC are the two opposite entities in society. Where there is corruption, there is ACC to take action against it. Bangladesh is witnessed some cases of corruption in recent days, but the role of ACC is also proactive though it has some limitations. This study would focus on the recent scenarios of corruption and the role of ACC as a whole.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

Corruption can be analyzed by different theories in sociological perspectives. Different factors are responsible for the prevailing corruption in Bangladesh. Corruption = (Monopoly + Discretion) – (Accountability + Transparency + Integrity). This suggests that corruption arises when ATI is lacking (as a result of poor governance), in addition to monopoly and discretion. From now on, corrupt behavior is usually the result of poor leadership. Some aspects of government activity, as mentioned by Vito Tanzi, provide a favorable environment for corruption [9]. Corruption, he argues, has both direct and indirect causes. Direct causes include things like complicated regulations and authorizations, taxation, spending decisions, and party financing, while indirect causes include things like the quality of the bureaucracy, the level of public sector wages, the severity of penalties, institutional controls, and the transparency of rules, laws, and processes. However, this study is concentrated on two theoretical perspectives to relate the scenarios of corruption in Bangladesh, which are illustrated below.

## 2.1 Organizational culture theory and corruption

Edgar Schein's [10] framework for analyzing organizational culture is the most popular of its kind. He takes a functionalist stance, defining culture as a set of shared beliefs and practices that a society creates as it finds solutions to the challenges of integrating its members and adapting to their environment. Because of its success, it is now being taught to new members as the only valid way of looking at, and reacting to, these issues. [11]. In this theory, if the culture of bribery exists in any organization, the corruption cannot be stopped. In addition, public officials are motivated to engage in corrupt behavior due to flaws in the "proper machinery" of government rather than in their own character. Schein [10, 12] proposes a model of culture with three tiers:

- a. Artifacts: Artifacts are difficult to quantify because they involve intangible organizational characteristics that one can see, touch, and hear upon first encountering a new society.
- b. Values: Questionnaires are a common tool for gauging this level, which is concerned with the embraced values, ideals, norms, standards, and moral principles.
- c. Underlying assumptions: The phenomena addressed at this level are those that baffle insiders when they are questioned about the norms and standards that govern the culture of an organization. At this stage, data are gathered by carefully observing behavior in order to collect underlying assumptions, which are often overlooked because they are taken for granted. According to Schein, this is where a company's culture can be found at its most fundamental.

Nevertheless, the lack of the proper norms and values among the officials in any institution, they can act corruptly. This theory is relevant to this study in the context of Bangladesh, because corruption prevail in the institutions due to the culture of the particular institutions.

## 2.2 Good governance theory and corruption

United Nations Development Program (UNDP) defined good governance as "to governing systems which are capable, responsive, inclusive, and transparent. All countries, developed and developing, need to work continuously toward better governance" [13]. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) is a source of concern for R. M. Gisselquist [13], who argues that governance—defined as the act of making decisions and the means by which they are implemented or, alternatively, not implemented—raises legitimate questions. [14]. Good governance theory focused on transparency, accountability, and reducing corruption in the context of Bangladesh. If the accountability and transparency is ensured, the corruption can be reduced in any institutions.

In 1946, the UN General Assembly determined: "freedom of information is a fundamental human right and the touchstone for all freedoms to which the United Nations is consecrated." According to UN, good governance has eight significant characteristics. It has to be (1) consensus-oriented, (2) participatory, (3) follow the Rule of Law, (4) be effective and efficient, (5) accountable, (6) transparent, (7) responsive, and (8) equitable and inclusive. All the components are important to describe good governance. For a sustainable development in any country, good governance is a

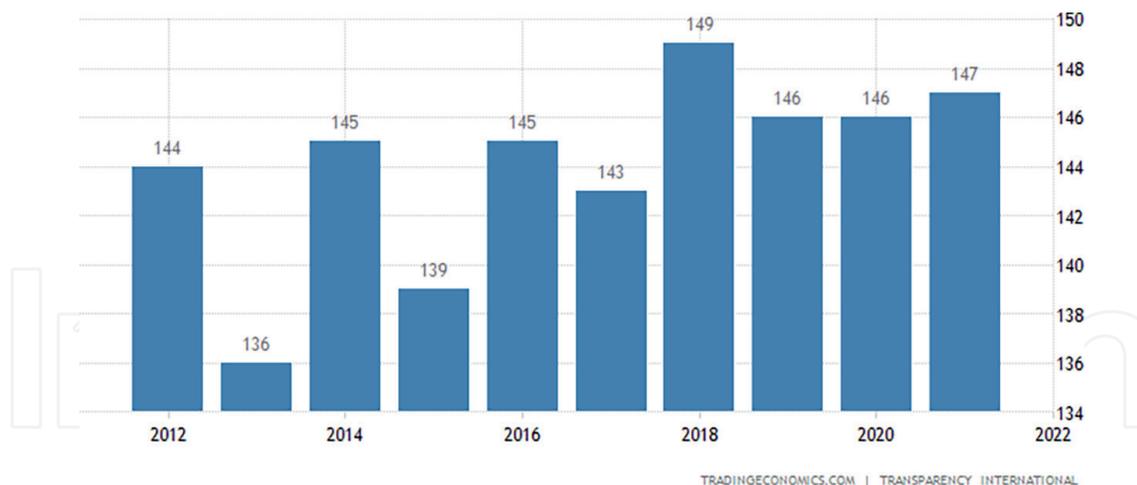
must and for good governance all of the prerequisites are needed. This theory is completely related to this study because if the good governance fails, the every institution and the state also can be corrupted.

### **3. Major corruptions in different government sectors in Bangladesh**

Bangladesh is a developing country in the world and the economic growth is jumping up gradually. Different mega-projects are going on to the development in every sectors in Bangladesh. In this context, Bangladesh has witnessed some incidents of corruptions in several sectors. According to Transparency International's 2021 Corruption Perceptions Index, Bangladesh ranks 147th on the list of 180 least corrupt countries [15]. Bribery and other corrupt practices in vital service delivery sectors continue to have a major negative effect on people's day-to-day lives. According to the National Household Survey on Corruption in service delivery published in June 2018 by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), roughly 66.5% of households were victims of corruption in some form or another. To add insult to injury, the study found that nearly nine in 10 (89%) bribe payers felt they had no choice but to do so because bribes were the only way to obtain public services. [16].

Some have speculated that dwindling support for democratic norms may have an impact on corruption rates. The Economist Intelligence Unit recorded Bangladesh's lowest Democracy Index score ever in 2017. Overall, the country scored 5.43 out of 10, ranking it at 92nd place among the 165 countries studied. [17]. Some analysts estimate that the country's annual GDP growth could have been at least 2–3% higher if corruption had been effectively managed behind the scenes. According to the Open Budget Index maintained by the International Budget Partnership (IBP), Bangladesh currently has a score of 41 out of 100. According to IBP's analysis, countries with an Open Budget Index score of 60 or higher are providing enough budget information for the public to participate in budget discussions with knowledge and expertise. Bangladesh, like many other countries with pervasive corruption, suffers most from a lack of unwavering political commitment, which allows corruption to flourish under the radar and is often protected by those in power [18]. It has been argued by some domestic experts that the country's corruption rates may have been affected by the apparent weakening of commitment to democratic norms. The Economist Intelligence Unit recorded Bangladesh's lowest Democracy Index score ever in 2017. Overall, the country scored 5.43 out of 10, ranking it at 92nd place among the 165 countries studied [17].

There is a substantial possibility of corruption in the courts in Bangladesh at the present time. The lower courts have a reputation for rampant corruption. Some magistrates, lawyers, and other court officials routinely ask for bribes from defendants or make decisions based on loyalty to patronage networks. For businesses, the indeterminacy, length (on average 1442 days), and high cost of enforcing a legally binding contract presents a significant obstacle [19]. While primary school in Bangladesh is technically free for all children aged 5–13 years, a 2009 survey of Bangladeshi families revealed that 66 percent of those families had to pay bribes to get their kids into the first grade (ages 5–7 years) [20]. Besides, it is mostly common, though it is not the only way, guardians has to pay extra if they wants to admit their children in better school. According to data collected by the Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC) in 2015 as part of their Trust Index evaluation of various institutions in Bangladesh, only 14.2% of respondents in Dhaka and 13.2% in rural areas have faith



**Figure 1.**  
*Corruption rank in Bangladesh (Trading [23]).*

in the police, while this number rises to 20.0% in other urban areas [21]. There is a rumored 10–20% bribe paid to the ruling party leader, 15–20% to the mayor, engineers, and civil managers, and 2–3% to other officials just to get the work order for an infrastructure project [22].

Nonetheless, Bangladesh ranked 147th in the corruption rank among the 180 countries in the world in 2021, while it was one position better (146th) in 2019 and 2020 (**Figure 1**). But it scored highest (149th) in the year of 2018 since 2012, while it was only 143th in 2017. The corruption level was so high in 2012 (144th) but in the next year, in 2013, it was developed from corruption (136th position). In keeping with Trading Economics data [23], this ranking is fluctuated in every year. But last 3 years, it was remaining almost same (146th–147th position).

Nevertheless, there are plenty of examples of corruption in Bangladesh. In almost every sector, corruption is prevailing for some dishonest officials and the customers. This study focused on four cases of corruption recently recorded in Bangladesh.

#### **CASE 1: a big money embezzlement**

Proshanta Kumar Halder (PK Halder), a former head of NRB Global Bank, is facing multiple charges of embezzlement in Bangladesh [24–27]. The Anti-Corruption Commission found that he had transferred around Tk 80 crore to Canada via money laundering. The investigation conducted by ACC Investigation Officer Md Salahuddin found that PK Halder had amassed approximately Tk 426 crore beyond his known sources of income. Halder gained prominence in 2019 as a leader in the movement against gambling establishments. In the years 2009–2019, he and his cohorts stole approximately Tk 1000 crore from four different banks [24–27]. Prashanta Kumar Halder, a former managing director of NRB Global Bank and Reliance Finance Limited, and 11 others were charged with embezzling Tk44 crore by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) in 2020 [28, 29]. According to the complaint, the accused stole Tk 44 crore from FAS Finance and Investment Limited using fraudulent means while posing as Diya Shipping Limited, a fictitious company. The ACC claims that between 2009 and 2019, PK Halder stole and laundered approximately Tk 6500 crore from four leasing companies. After that, on May 14, 2022, PK Halder and his attorney Sukumar were taken into custody in Ashoknagar, West Bengal, India [24–27]. Government of the people's republic of Bangladesh recently has requested to government of India for giving him back to Bangladesh to bring him by the book/to bring him under law.

### **CASE 2: dishonest/immoral hospital business during COVID-19 pandemic**

After the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) raided the Uttara and Mirpur locations of Regent Hospital (a private hospital) over fraud hospital business, Chairman Mohammad Shahed (Shahed Karim) went into hiding. According to RAB's investigation, he was providing fake COVID-19 certificates and stealing from patients. Two cases involving the alleged theft of Tk3.68 crore were filed in a Dhaka court, and the bench warrant for Shahed's arrest was issued on the second day [30]. In the trial, it was claimed that between 2017 and 2020, Shahed stole around Tk 12 crore [31]. In addition, between 2017 and 2020, he stole Tk 7.9 crore from 10 to 12 different individuals and organizations. Shahed also forged the COVID-19 test, which cost him about Tk 3 crore, in the early part of that year. It is believed that Shahed laundered the funds through a network of 43 bank accounts he set up in the names of fictional businesses such as Regent Hospital, Regent KCS Limited, and 12 others. After the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) filed charges in a Dhaka court alleging that Mr. Shahed stole money and property illegally, the court ordered the trial to officially begin [24–27].

### **CASE 3: big cheating with customers**

Mohammad Rassel, Evaly's founder, graduated from Dhaka University's Institute of Business Administration with an MBA (IBA). Initially in his career, he worked for Dhaka Bank. Upon leaving the bank, he went into business for himself, importing diapers under the "Kids" brand. When he was finished, he had Evaly all ready to go [32]. Evaly provides customers with a wide variety of attractive discounts, including "cash back" offers of up to 150%. Customers are drawn in by the discounts and make prepayments to Evaly for the merchandise. However, after waiting for a very long time and being repeatedly denied their request for a refund, they finally complained. Evaly received thousands of complaints because it took months for customers to receive their orders or their money back after the company took their money in advance for delivery within 45 days [7, 8, 33]. Allegedly, Tk 7–8 billion (700–800 crore) was stolen from the Evaly company [34]. Nearly Tk339 crore, or about \$70 million, was reported stolen from the e-commerce company's customers. The Ministry of Commerce has requested an investigation into allegations that the online marketplace Evaly stole Tk338.62 crore in prepayments for deals and discounts from its customers. Mohammad Rassel, MD, and Shamima Nasrin, Chairman and CEO of Evaly, were arrested by RAB on September 16, 2021. [35]. The company's liability was estimated to be around BDT 1 trillion at the time of the arrest, and there were 44 lakh customers registered with Evaly, according to a press briefing given by RAB the day after the arrest. Right now, the government is keeping an eye on Evaly's situation. Protests from angry customers demanding refunds began as soon as the couple was arrested from their shop, Evaly.

Besides these cases, there are uncounted number of incidents of corruption. Among them, Monir Hossain alias Golden Monir is significant to mention who was arrested along with a huge amount of money, arms, gold, and liquor worth of Tk 1050 Crore. In addition, Dr. Sabrina Arif Chowdhury, chairman of JKG Health Care and a NICVD registrar, was arrested for her alleged role in a COVID-19 testing scam (The Financial Express [36]. Additionally, the casino Samrat was also the talk of the town recently. Nonetheless, all the incidents are the examples of prevailing corruption in Bangladesh in which the Anti-Corruption Commission works to combat it.

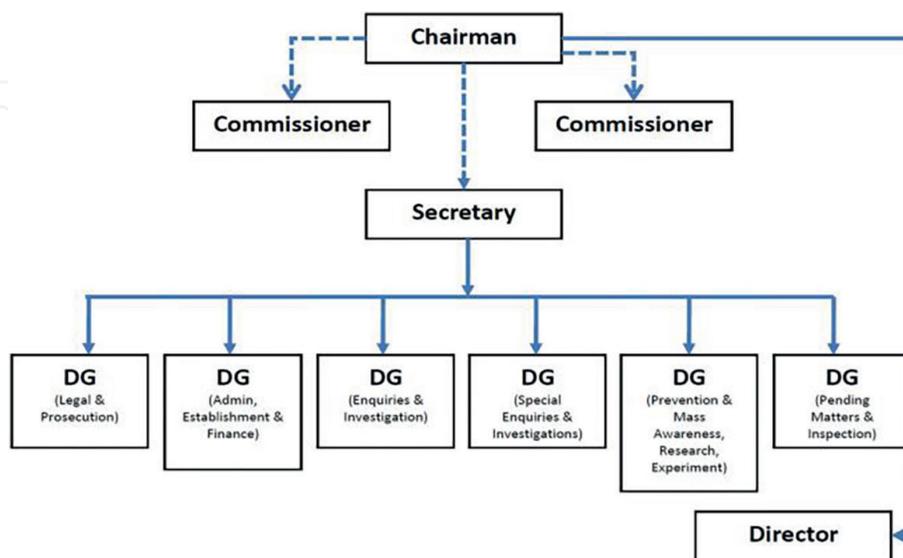
#### 4. How Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) operates in Bangladesh?

The Anti-Corruption Commission Act of 2004 establishes an independent Anti-Corruption Commission with the mandate to investigate and inquire into allegations of corruption as well as other specific offenses, and to take such other actions as may be necessary to prevent corruption and other corrupt practices within the country [37]. An Act was issued on 23 February 2004 that established the Anti-Corruption Commission, and it went into effect on 9 May 2004. Despite initially failing to have the desired effect, the ACC began its work with renewed vigor and impetus immediately following its reconstitution in February 2007, when it acceded to the United Nations' convention against corruption, which had been adopted by the General Assembly on 31 October 2003. The Anti-Corruption Commission Act of 2004 provides the legal foundation and mandate for the organization.

The government shall, as soon as practicable after the enactment of this Act, by notification in the official Gazette, establish a Commission to be known as the Anti-Corruption Commission for the purposes of this Act (Article 3/1). Article 32 establishes that the Commission shall function independently and without bias. The Commission shall have perpetual succession, a common seal, and the authority to acquire, hold, and dispose of property, both movable and immovable, and may sue and be sued in its own name in accordance with the provisions of this Act and the rules promulgated thereunder (Article 3/3). **Figure 2** spectacles the administrative body of the ACC by which it operates smoothly.

Based on the Article 17, the Commission may perform all or any of the following functions, namely:

- a. in order to inquire into and investigate the crimes listed in the Schedule;
- b. to bring charges under this Act based on the results of the inquiry and investigation performed under clause (a);



**Figure 2.** Administrative structure of anti-corruption commission [38].

- c. to investigate allegations of corruption either on its own initiative or in response to an application filed by a victim or his representative;
- d. to carry out any anti-corruption-related duty imposed on the Commission by applicable law;
- e. reviewing existing anti-corruption measures and making suggestions for improving their efficacy to the President;
- f. to make a plan for investigating how to cut down on graft and then advise the President on what he should do with the information gleaned from those investigations;
- g. to create a culture of trust by devising a strategy to examine how to reduce graft and subsequently advising the President on how to proceed with the information gleaned from those studies, and honesty to curb corruption and raise public awareness, we must take preventative measures and educate the public;
- h. to host meetings, gatherings, and events on topics within the Commission's purview;
- i. to analyze the social and economic conditions in Bangladesh in order to pinpoint the root causes of corruption and make policy recommendations to the president;
- j. to investigate allegations of wrongdoing, to file formal charges against those responsible, and to establish Commission procedures for approving those actions; and
- k. as deemed necessary for the elimination of corruption, to carry out additional tasks [37].

The time frame for the investigation is laid out in Article 20A as follows:

1. Regardless of any other law, the Investigating Officer has 120 working days from the date he or she is given authority under Section 20 to complete the investigation of the offenses listed in this Act and the Schedule;
2. If the investigation cannot be concluded within the allotted time for any reason, the investigating officer may grant additional time for the investigation to be concluded.

Besides, ACC Act, 2004 has special power to in respect of inquiry or investigation (Article 19), power of arrest (Article 21), and also has penalty system for giving false information (28C).

The commission has defined some forms of corruption in Bangladesh so that people can learn about them, make sense of them, and get ready to fight corruption head-on [39].

- a. **Bribery:** Bribery consists of offering a person money, services, or other valuables in exchange for a favor.

- b. **Embezzlement:** It is the illegal use of someone else's trust fund, property, or other valuables for one's own gain.
- c. **Extortion:** The term refers to the illegal seizing of something of value by means of force or threat of force. Extortion occurs in unusual situations, such as when armed police or military men demand money to allow you to pass through a roadblock.
- d. **Abuse of discretion:** Using one's position of authority for one's own financial gain, without any outside pressure or bribery. Such abuses are more common in bureaucracies where individuals are given wide latitude to make decisions, where there are few checks and balances, and where the decision-making rules are so complex that they nullify the effectiveness of those that do exist.
- e. **Improper political contributions:** Spending money to unduly sway an in-office political party or its members' actions in the here-and-now or in the future.

Moreover, the Anti-Corruption Commission established, in every district of Bangladesh, committees consisting of 10 individuals [24–27]. The Commission is responsible for:

- inquiry and investigation of the scheduled offenses on any allegation of corruption on own initiative, upon a person who has been wronged or by anyone on his or her behalf;
- filing and investigating cases based on investigation and evidence;
- encourage moral principles like transparency and fairness to curb corruption, and work to raise public consciousness about the issue; and
- Determine, in light of Bangladesh's socioeconomic context, the origins of the various forms of corruption that exist there, and propose solutions.

The ACC is authorized to conduct investigations and inquiries, including but not limited to the following: (a) issuing notices to witnesses, ensuring their appearance and interrogating them; discovering and presenting any document; (b) taking evidence; (c) requesting public records or certified copies of such records from any court office; (d) issuing notices for the interrogation of witnesses and the examination of documents; and (e) taking any other action necessary to realize and fulfill the purposes of this law [40].

## 5. The role of ACC minimizing corruptions in Bangladesh

The ACC's vision is "to ensure creating a strong anti-corruption culture that permeates throughout the whole society," and its mission is "to combat, control, prevent corruption relentlessly and promote good practices" [41]. To preclude corruption and the misdeeds linked with corruption in compliance with the [37], the tasks are to conduct inquiries, inspect corruption and other specified offenses, and discharge duties as a prosecuting agency ([42], p. 13). Correspondingly, in 2018, the commission made 57 arrests, while in 2019, the number rose to 123, which was about 116 percent higher

| Year | Number of complaints received | Number of enquiry initiated | Sent to various ministries for action | Number of cases filled in the years |
|------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2017 | 17,983                        | 937                         | 377                                   | 273                                 |
| 2018 | 16,606                        | 1265                        | 1404                                  | 216                                 |
| 2019 | 21,371                        | 1710                        | 3627                                  | 363                                 |
| 2020 | 18,489                        | 822                         | 2469                                  | 348                                 |
| 2021 | 14,789                        | 533                         | 2889                                  | 347                                 |

*Source: [6].*

**Table 1.**

*Comparative data of complaints received by the commission in last 5 years.*

than that of the preceding year [43]. However, ACC is playing a vital role to combat corruption from every sector in Bangladesh, especially from the government sectors.

According to [6], ACC played most significant role to take initiative against corruption. In **Table 1**, it spectacles the comparative scenarios of complaints received by ACC and their actions. In 2019, the highest numbers of complaints were submitted to the Commission. At the same time, the maximum number of complaints were forwarded to relevant ministries or departments for necessary action or for sending reports to the ACC after departmental enquiry. However, the present Commission has taken special initiatives to monitor responses from the relevant ministries or departments in taking administrative actions against the allegations. Regular follow-up meetings with the relevant departments are organized to get feedback about the actions taken on the complaints sent to them.

ACC has been convicted total 108 cases in inside Dhaka and 65 cases in outside of Dhaka in 2020. ACC also fine Tk 621,974,181 in inside of Dhaka and Tk 102,908,949 in outside of Dhaka in 2020. Besides, ACC has been convicted total 50 cases in Dhaka and 69 in outside of Dhaka. And with regard to the fine, ACC fine Tk 653,767,876 in Dhaka and Tk 98,067,441 in outside of Dhaka in the year of 2021.

### 5.1 Immediate action against corruption

The Anti-Corruption Commission launched a toll-free Hotline number (106) on 27 July 2017 to receive public complaints and prevent corruption instantly. In the very first week of the launch, about 75,000 phone calls were received. The AFP, The France24, the BBC, The Mail Online, The Deutsche Welle, The Qatar Post, The Herald, and many other media outlets worldwide published news pieces on this in different languages. This trend of reporting complaints to the Hotline continues as a routine activity. About 42 lakh (4.2 million) phone calls have been received since the inception of the Complaint Centre. Hotline services are conducted every working day from 9 am to 5 pm divided into four shifts. Five trained technicians of the Commission are providing this service. Activities of the Complaints Centre are digitally monitored. The ACC Complaints Centre (106) is being run under the close supervision of the Commission's senior officials. As a result, the quality and transparency of the campaign were increased. Due to the prima facie evidence of the allegations, formal enquiries were started into 203 allegations in the last 2 years. Moreover, eight cases were filed directly under the powers given by the latest amended Rule 10(f) (1) of the Anti-Corruption Commission. According to Rule 16 of the ACC Rules, 2007, with the approval of the Commission, criminals were arrested in four cases of bribery through Trap operation.

## **6. Limitations of Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) in Bangladesh**

Despite the Anti-Corruption Commission's (ACC) best efforts, corruption remains a problem in Bangladesh. ACC's investigations frequently get off to a good start but then head down the wrong path. The ACC has received numerous reports of corruption by public and commercial sector officials, but no adequate action has been taken to address these allegations. Given the substantial obstacles standing in the way of the Anti-Corruption Commission's efforts to become an effective entity in reducing corruption in Bangladesh.

### **6.1 Lack of coordination**

As a single entity, ACC is not sufficient. It is an integral aspect of the whole system of government. There are a number of organizations working together to combat corruption, and their efforts are bolstered by open lines of communication and cooperative strategies. There has been no actual cooperation between government agencies.

### **6.2 Zero-sum game of politics and corruption**

To many people in Bangladesh, politics has become a zero-sum game in which the victor receives complete power and all of the associated benefits. Many people view the government representative business and profit relationship as politically acceptable. Businesses, investors, recruiters, public contractors, land grabbers, extortionists, and the like might potentially run amok with such a massive majority. Low efficiency and purposeful delays in execution may continue to cost Bangladesh several times more than in other nations due to corruption in the planning, design, and budgeting of infrastructure projects, as well as contracting that is driven by conflicts of interest. In a sector where accountability mechanisms are poor, unethical business practices are uncommon, and self-regulation is a rarity, the challenge for ACC is much more daunting now that the kingpins of loan default and banking fraud are well situated in crucial positions.

### **6.3 Challenges ahead**

For the foreseeable future, the ACC should be ready to face the repercussions of some of the most serious problems posed by a government founded on the basis of astonishing election results, where almost all of the political space has become institutionally monopolized by the ruling party. Lacking practically all traditional institutions of accountability and checks and balances, those in power often use their majorities to enrich themselves personally and financially by seizing control of all facets of government. The misuse of authority has quickly become the norm in today's society, and ACC is failing to go against them regarding inspection and jurisdiction of corruption.

### **6.4 Managing conflict of interest**

Frequently blurring the lines between public and private matters is a major contributor to corruption in Bangladesh, which is inextricably linked to the country's highly intertwined political and economic systems. Almost no elected or appointed public officials seem to understand the importance of avoiding conflicts of interest. To safeguard and advance the public interest, decision-makers must be held accountable for basing their votes solely on the merits of the issue at hand, rather than on

their allegiance to any particular interest group or special interest. Opportunities for corruption is leading to turf wars between different parts of segments of the power structure and their minions, keeping the ACC busier than ever before but ACC is not doing up to the mark to control this situation.

### **6.5 Small-scale preventive activities**

However, the Commission's spectrum of preventative efforts is limited and fragmented, meaning that its awareness message is not reaching a sizable population. When compared to the size of the population and the available funds, the current staffing and funding levels fall far short.

### **6.6 Lack of political commitment**

An important factor in determining ACC's autonomy is political will. Organizational effectiveness depends on cooperation from the ruling political party. It is common practice for the dominant political parties in Bangladesh to use this institution as a tool to silence the opposition.

### **6.7 Accountability and oversight**

Inasmuch as the ACC's monitoring and evaluation unit is not open to public participation, it lacks internal accountability and external supervision mechanisms. Not a single scholarly or parliamentary debate has been held on its findings.

### **6.8 Legal constraints**

The ACC is legally reliant on the government for funding according to the Act of 2004, which mandates that the government must annually approve the ACC's budget. Because of this, the commission's ability to function independently is compromised.

### **6.9 Lack of transparency**

The commission's information system is poorly managed. Information has been leaking out of the office on a regular basis. The main site lacks recent and relevant content and is poorly equipped.

### **6.10 Resources**

When put next to the size of the country's population and its overall budget, the commission's allocation falls far short (only 0.025 percent of the budget). There is an insufficiency of personnel and regional representation due to cuts made during the caretaker government's term (2007–2008).

### **6.11 Insufficient manpower**

At least at its headquarters, the ACC has hired several former BAC employees. However, in the field, under-staffing continues to be an issue, in addition to problems with credibility and knowledge. Offices of the ACC found in the field often suffer from inadequate facilities, sluggish logistics, and a shortage of personnel.

## **6.12 Lack of infrastructure**

The anti-corruption effort has been hampered by the decision to cut the number of district offices from 66 to 22. ACC's 22 consolidated offices confront difficulties providing service to all districts. People in areas without an ACC office cannot get those services since it is inconvenient for them to travel long distances to lodge complaints.

## **6.13 Lack of skill**

Professionally competent professionals are in short supply. Staff turnover makes investigations less effective, while more experienced members of staff are not up to speed on the most recent methods of money laundering and technological advancements.

## **6.14 Failure to involve people**

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has not effectively engaged key stakeholders in the fight against corruption. Where there was once a surge of interest and activity, it has since died down. An outstanding instance of this occurred in 2007 during the interim government. The Jessore (one of the district) CPC presented the best CPC program ever in Jessore on March 23 with a rally. Participants came from all throughout the district and represented a wide range of demographics and socio-economic statuses. More individuals could be seen praying outside on the grounds of the eidgah (a mosque used during the Muslim holiday of Eid). People today are not becoming involved, and as a result, the CPCs have lost their zeal for their task. There have been recent protests held under the guise of CPCs, but a large majority of them have actually been coordinated by the ACC or another government agency. Extremely few average people take part in these kinds of initiatives. To file a complaint, for instance, you can fill out a form provided by the ACC; nevertheless, only one charge has ever been submitted at a CPC event.

## **6.15 External and internal predicaments**

Overall, the history of ACC's use demonstrates that both internal and external issues have limited the program's efficacy. ACC has always been subject to political and administrative influence and control from the outside, while internally it has been far from capable of fulfilling its purpose to take action against corruption without regard to the identity or standing of the individual involved. A lack of boldness and professional competence befitting their prominent position of public interest appears to be the result of a belief that they have much to lose if they ignore and reject external influences.

## **7. Conclusion and recommendations**

Corruption is not uncommon in public and private sectors in Bangladesh, and Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) is always ready to take initiative against the corrupted persons and institutions. In spite of proactive role of ACC, corruption still prevail in the government sectors in Bangladesh in some extent. There is the power

of ACC to take direct and indirect actions against the perpetrators. Though the ACC's role taking actions against corruption is appreciable, they have some limitations to overcome. While political will is lacking, the legal, political, and practical hurdles to establishing an independent and effective ACC are eroding. Multiple constraints have plagued ACC from the start. Below are some suggestions for reducing the impact of bottlenecks:

- Reorganizing the ACC's jurisdiction and authority to meet modern needs is essential.
- ACC should be called in only when the stakes involve government interests and assets.
- The officials at the ACC must have the requisite knowledge, experience, and capacity to effectively manage the court and its operations.
- To deal with the most recent kind of corruption, substantial technical integration is required.
- Institutional digitalization, speedy investigation, and an easily available information system are necessary for this.
- If employees engage in any form of misconduct, a culture of zero tolerance must be fostered.
- It is necessary to have political dedication and comprehensiveness in order to have independence and effectiveness.
- All institutions, but especially the police, the NBR, the tax authority, and the judiciary, need to have good governance in place.
- People should be able to easily get information as much as they want to about both public and private institutions; hence, it is important that they be placed under a system of strong accountability and transparency.
- The Chairman and Commissioners must be objective, charismatic, and fearless in their pursuit of the truth. With their voices, members of a free and fair society can exert influence.
- To improve access, openness, and accountability, the Right to Information (RTI) Act should be fully and extensively implemented in all corporate and governmental institutions.
- TIB, SUJAN, and other civil society organizations should keep pushing until they win significant reforms in governance, such as a more robust ACC.
- The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) is a part of a larger system called the National Integrity System (NIS), which works to combat corruption through strengthening the country's institutions. The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) is insufficient for achieving thorough anti-corruption results on its own.

- The ACC is most effective when all relevant institutions, including the judiciary, police, and other law enforcement agencies, the public service, the private sector, the public procurement system, and the media, uphold the highest standards of integrity, efficiency, and professionalism.
- Further research study is necessary to explore more gap and limitation of the ACC with regard to ensure the accountability and transparency.

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