

# GOVERNANCE

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## Microgovernance in Bangladesh: an effective tool of good governance

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With the emergence of new forces of globalization, the idea of politics and management has been changing fundamentally. Scholars from across a variety of disciplines and academic schools are trying to incarcerate the implication of these changes both in theoretically and conceptually. The neo-liberal discourse of governance has popularized the ideas of extended role of markets, civic engagement and network cooperation. The new strategies of 'smart regulation' 'cooperative regulation', 'self-regulation', 'social regulation' and 'bottom-up', and 'results-oriented' approaches have been emerged in the shadow of the state or in the absence of the state in all over the World. Many scholars perceived these shifting trends of governance as 'from politics to markets' or as a move 'from government to governance'. Some treated governance from above, beyond and without State and argued that a new mentality of rule has been emerged in which direct state command and control are being substituted by indirect rules and norms and form a 'regulated self-regulation' style of governance mechanism Others have a preference to stress on 'society-centred' approaches with focus on the consequences of living in a 'risk-society' in which preventative governance becomes more important Many of them are speculate on the regulatory policy effects of the new economics of 'post-Fordism.' Normative political theorists emulate these transformations by moving from cumulative to deliberative models of democracy with emphasize on extended and localized forms of 'civic engagement'. With this changing context, many observers appear to be of the same mind that state governments can no longer monopolize the provision of service sand new types of governance have emerged in which services are provided through a variety of governmental nodes including departments of state, education and health institutions, business entities, NGOs and community-based auspices etc. This nodal governance operates through networks and partnerships within and across the state and non-state segments. To Scott Burris, nodal governance theory can guide efforts to create institutions of mi-

crogovernance. Robert J. Sampson and others stressed on institutions that enable collective efficacy to address the problem of local communities. This view promotes new forms of microgovernance which is potentially important tool to ensure effective participation and partnership. Simultaneously, the success of Zwelethemba model in Africa based on the identified deficit of governance fabricated a robust and sustainable model for localized governance that responded to the generic issues. This model prescribed to work through fostering institutions of microgovernance that mobilized local capacity and local knowledge. The microgovernance approach has the advantages to address fundamental determinants of governance at the micro-level where the actual causes, practices, and setting embodied. This can provide real-life demonstration of what is feasible for administrative efficacy and development.

In Bangladesh, the prescriptions of donors' and other development institutions have not working effectively and some extent have become 'fragile dialogue' to the implementation of the aspiration of development administration. There is general trend to 'over-focus on big solutions' in Bangladesh. They mainly focused on macro issues of governance with top-down approach. On the other hand, the policy makers, reformers, political leadership have repeatedly ignored the panorama of micro solutions aperture. Only focus on the macro issues cannot be panacea. Consequently, there is imperative need to address the microgovernance issues which can embark immediately with less of divergence in policy innovation. For Bangladesh, the microgovernance windowpane and evocative strategic engagement is expected to elicit better domino effect rather than preferring macro issues. Few recent examples substantiate the effectiveness of microgovernance model which produced constructive result in response to the current problem of governance disparity in Bangladesh. An effective micro solution was the reform in the Stamp Act which has produced manifold settlement in land disputes. The

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reform has lead to cost savings for the government, removed some of the institutional sources of corruption around the printing, distribution and forgery of stamp papers, reduced the bureaucratic load on the sub-registry offices, and reduced the hassle for the buyers and sellers of land. Such small solutions serve to improve the quality of governance as a process. The recently announced decision on direct allocation to union parishads (Council) aiming to empower the second lowest tier of local government is an important micro initiative which has well-liked by donors' and development institutions. With this decision, all the UPs will receive the annual block allocation at a time directly from the government by which there is possibility to reduce corruption and delay in project approval and implementation. It will facilitate people's

participation in local level expenditure, policymaking and budgetary processes. This will develop participatory planning and budgetary system to prioritize development schemes. There are some other available 'micro solutions' opportunities in the areas of health, environmental, education, and so on in Bangladesh. With this theoretical and practical ground, I would attempt to analyze following issues: to formulate a theoretical framework of microgovernance within the governance structure in order to conceptualize the issues; to explain the success stories of microgovernance in Bangladesh to understand its feasibility and likely impact on effective governance; and to explore socio-economic areas where the approach of microgovernance can be effectively applied to measure its performances.