Disaster Accountability Framework of Bangladesh: An Analysis of Strengths and Gaps

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ABSTRACT: This research aims to critically analyze the manifestation of accountability issues in disaster related major policies of Bangladesh as well as its field level implications. For that purpose, five major policies related to the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) of Bangladesh have been meticulously selected and analyzed. Critical analysis of the policy contents with regard to a model accountability framework has been principally adopted to derive the insights. Key Informant Interview (KII) with experts in the relevant fields has been considered for empirical data collection on accountability practices. The findings reveal existence of well-articulated accountability principles implanted into the policy dictates alongside weak institutional arrangements and governance mechanism to implement them at the empirical level. However, the remarkable progress of Bangladesh in disaster risk management against the partially dysfunctional accountability framework seemingly takes place by reaping benefits from indigenous knowledge and community based adaptive practices. The policy makers need to better understand the institutional mechanisms as well as the community level practices for DRR and finally mainstream them in the policy making process. The findings will potentially serve as a standard assessment of the current status of disaster risk governance in Bangladesh.

Keywords: Accountability; Public Policy; Good Governance; Disaster Risk Governance

INTRODUCTION

Background

In democratic socio-political context, different measures are taken into account in evaluating the quality of governance system but accountability has been referred as the most critical and common form of variable to be considered for such kind of analyses (Gall *et al.*, 2014; Huque, 2011). Accountability or, system of answerability, forms the institutional basis for sustaining good governance. The meta-analysis by Doeveren (2011) on the building blocks of good governance reveals that several donor agencies and eminent scholars in this field have considered accountability as the benchmark indicator for the performance analysis of aid recipient governments.

The Governance standard of a system is ideally reflected through the accountability structure laid to ensure institutional obligation of the executive bodies. Therefore, robust accountability framework has been accredited by several researchers as the substantial and generalized indicator of good governance. The implication of accountability in disaster risk governance has been accentuated in recent years mainly since the adoption of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) in 2015. The framework urged nations to develop definite accountability standard to be followed by national governments in ensuring proper risk governance at all levels. Previous studies suggest that the existing accountability structures rooted in national risk governance frameworks of most of the nations were failing to ensure active persuasion of risk reduction and prevention measures (Coskun, 2013; UNDRR, 2019). Hence, periodic reviews of the accountability aspects in disaster risk governance frameworks at the state level have been termed as a pre-requisite for implementing the resilience agenda as emphasized by the SFDRR. Governance, in risk management context, covers a vast range of regulatory interventions as it includes "totality of actors, rules, conventions, processes and mechanisms concerned with how relevant risk information is collected, analyzed and communicated and management decisions are taken" (UNDRR, 2019). Comprehensive risk governance framework of a nation consists of the institutional arrangements and the policy instruments that direct and confine the collective actions of a group, society,

or community to regulate, mitigate, or control potential risk factors related to natural phenomena, events, or hazards (Briceño, 2018; Renn *et al.*, 2018). In this study, it is challenging to analyze all of the components of the framework. Concision of the areas of concentration helps articulate in-depth analysis. Hence, this paper aims to analyze the accountability framework as reflected in some of the major policy instruments developed for disaster risk management purposes in Bangladesh. The Government of Bangladesh (GoB) has formulated national level risk management policies and acts in line with the international Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) principles. This research focuses on a methodical assessment of the strengths and weakness of the accountability mechanisms both in policy and practices as outlined in major disaster risk reduction policies of the country. Through analyzing the manifestation of accountability issues, the study aspires to conduct an assessment of the existing state of disaster risk governance in Bangladesh that has remained an under researched area so far.

Theory and Research

In literal term, 'accountability' has been referred by Gusinsky *et al.* (2015) as "an obligation of answerability of members of a given administrative or representative institution, its parent institutions or their representatives and, ultimately, society itself ". In public sphere, it relates to supervision or monitoring, evaluation and, often, conservation of ethical principles while performing public welfare activities. In the context of public governance, the concept of accountability is reflected through components like responsibility, social control, public participation and disclosure or transparency (Gusinsky *et al.,* 2015). Accountability plays significantly important role in the realm of public administration as the efficiency of public welfare activities is greatly influenced by the transparency and answerability of public institutions. Christie (2018) viewed accountability of public administrators to be multidimensional (i.e. political, administrative, professional, social and ethical) in nature and explained the features of different dimensions in a single comprehensive framework. The framework considers each dimension as distinct system with definite goals, values, conceptions, structures, methods of assuring accountability and evaluative criteria. Political and administrative dimensions of the framework appear most relevant with the subject matter of this research. The performance for administrative accountability has been evaluated by applying tools such as monitoring, auditing and outcome assessment while political accountability is expected to be established through overview or monitoring of executive behavior by democratically legitimized bodies. Mees and Driessen (2019) studied the accountability of interactive governance arrangements for local adaptation to climate change in the context of Netherlands. Their accountability evaluation framework comprised of five core elements - clear responsibilities and mandates, political oversight, transparency, citizen control, and checks and sanctions. The United Nations has an accountability framework comprising of three key elements - political covenant with member states, internal control and the complaints and response mechanism. UN recommends that any accountability framework should be led by five key principles: values and examples, information and communication, motivation, guidance and discipline, participation (Zahran, 2011). A number of UN organizations have their stand-alone accountability framework based on which the organizational performance is evaluated. Table 1 compiles the core principles of the accountability framework adopted by some UN organizations.

Table 1: Core Principles of the Accountability Frameworks of Some UN Organizations, Source: Author's Compilation

Organization's name	United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	World Health Organization (WHO)	International Labour Organization (ILO)	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)
	Mutual accountability and clarity of organizational responsibility	Mutual accountability and clarity of organizational responsibility	Mutual accountability and clarity of organizational responsibility	Clarity of responsibility Alignment of accountability	Mutual accountability and clarity of organizational responsibility

Organization's name	United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	World Health Organization (WHO)	International Labour Organization (ILO)	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)
Core principles	Managerial accountability for programme results Formal and consistent delegation of authority Risk and cost-benefit considerations in decision-making. Reliable and verifiable performance monitoring and reporting	Alignment with corporate goals and accountability Formal and consistent delegation of authority Risk and cost-benefit considerations in decision-making Reliable and verifiable performance monitoring and reporting Highest standards of personal integrity	Alignment of strategic direction and results with accountability. Individual and collective commitment Highest standards of personal integrity Transparency Balanced expectations and capacity Continuous monitoring and learning	with organization-wide goals Delegation of authority Cost-benefit considerations Performance monitoring and reporting Highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct	Alignment with corporate goals and accountability Formal and consistent delegation of authority Risk and cost-benefit considerations in decision-making Reliable and verifiable performance monitoring and reporting Highest standards of personal integrity Transparency

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Amaratunga *et al.,* (2016) suggested a potential social accountability framework to be considered for inclusion in a national disaster management plan that identified several innovative principles and components of accountability including – broadly defined and long-term process, delineation of accountable authorities and responsibilities/mandates, stakeholder participation, partnership and collaboration, penalties and incentives, regulatory bodies, external actors, broad participation and public involvement, and monitoring process. Bayrakçı *et al.,* (2012) also identified important features of a well-sustained and exemplary policy accountability framework which include clear delineation of roles and responsibilities of actors and institutions, definition of distinct and unambiguous performance

expectations from the actors and parties involved; pragmatic and periodic monitoring, review and correction strategy and mechanism for disclosure of information on achievements and letdowns through reporting and information sharing.

This particular study has developed a standard policy analytical framework in evaluating manifestation of accountability components in DRR related public policies of Bangladesh principally adopting context specific components from the accountability framework defined by Amaratunga *et al.,* (2016). The components considered in the framework (Fig. 1) have also been commonly emphasized by most of the reviewed literatures as the principle elements of a well-structured policy accountability mechanism. The components include- clear delineation of roles,

responsibilities and mandates, inter-organizational partnership and collaboration, stakeholder and public participation, monitoring strategy to overview implementation and penalty and incentive mechanism.

Figure 1: Components of the Considered Policy Accountability Framework, Source: Author's Compilation

Roles and responsibilities of the actors and parties acting within a common accountability framework must be clearly delineated, agreed upon and comprehended correctly by the stakeholders (Bayrakçı et al., 2012). It is important to identify the authorities and institutions that are to be held accountable along with their mandated roles and responsibilities since clear understanding of the legal and moral obligations of the executive bodies helps develop performance indicators and reduce overlapping of responsibilities and confusions. Stakeholder participation is critical towards accountable system as stakeholders can significantly impact at all phases of public policy process; formulation, implementation, evaluation and monitoring. Moreover, policy implementation is a fragmented process involving numerous actors, organizations and networks (Leite and Buainain, 2013) and therefore, lack of inter-organizational coordination and partnership results in reduced accountability and cross organizational collaboration potentials (Koivisto and Nohrstedt, 2017). Reviewing and monitoring tools meant for regulatory bodies or strategic monitoring mechanisms are also critically important in maintaining check and balance within a predefined accountability context. Penalties and incentives are vital in ensuring adherence to accountability principles. It is important to ensure that actors and institutions failing to comply with the

regulations should be penalized and whilst efficient completion of them should be acknowledged.

METHODOLOGY

This study has adopted a qualitative research methodology which involves the use of observational, communicative, and documentary methods in natural settings in an effort to understand the social world (Sadovnik *et al.,* 2007). The data collection methodologies in qualitative research have also been acknowledged for the characteristics of abstraction and generalization. This paper mainly deploys Key Informant Interview (KII) and content analysis techniques in order to collect the data and analyze them.

In the first stage of the research, the authors have scanned the available policy documents related to disaster risk reduction in Bangladesh and identified five most important documents which are relevant with the research purpose. The five policies include Standing Order on Disasters 2019 (SOD), National Disaster Management Act 2012 (DMA), National Disaster Management Policy 2015 (NDMP), National Plan for Disaster Management 2016-2020 (NPDM), and Emergency Response Preparedness Plan 2014 (ERPP). Afterwards, the contents of the selected documents have been reviewed by using the accountability framework developed in this study. The framework includes five components and the relevant information embedded in those policy documents has been categorically extracted. This analysis has helped to find out the reflections of the accountability framework in the contents of the policy documents. In the second stage, the research team has selected 6 key informants for interviewing and knowing more about the existing condition of the accountability framework in the selected public policies as well as the ground level realities of accountability. KII is a powerful tool to collect rich and detailed information in the qualitative research (Ali et. al., 2013). The informants were the professionals and experts who have the firsthand information and knowledge about the disaster accountability framework of Bangladesh. A meticulous selection process was followed to choose the informants and the selection was limited to social activists, academicians, bureaucrats, NGO heads etc. Semi-structured questionnaire has been used during the interview process and each of the informants has been independently interviewed with the questionnaire for almost one hour. The questions focused on the reflection of the components of the accountability

framework in those policies, specific strength and weakness in them, practical conditions of accountability in the context of disaster risk reduction of Bangladesh, and recommendations for improving the conditions of accountability. The findings from the literature review and subsequent content analysis of the policies have helped to develop the theoretical insights in this paper. The KIIs have been useful to develop the empirical insights which have played the complementary role for integrating the reality with the theoretical understanding.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Results from the Content Analysis

The Standing Order on Disasters (SOD) was initially issued in 1997 and later revised in 2010 and 2019. The SOD 2019 has been selected for this research. After SOD, the next big step for the Government of Bangladesh in disaster management context was the formulation of National Plan for Disaster Management (NPDM) in 2010. The plan was updated

in 2016 and it has been considered for analysis in this research. Disaster Management Act (DMA) was passed in the parliament in 2012 for providing the legal thrust to the disaster management framework of the country. The Disaster Management Policy (DMP) was finalized in 2015 with the aim to strengthen governance and capacity for disaster management in Bangladesh. These are the four major disaster related public policies in Bangladesh and these documents have been analyzed critically to draw inferences on the components of accountability framework. In addition, the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) working in the field of humanitarian assistance in the country have also developed one major policy document, the Emergency Response Preparedness Plan (ERPP) in 2014 to coordinate their emergency management related activities. ERPP has also been considered for analysis in this research. Table 2 provides a brief outline of the major contents and themes of the five documents which have been analyzed in this paper.

Table 2: Key Themes of the Analyzed Policy Documents, Source: Developed by the Authors

Standing Orders on Disasters (SOD)	Disaster Management ACT (DMA)	National Plan for Disaster Management (NPDM)	Disaster Management Policy (DMP)	Emergency Response Plan (ERPP)
• Provides "Best Practice Models" at all levels of administration. • Foundation for the risk governance in Bangladesh • Specific focus on the roles and responsibilities.	• Legal Framework for Disaster Management on the basis of SOD and DMP.	• "Whole of Government" approach. • Resilience is a key priority • "White Paper Document" of the government for disaster risk governance • Disaster development linkage.	• Hazard based representation of the SOD. • Participation as the key agenda for developing comprehensive disaster management. • Inclusivity is also a priority issue of the disaster management.	• Optimizes the speed and volume of critical assistance delivered immediately after an emergency • SOD for the Non-Government Agencies.

Roles and Responsibilities

The SOD outlines the formulation of several coordination committees and councils for Disaster Management from the apex level of administration to

the bottom of the tier. Detailed roles and responsibilities of those councils, inter or intra ministerial committees and local level administrative bodies including field administration and local government have been mentioned in SOD. The

instructions in SOD have discretely addressed the roles and responsibilities for risk reduction and emergency response. The DMA provides the legal basis for the mentioned roles and responsibilities of the committees, ministries and personnel outlined in SOD and other documents. The DMP has also outlined the roles and responsibilities from a hazard focused perspective. Like SOD, the instructions have also been classified separately for the risk reduction period and the emergency period. The responsibilities of the designated institutions and personnel to implement the decisions taken by the top level councils or committees have been clearly articulated in DMP. The NPDM has realigned the roles and responsibilities of actors and parties with SOD, DMP and SFDRR. This plan has a distinct section delineating the accountability framework in ensuring proper implementation of the plan. One of the key mechanisms of this accountability framework is the provision of disaster management focal point, namely, Ministry, Department and Agency Focal Point to coordinate activities and interventions of ministries, departments, research organizations, donor agencies and NGOs. The ERPP, more or less, has emphasized the roles and responsibilities of the humanitarian agencies working in the country. There are two sets of guidelines, namely Minimum Preparedness Actions (MPAs) and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that clearly define what role the humanitarian agencies should play in the preparation phase as well as the response phase of disasters. But the presence of the complex rules and procedures along with weak institutional support to materialize them has been a common problem for implementing the accountability framework or other components of the good governance agenda in Bangladesh (Huque, 2011; Jones *et al.*, 2014; Ansari and Hore, 2009).

Stakeholder and Public Participation

The SOD has the provision to form National Disaster Management Council (NDMC) at the top of DM administration which literally encourages the participation of different stakeholders. NDMC incorporates representatives from government, NGOs, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and United Nations (UN). Top level committees may have several sub committees which can also co-opt relevant experts in the committees. The DMA legitimizes the provision of the participation of general citizens and the stakeholders in SOD and other public policy documents. The section on supporting people who are at risk and vulnerable prioritizes providing support to the aged, women, children and handicapped people as well as disadvantaged indigenous and tribal groups. The instructions in SOD and DMA for promoting participatory practices mainly revolve around the sections on roles and responsibilities. Both DMP and NPDM break this trend by producing and incorporating different sections on participation. There are several provisions in DMP on the engagement of different stakeholders in disaster management activities. Private commercial enterprises have been encouraged to expand their Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR) activities for disaster risk reduction. It has also underlined the issue of specialized treatment to the vulnerable groups like destitute women, children, senior citizens, handicapped, and ethnic minorities. Inclusion of different stakeholders and their effective participation have been admitted as one of the underlying strategies for achieving the targets of NPDM where two major areas of inclusion principle have been incorporated; women and people with vulnerability. Risk proofing investments, business continuity plans and funding DM projects by the private sector have also been introduced in NPDM. The humanitarian agencies are part of the larger stakeholders in the disaster management framework of the country.

Partnership and Collaboration

The first ever comprehensive guiding document in the field of disaster management in Bangladesh, SOD promptly stresses over partnership and collaboration principles. There are guidelines in the SOD on how different ministries and different forces of the government should collaborate and develop partnership while working in different phases of disaster management. The committees in the top level can decide about need based partnership strategies. The local level committees are also supposed to collaborate with different government offices, i.e. the city corporation DM committee coordinates with utility services for restoring lifeline services. The DMA reinforces the guidelines for partnership and collaboration among different branches and offices of government with legal foundation. The Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief has been selected as the nodal agency in regulating the partnership and collaboration among the agencies. The provisions of DMA have been articulated in such a way so that different government agencies can avoid any kind of conflict of interests while working together. There are 14 specific types of hazards for which the mechanisms of risk management and emergency response have

been identified in the DMP. Partnership and collaboration among all the government agencies and with non-governmental organizations have been frequently mentioned as the general mechanism to implement policies. The policy also emphasizes the importance of necessary institutional reforms to strengthen this purpose. For example, during the emergency situation the support from the armed forces becomes necessary and civil government officials should be trained up about the coordination strategies with the military bureaucracy. The NPDM has provided directions to undertake inter-ministerial coordination for developing sectoral policies and enhancing capacity building. The relevant policies, protocols and legislations in this regard should also be regularly updated in a risk informed way. The ERPP has brought the newest approach of inter-agency collaboration for Non-governmental Organizations called cluster-based collaboration which would be hazard specific clusters. The MPAs of the ERPP focus on the coordination strategies which provide direction on how the individual organizations or their federations should cooperate with government in different phases of disaster management. On different issues like joint needs assessment, declaring state of emergency etc., the SOPs provide directions on working in collaboration with the government.

Monitoring

Most of the committees that will be formed under SOD are supposed to monitor the response, relief operations, and equipment supplies and determine the priorities during the emergency times. They are also instructed to look after the existing facilities to get prepared for the future emergencies on a regular basis. At district level, the disaster management committees should arrange regular meetings, train the professionals and prepare annual monitoring reports like hazard and risk assessment reports and update it every year. The DMA has entitled some groups with the delegated authority to conduct the monitoring activities. National Disaster Response Coordination Group has the authority to evaluate the emergency situations, ensure the speedy delivery of supplies, telecast the hazards signals, and manage the flow of necessary manpower. The DMP mentions about mainstreaming the DRR as a tool to monitor the disaster management activities in the country. For example, the sectoral policies like agricultural policy should be formulated in harmony with the SOD. Educational institutions should be used as shelters during the disaster. The monitoring mechanisms addressed in NPDM consist of regular assessment of technical, financial and administrative management capacity to deal with the risks at different levels as identified in the SOD. The SOPs in the ERPP consist of a number of meetings during and after the emergency situations. Several personnel and agencies are entitled with the responsibilities to collect information on donor funding and resource mobilization.

Penalties and Incentives

There are provisions in SOD for adopting legislations to support regulations and mechanisms to promote incentives for undertaking risk reduction and mitigation activities. And whilst the highest bodies of administration are allowed to allocate resources as per plan and strategies. The DMA has the strongest provisions amongst the reviewed documents in terms of penalties and incentives. Every citizen or beneficiary has the legal right to lodge complaint to the local and national level committees or to the designated personnel against any visible irregularities and mismanagement or misbehavior caused due to any decisions taken by the government. The committees or the personnel are instructed to resolve the issue within 30 days from the date of application. The authorities can adopt punitive measures, physical or financial, against anybody for not complying with the instructions, providing false and fake information, abuse of resources, illegal stockpiling and price hike in the disaster affected areas, yellow journalism etc. However, incentives like prizes or special allowances and other pays have also been encouraged. DMP as well as ERPP have no implicit or explicit guidelines in this regard. NPDM encourages the establishment of necessary mechanisms and incentives to ensure high levels of compliance with the existing safety-enhancing provisions of sectoral laws and regulations.

The following table (Table 3) lays out the key findings of the accountability components from the content analysis of the five policies in this research.

Table 3: Findings on the Components of Accountability Framework, Source: Developed by the Authors

	Standing Orders on Disasters (SOD)	Disaster Management ACT (DMA)	National Plan for Disaster Management (NPDM)	Disaster Management Policy (DMP)	Emergency Response Plan (ERPP)
Roles and Responsibilities	• Distinct guidelines for committees/agencies at local/national level.	• Legal thrust for responsibilities outlined in SOD, DMP and other documents	• Develops coherence among SOD, DMA, Sendai Framework and Agenda 2030	• Hazard specific roles and responsibility	• MPAs for emergency conditions
Stakeholder and public participation	• Forums and committees have to include NGOs, CSOs & citizens. • Bureaucrats are responsible for public engagement	• Participation principles should adhere to SOD and DMP. • Guidelines in the policies should not contradict	• Encourages private sector investment in DRR.	• Multi-dimensional culture of participation. • Participatory disaster risk management. •	• Inter-agency collaboration strategies. • Participation of Humanitarian response group/ agencies
Partnership and collaboration	• MoDMR as nodal agency. • Guidelines for government entities to work jointly.	• Partnership should follow SOD procedures and sometimes by the agencies' own discretion.	• Coordinated actions to achieve same end result • Decentralization of partnership.	• Institutional reforms to speed up collaboration. • MoDMR as the lead.	• MPAs and SOPs delineate the details of working, • Guidelines on seeking support or providing assistance to government.
Monitoring process	• MoDMR needs to oversee. • Self-performance assessment.	• Agencies can develop recommendations based on monitoring	• Assessment based on the linkage of the policy and operations. • Disaster Impact Assessment	• Monitoring through mainstreaming DRR. • Online database management	• Daily situation reports during the emergency
Penalties and incentives	• Incentives with legal basis.	• Legal provisions for incentives &punishment for the perpetrators.	• Encourage Incentives to ensure compliance	• Implicit reference to SOD guidelines in this regard.	• No explicit or implicit reference or guidelines.

Findings from KII

The content analysis reveals that almost all of the components of the applied accountability framework are present with varying weights; in the analyzed policies and act. To justify the viability and reliability of these findings, a number of KIIs have been conducted. It has been acknowledged by the expert respondents that the components of the analytical framework have already been addressed by the policies. A strong presence of the accountability related components has been ensured at the national

level risk management documents in coherence with the international principles and standards. But some challenging factors cut across the accountability components during the implementation phases.

Among the studied documents the SOD 2019 and DMA with significant importance identified and created mandates for the disaster management committees at all tiers of administration to conduct consultation meetings on periodic basis with the stakeholders. Due to some constraints, the mandates are not always appropriately implemented. Empirical evidences from the local levels and discussions suggest that the committees remain dysfunctional most of the time and only become active, rather reactive during the emergency periods. The accountability mechanism is highly centralized which mainly revolves around the superior levels of committees. Hence the actual roles and responsibilities are not being pursued diligently by everyone neither they are held accountable by the superior authority.

Different administrative bodies and officials in the DM process often experience conflicts of interests and confusion in collaborative operations which creates a tendency to not to work in partnership further. The policies cannot materialize the specific articulations of responsibilities in the case of multi authoritative regulatory orders and consequently, the accountability of any single agency or person often does not get assured. This issue also becomes complex due to the lack of adequate cooperation among the agencies. For example, there are more than 54 government agencies working for the urban utility services in Dhaka city leading to inter-agency conflicts, repetitions and overlapping of responsibilities as well as wastage of public resources. There is also a lack of information sharing practices among the agencies i.e., the Fire Service and Civil Defense (FSCD) department does not get adequate traffic information while reaching to the affected spot which results into a delayed response.

The participation of the stakeholders in the field level committees and meetings suffers from two major types of hindrances. Firstly, the interference by the political process creates an imbalance within the existing regulatory mechanisms. This often creates one kind of tokenism as the political forces do not always represent the people and involve in power politics as well as render rent seeking activities. On the other hand, the field level experience demonstrates unprofessional, indisposed attitude of some officials to

involve the diverse groups and stakeholders and thus reluctant to follow the inclusiveness principle. This particular aspect of accountability failure is also reinforced by the mass public ignorance and disrespect for the rules and regulations for disaster risk reduction. Many high-rise buildings across the country have been built without complying with the standard practices and codes. Despite repetitive fire hazards, a large number of people reportedly use inflammable products in the interior design of their houses. However, the economic hardships sometimes force the poor urban population to inadvertently overlook the highly risky living conditions and violate the rules and regulations placed to ensure their protection and safety from hazards.

The monitoring mechanism in disaster management is dependent primarily on paper based reporting and reportedly it is also not free from bias. The mushrooming of dense settlements by ignoring the building codes and other relevant policies in the major cities of the country for last 20-25 years stands as a solid proof of the dysfunctional monitoring mechanism. In addition, there is no third party assessment of the performance reports. The government agencies evaluate their own performances or Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief looks after it. But a third party based monitoring will be helpful to ensure check and balance in the system.

In last two decades, numerous incidents of fire hazard, building collapse, road accident have happened in the country. These kinds of incidents are quite persistent lately and unexpected casualties regularly happen from those occurrences. But so far nobody has been punished for these types of human made disasters. The DMA has laid out some punitive mechanisms for the violation of the regulations but no accused could be held penalized in real life conditions. As the perpetrators are not being held accountable and released without any punishment, these kinds of hazards continue to increase. People, more in number, violate the regulations contributing to increased risk for everyone. Some strengths and weaknesses of the existing accountability frameworks identified by the Key informants have been listed in the following table (Table 4)

Table 4: Strengths and Weaknesses of the Existing Accountability Frameworks

STRENGTH	WEAKNESS
• Enriched theoretical framework • Available implementing agencies • Career service bureaucrats at field • Detailed analysis of hazard context • Coherence to global policies	• Inadequate supervision • Insufficient provision on 'financial accountability' • Cannot resolve conflicts of interest • No third party monitoring or external assessment • Have not hold anyone accountable ever

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The research findings reveal two glaring facts about the existing state of accountability framework for disaster risk governance in Bangladesh. On the one hand, the essence of the framework has been moderately established by the policy dictates. But at the operational level, lots of loopholes exist which continue to threaten the understanding of accountability framework by the people. The lower ranking of Bangladesh in terms of "voice and accountability" of the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) over the last decade also supports the existence of inadequate accountability practices in the country. As accountability impacts the entire scheme of governance, and therefore, lower performances of accountability results in empirically futile governance framework. Despite the existence of this dichotomy, Bangladesh has made remarkable success in reducing the disaster vulnerability of a large number of people. The United Nations has dubbed Bangladesh as the role model of disaster management in the world. The head of the state has also received several acknowledgements for her pioneering and innovative leadership roles in disaster management and climate change related affairs. The key determinant behind this exemplary disaster management can be explained by the development of community resilience and the application of indigenous knowledge and innovations by the people. Community people in Bangladesh, particularly those inhabited along the most disaster-prone locations of the country, have grown intrinsic resilience through a process of innovation and adaptation, variety of coping strategies and techniques that are well-adjusted to the local environment, economic and socio-cultural arrangements.

It has been reported that the components of accountability framework; roles and responsibilities, stakeholder and public participation, partnership and collaboration, monitoring and finally penalties and incentives, despite having strong legal foundation often fail to meet the desired outcome. It is about deep rooted administrative culture that demonstrates bureaucrats as the 'master of general public' and the scarcity of 'Prospective partner' hinder effective participation and collaboration of individual and development agencies. The provision of monitoring by the implementing agency itself facilitates negligence to work, corruption, etc. Inception of third party monitoring is a must to ensure efficient implementation of the policies. The general people who would take part in the committee meetings should be made trained and aware of the policy provisions regarding their rights and responsibilities. Bangladesh has got both human and material resource gaps; effective partnership should be encouraged especially with international agencies at the top and with NGOs at the local level to reduce these gaps. The officials of the concerned agencies should also be trained on planning, controlling, supervision, monitoring so that the scarce resources can be efficiently utilized. Further research and in-depth study in this field might aid to generate insights on multifaceted dynamics associated with the discussed gaps, externalities and prospects.

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