

"A Comprehensive Analysis of Parliamentary Oversight on Audit Reports in Bangladesh: Improving Public Finance Accountability"

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ABSTRACT

This research paper, titled "Enhancing Public Finance Accountability: A Comprehensive Analysis of Parliamentary Oversight on Audit Reports in Bangladesh," delves into the critical role of parliamentary oversight in ensuring fiscal accountability within the context of Bangladesh's economic landscape. Against the backdrop of commendable economic growth, the study scrutinizes the challenges faced by the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (OCAG) in examining government audit reports. The research questions aim to assess the effectiveness of current oversight mechanisms, identify challenges encountered by the PAC, and propose actionable recommendations. Utilizing a theoretical framework grounded in accountability theory, institutional analysis, and governance literature, the study employs a mixed-method research design. Primary data is extracted from PAC reports and parliamentary proceedings, supplemented by external sources and comparative case studies. The comprehensive analysis reveals multifaceted challenges, including political interference, resource limitations, and technological gaps, hindering the transparency and accountability of public finances. The study combines mixed-method research, including efficiency analysis, document analysis, key informant interviews, surveys, and case studies, to propose actionable recommendations for strengthening transparency, accountability, and good governance in Bangladesh's financial management. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the significant role that civil society and the media play in enhancing parliamentary oversight, encouraging more grassroots participation. The recommendations include a phased approach to digitalization, capacity building, and reforms to improve transparency, alongside greater civil society engagement. The findings emphasize the urgent need for reforms and a multifaceted strategy to address the identified challenges, fostering economic growth and sustainable development. The findings underscore the urgency for a holistic strategy, leading to a set of recommendations categorized into capacity building, independence and transparency reforms, digitalization and automation, open government data initiatives, and strategic resource allocation. A long-term impact assessment envisions positive economic outcomes, including GDP growth and reduced deficit and debt burden, endorsing the transformative potential of the proposed reforms. In conclusion, this research emphasizes the pivotal role of parliamentary oversight in reshaping Bangladesh's financial governance. The proposed recommendations, supported by a multicriterial analysis, offer a pathway to fortify public finance accountability, fostering transparency, efficiency, and public trust. The research contributes valuable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and citizens, advocating for continuous inquiry to refine strategies and ensure sustained improvements in governance and accountability.

INTRODUCTION

Bangladesh's impressive economic growth, which has averaged almost 7% per year over the past ten years, has played a big role in reducing poverty and overall development. However, this progress comes with ongoing problems, such as food and energy shortages, inflation, and a large public debt burden. To navigate and maintain these economic improvements, strict Public Financial Management (PFM) practices are essential in this ever-changing economic environment.

Audit reports are a key part of effective PFM because they help make sure that money is spent in a way that is open, accountable, and follows the rules. They help direct resources to where they are needed, find areas where government spending is wasteful, and promote good governance, which lowers corruption. With Bangladesh's

tax collection lagging behind and a large development budget of more than BDT 2.46 trillion in 2022-2023, strong oversight of audit reports is very important.

The issues of political interference and resource constraints in Bangladesh's oversight mechanisms cannot be viewed in isolation. These problems are deeply ingrained in the country's **historical context**. The **colonial legacy** led to the establishment of highly **centralized governance structures**, which continue to affect the functioning of the PAC and other oversight bodies. The **political patronage system**, where loyalty often trumps merit, further undermines institutional capacity and independence. These deep-rooted factors create a system where **parliamentary committees** struggle to function effectively, leading to weak public finance accountability.

This research paper, "Enhancing Public Finance Accountability: A Comprehensive Analysis of Parliamentary Oversight on Audit Reports in Bangladesh," aims to fill the gap in knowledge about the current oversight environment. The study will find problems and suggest workable solutions, focusing on the important roles of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (OCAG) in looking at government audit reports and doing independent audits, respectively. Even though audit reports are very important for keeping financial discipline, the current systems of oversight have a lot of problems, such as not having enough resources, political interference, and not being able to do the job properly.

There will be a number of important research questions that will help with this investigation:

1. How well do the current parliamentary oversight mechanisms, especially the Public Accounts Committee, check and respond to audit reports on Bangladesh's public finances?
2. What are some of the problems and limits that the Public Accounts Committee faces when it tries to do its job of overseeing, such as not having enough resources, political interference, not having enough technical expertise, and systemic barriers?

The main goals of this study are:

1. To find out how well parliamentary oversight is working right now, we need to look at how involved different parliaments are with audit reports and what problems they are having.
2. To find and look at the common problems and limitations that the Public Accounts Committee in Bangladesh faces, such as lack of resources, political interference, lack of technical skills, and systemic problems.
3. To come up with useful suggestions for improving the ways that audit reports are checked.
4. To push for programs that build capacity and improve parliamentarians' and staff's knowledge and skills in auditing.
5. To push for more open and honest auditing practices so that the public can see and hold accountable the results of audits.

This study is important because it will help improve fiscal responsibility, openness, and good governance in Bangladesh. The study's goal is to help the country meet its fiscal challenges and goals by addressing the problems that were found and suggesting workable solutions. This is in line with Bangladesh's goals, such as its "Vision 2041" and its commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The paper is set up so that it can answer the research questions and goals in a logical way. Section II gives a full review of the literature to put the study in the bigger picture of legislative scrutiny, financial governance, and public accountability. In Section III, the theoretical framework that guides the analysis is explained. In Section IV, the methods used are explained in more detail. The next sections go into great detail about the current state of parliamentary oversight and the problems that the Public Accounts Committee is having.

Section XI of the paper wraps things up by going over the main points, making suggestions, and talking about what this means for the future of legislative scrutiny in Bangladesh.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature makes it clear that parliamentary oversight is very important for keeping accountability in democratic governance. Stapenhurst and Pelizzo (2002) talk about how the roles of legislative bodies are changing to make democratic systems more accountable. This understanding of how important parliamentary oversight is lays the groundwork for understanding how important it is for making government actions clear and accountable.

Sahgal and Verma (2001) add to the conversation by giving us a look at the complicated world of oversight in India, pointing out both the problems and the chances it presents. Jahan (2010) goes into great detail about Bangladesh's complicated political history and how it has affected parliamentary reforms. He stresses the need for strong oversight systems. This point of view is supported by Sobhan (2001), who stresses how important it is for Bangladesh to have strong parliamentary oversight to make sure that people are held accountable.

Jacobs (1998) looks at the New Zealand context and checks how well value-for-money auditing works in oversight mechanisms. McGee (2002) stresses how important Public Accounts Committees are in keeping an eye on public spending, highlighting their importance in the oversight landscape. Wehner (2003) takes a wider view by comparing how financial oversight works in different parts of the Commonwealth. This shows how different models of financial oversight work.

Stapenhurst and Titsworth (2001) look at how supreme audit institutions help hold the government accountable. Pelizzo et al. (2006) and Santiso (2005) add to the conversation by suggesting ways to improve oversight mechanisms in the future.

Even though there have been many talks about it, oversight mechanisms in Bangladesh, especially parliamentary committees, still have problems that make them less effective. Khan (2010) talks about problems with parliamentary committees, and one of them is that there isn't enough research on how to use oversight mechanisms in Bangladesh to look at audit reports and the government's financial statements at the same time.

The current discussions and analyses in the literature give us useful information about the problems that oversight mechanisms in Bangladesh are having. The focus on the need for strong parliamentary oversight fits with the country's situation, which stresses accountability and openness in the management of public funds. The limitations that were found, on the other hand, show how important it is to do more research to improve the Public Accounts Committee's oversight in Bangladesh, especially in the important areas of government audit reports and financial statements. The importance of this literature is that it could help shape and guide the creation of effective reforms that are specific to Bangladesh.

While Bangladesh has made efforts to strengthen its parliamentary oversight, other countries in South Asia, such as Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and India, face similar governance challenges. These nations have also grappled with political interference, resource constraints, and institutional weaknesses in their oversight systems. However, each of these countries has implemented reforms and strategies that Bangladesh could adopt to enhance its own public finance management and oversight frameworks.

While official data from PAC reports is essential, it often overlooks valuable insights from civil society and media. These groups play a critical role in identifying inefficiencies and corruption that may not be visible in formal government reports. For instance, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) regularly highlights corruption and governance issues that are often ignored by state institutions. Engaging these grassroots voices through public forums, surveys, and interviews will help capture a more holistic view of public finance accountability. Expanding the comparative analysis reveals that countries like Sri Lanka and Pakistan have faced similar challenges in parliamentary oversight. For instance, Sri Lanka's PAC has worked alongside civil society organizations to enhance transparency, addressing the same issues of political interference that

Bangladesh faces. Similarly, Pakistan's finance committee has adopted digital tools for improving the tracking of audit outcomes, which Bangladesh could emulate to overcome its resource constraints and improve financial management.

Theoretical Framework:

This research paper is based on a set of ideas from the fields of accountability theory, institutional analysis, and governance literature. This study is based on the accountability framework that Bovens (2007) wrote about. It focusses on the aspects of answerability, enforcement, and transparency. This study looks at the parliamentary oversight systems in Bangladesh, focusing on the Public Accounts Committee (PAC). It tries to figure out how accountable public officials are when they get audit reports, how well enforcement systems work to make sure people are held accountable, and how important transparency is for public scrutiny.

We also use the Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) framework, which Elinor Ostrom and her colleagues created (Ostrom, 2005), to look at the formal and informal institutions that affect how the PAC works. This framework lets us look at the rules, norms, and decision-making structures that make up the oversight process. To find problems and chances to make the PAC's role in promoting public finance accountability better, you need to know about the institutional context.

Also, the governance literature gives us a better understanding of how political interference, limited resources, and systemic barriers can make oversight mechanisms less effective. Using these theoretical frameworks, the study aims to create a thorough examination of how parliament in Bangladesh oversees audit reports. This will provide useful information for both academic discussions and real-world policy decisions.

The study tries to add to the larger body of work on accountability and governance by combining these theoretical foundations. It aims to give a more nuanced view of the factors that affect how well parliamentary oversight works to improve public finance accountability in Bangladesh.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a mixed-method research design, which means it uses both qualitative and quantitative methods to fully look at how the Bangladeshi parliament oversees audit reports. The Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (OCAG) and the parliament secretariat will provide the primary data, which will come from the Public Accounts Committee Reports from the 9th, 10th, and 11th sessions. Looking at parliamentary debates about audit reports will show how people talk about and respond to them. To give a bigger picture, more information will be gathered from outside sources, such as academic papers and reports from international organizations. To gather data, we used content and document analysis, interviews with key informants who are experts in Public Financial Management, OCAG officials, and parliamentary secretariat officers, as well as a survey given to 36 people chosen at random. To learn about best practices, we will look at case studies of other Supreme Audit Institutions that work in similar situations. The sampling strategy uses both purposive and random sampling methods. The data analysis includes systematic examination, qualitative thematic analysis, quantitative analysis, and comparative analysis. The goal of the combined findings is to find gaps, suggest policy options, suggest ways to make things better, and lay out a plan of action for better parliamentary oversight of audit reports in Bangladesh.

Analysis of Data:

The number of audit reports and observations sent to the Public Accounts Committee from the 1st JS in 1971 to the 11th Jatiya Sangsad (up to June 2023) is shown in tables 1 to 4. These reports were sent by the Public Accounts Committees of the 9th, 10th, and 11th Jatiya Sangsad and discussed with other relevant data. In addition, data for the 9th and 10th Jatiya Sangsad has been collected and analyzed to see how well the PAC is at resolving Audit Observations and taking the right steps. The results are shown in analysis report B. Also, the analysis from the interview and survey has been added to reports C and D, respectively.

Analysis of Efficiency (discussion capacity)

Table 1: Analyse JS efficiency in relation to audit report discussion capacity and observations

Aspect of Efficiency	1-8th JS	9th JS	10th JS	11th JS
Number of Audit Reports Submitted	822	648	93	102
Discussion Rate (Percentage)	~40%	~88%	~87%	N/A
Undiscussed Audit Observations	12,765	-	1,691	3,667
Monetary Value of Undiscussed Obs. (Crore BDT)	17,513	-	45,262.27	223638.83
Undiscussed Observations in Discussed Reports	-	4,905	-	-
Monetary Value of Undiscussed Obs. in Discussed Reports (Crore BDT)	-	13,118.41	-	-
Unresolved Observations (All Reports)	-	1,924	-	-
Monetary Value of Unresolved Obs. (Crore BDT)	-	46,754.12	-	-
Historic Backlog (Undiscussed Reports)	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Note. Data source: PAC report of the 9 th , 10 th and 11 th Jatiya Sanglsad (2010,2015,2020).				

Table 2: Status of Finance & Appropriation Accounts and Financial & Performance Audit Report

Number of Cert. FA & Finance & Performance Audit Submitted & Discussed	1-9 th JS ¹
Number of Finance & Appropriation Accounts submitted by OCAG (Certified)	210
Discussed	A few ²
Financial Aduit on Finance and Appropriation Account (2016/17), (2017/2018)	2
Discussed	Not Yet
Number of Performance Audit Report Submitted	29
Discussed	5

Please note. The PAC report of the 10th Jatiya Sanglsad (2015) is the source of this data.

Document Analysis "Report A": The Efficiency Analysis of Jatiya Sangsad (JS) in terms of how well it can discuss audit reports and observations has shown that there are many problems and inconsistencies. The 1st through 8th Joint Session (JS) got a lot of audit reports (822), but the 10th JS only got 93 reports, which is a big drop. This autumn makes people worry about possible backlogs and the need for better oversight. There hasn't been much discussion about certified finance accounts. Only a few of the 210 submitted certified accounts have been talked about, and out of 29 performance audits, only 5 have been talked about. There have only been 2 finance audit reports submitted, and they haven't been talked about in parliament yet.

The 9th JS had a high discussion rate of 88%, which shows that people were actively involved. On the other hand, the 11th JS doesn't have a discussion rate, and the 1-8th JS has a lower rate, which makes people worry about how well the oversight is working. A lot of audit observations (12,765) were not talked about during the 1-8th JS session, and they were worth a lot of money.

Even though things got a little better in the 10th JS, unresolved observations are still a problem. The monetary values went up a lot in the 10th and 11th JS, reaching a huge 223,638.83 Crore BDT in the 11th JS. The results show how important these unresolved observations are for finances and stress how quickly action needs to be taken to fix the problems raised in the audit report.

Total Meetings: Total Meetings, report talked about.

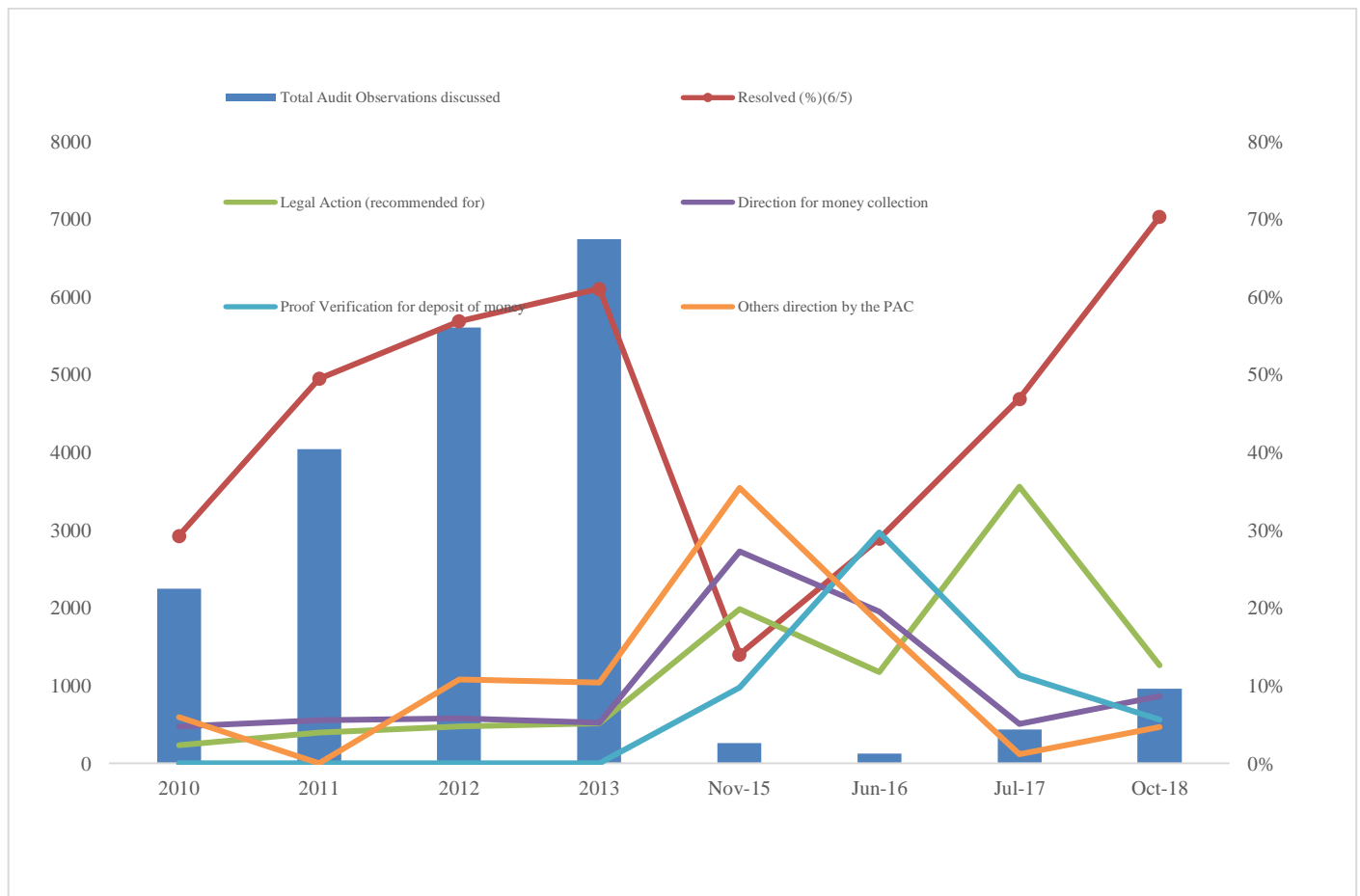
Table: 3: Total meetings, reports discussed, resolved observations (%) etc. in the 9th & 10th JS

Audit Reports				Audit Observations				
Year	Total Meetings	Reports Discussed (New)	Report Discussed (Old)	Resolved Observations (%)	Legal Action (Recommended for)	Direction for Money Collection	Proof Verification for Deposit of Money	Others Direction by the PAC
2010	74	110		29%	2%	5%	0%	6%
2011	131	102	319	49%	4%	6%	0%	0%
2012	206	317	361	57%	5%	6%	0%	11%
2013	262	41	361	61%	5%	5%	0%	10%
Nov-15	25	25	9	14%	20%	27%	10%	35%
Jun-16	10	11	3	29%	12%	20%	30%	18%
Jul-17	20	20	5	47%	36%	5%	11%	1%
Oct-18	53	25	285	70%	13%	9%	6%	5%

Note: The data comes from the PACs report on the 9th, 10th, and 11th Jatiya Sangsad (2013, 2020).

This table shows everything, including the total number of meetings, the reports that were talked about (both new and old), the percentage of observations that were resolved, the legal action that was suggested, the direction for collecting money, the proof that was needed to deposit money, and other PAC directions for each year.

Chart 1: How well audit observations, resolve, and other things work (audit observations in numbers)



Note: The author got the information for the chart from the PAC Report (2010,1018).

Audit reports and observations about money, such as money collected, money spent, etc

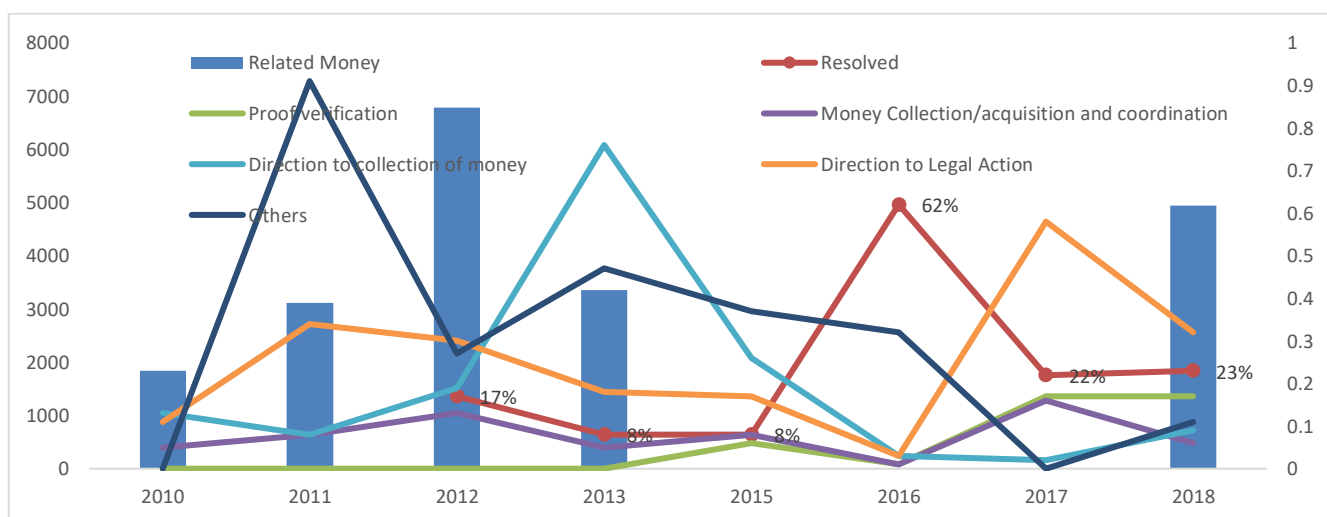
Table 4: Audit Reports/observations Related Money, resolved, money collected etc. (BDT in Crore)

Description/Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2015	2016	2017	2018
Related Money (Crore Taka)	1839	3119.51	6780.13	3358.14	2696.83	2762.66	4760.1	4947.9
Resolved (%)	-	-	17%	8%	8%	62%	22%	23%
Proof Verification (%)	-	-	-	-	6%	1%	17%	17%
Money Collection/ Acquisition or coordination	5%	8%	13%	5%	8%	1%	16%	6%
Direction to Collection of Money (%)	13%	8%	19%	76%	26%	3%	2%	9%
Direction to Legal Action/File a Case/ Departmental Action/ Inspection etc. (%)	11%	34%	30%	18%	17%	3%	58%	32%
Others (%)	0%	91%	27%	47%	37%	32%	0%	11%

Note: Data Source: PACs report of 9th, 10th, 11th Jatiya Sangsad (2013,2020)

This table shows the data for the years in question on related money, resolved cases, proof verification, money collection/acquisition, direction to money collection, direction to legal action, and other actions.

Chart 2: The effectiveness of audit reports/observations, money collection, and so on (Monetary Value)



Note: The author got the information for the chart from the PAC Report (2010, 2018).

Document Analysis "Report B": A look at the efficiency of the audit report and observations in the 9th and 10th Jatiya Sangsad, based on Table 2 and Table 3 (Charts 1 and 2). There were a lot of problems and inconsistencies in the audit reports that were looked at in Bangladesh's Jatiya Sangsad during the 9th and 10th parliamentary periods. The money involved in these reports is very different, from 1838.96 Crore Taka to 6780.13 Crore Taka. A lot of the financial problems are still not solved, with a resolution rate of only 0%. There isn't enough checking of the accuracy of the audit reports; only 17% of them are checked. There are ups and downs in the efforts to get money back and the commitment to this recovery, but they are generally low. Sometimes people are told to take legal action, which is at its highest level at 91%, but usually stays lower. In about 47% of cases, other actions are taken. In 2013, there were 6,740 audit reports discussed, but after 2015, there was a big drop, with issues not getting resolved and inconsistent efforts to recover funds and confirm audit findings. The results show that Bangladesh's Jatiya Sangsad needs to respond to audit reports more consistently and effectively right away. Table 3 showed that only a few of the 210 government financial statements (certified by the C&AG) were talked about, and two financial audit reports were sent in.

The 2016 PEFA assessment report for Bangladesh backs up the above findings. It rates the external scrutiny and audit-related parts of a government or organisation on a scale from D to A. Here's a brief summary of the most important results:

Table 5: Legislative Scrutiny of Audit Reports by PEFA (31)

Indicator	Sub-Indicator	Assessment
Timing of Audit Report Scrutiny		D - Suggests that legislative review of audit reports may not be timely or efficient.
Hearings on Audit Findings		A - Indicates that the legislative body conducts hearings to discuss and understand audit findings, which is a positive practice.
Recommendations on Audit by the Legislature		A - The legislature actively makes recommendations based on audit reports, which is a positive sign of accountability.
Transparency of Legislative Scrutiny of Audit Reports		B - Suggests that the legislative scrutiny process is somewhat transparent, with room for improvement.
Note: Data source: PEFA Assessment Report on Bangladesh 2016		

Note: The data comes from the 2016 PEFA Assessment Report on Bangladesh.

Main Results of the KII Interview

KII Analysis "Report C": A summary of the interviews from the Key Informant Interview:

People are unhappy with how parliamentary oversight works in Bangladesh right now, especially in the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), because it isn't very effective and isn't very clear. The UK and Canada are better at checking audit reports than other countries, which keeps the government accountable and open. The PAC in Bangladesh is weak because there isn't enough debate in Parliament about the PAC report or discussion with the media and civil society. It also doesn't have enough resources, technical knowledge, or political support. To improve and strengthen oversight, ensure good governance and independence of PAC and OCAG, raise PAC's budget, and improve technical capacity are all necessary. The PAC's effectiveness can be improved even more by programs that build capacity in public administration and financial management. To make things easier for SAI, they should focus more on internal control and internal audit. They should also focus more on financial and performance auditing. We should do performance audits on the country's macroeconomic situation and other related issues to meet citizens' expectations. Improving user-friendly audit reports, especially the performance aspect of the audit, by using "FinTech" to make interactive dashboards, short videos from SAI (as many SAIs do, like the Auditor General's Office in Scotland), allowing real-time access, using automated analysis, and sending short messages to citizens' mobile phones, using blockchain for security, and giving enough resources can make things more open. Also, some experts stress how important it is to close the technology gap so that AMMS.2 and CMIS can work with iBAS++. Strengthening parliamentary oversight is important for democratic governance because it builds public trust by making sure that officials are held accountable for how they use public funds. This is shown by examples from South Africa and Canada. In short, Bangladesh needs to make a serious effort to improve parliamentary oversight by giving it more resources, technical knowledge, and legislative changes. This is necessary to strengthen democratic governance, transparency, and accountability (see Appendix-11 for a detailed interview report presentation).

The survey's most important results

Survey Analysis "Report D": The survey report on "Strengthening Parliamentary Oversight on Audit Reports in Bangladesh" highlights serious worries about the lack of parliamentary oversight over audit reports and government finances in the country. The study, which involved 36 people, shows that government finances are not very open or accountable. Even though they see audit reports every day, the people who answered are not happy with how open and accountable the government is with its money. A large 69.4% know about problems with money, and most think that government agencies are only sometimes responsible for how they spend public money. The survey shows that people don't trust public financial management and don't think people will follow the rules when it comes to money. 84.4% of people agree that some changes have been made, but a large 71.9% think that checks and balances are still not enough. The report suggests a number of ways to improve parliamentary oversight, such as making things more open, making information easier to find, giving people better tools to look over audit reports, making accountability systems stronger, getting the public more involved, using technology to keep better financial records, and setting up regular auditing and monitoring

systems. These strategies must be put into action in order to improve financial management and restore public trust in the government's financial activities in Bangladesh (see Appendix-12 for a detailed survey report with graphs).

Case Studies (for comparing with other countries)

Case Study Report E: A few case studies about PAC's active oversight role

The first case study is about the important role that India's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) played in looking into the 2G spectrum scam that rocked the country in the late 2000s. Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi led the PAC, which got a lot of attention for its thorough investigation, which put the issue under a lot of public scrutiny. The investigation not only gave opposition parties the power to call for openness and accountability, but it also forced the telecom minister to step down and led to the arrest of several high-profile people because of the growing pressure from the PAC and other groups. The success of the Indian PAC in handling such high-profile issues can be attributed to its independence, political will, and ability to engage public interest through media coverage.

In Case Study 2, the focus moves to the UK's PAC and its investigation into how Google avoids paying taxes. Under Margaret Hodge's leadership, the committee looked into how Google moved profits to Bermuda to avoid paying taxes in the UK. The PAC's estimates showed a big difference between Google's high sales in the UK and the low taxes it pays there. This investigation led to a wider look at how multinational companies, like Starbucks and Amazon, handle their taxes. The issue of corporate tax evasion was brought to the forefront by the high-profile public hearings and extensive media coverage. This led to widespread calls for changes to international tax laws.

In Sri Lanka, the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) has faced challenges similar to Bangladesh, particularly in terms of political interference and limited resources. However, Sri Lanka has made significant strides in improving transparency by integrating civil society into the oversight process. The Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA), an NGO, collaborates with the PAC to provide independent reviews of audit reports. This engagement has enhanced the transparency of government spending and strengthened the PAC's role in promoting accountability.

Similarly, in Pakistan, the Standing Committee on Finance has worked to address the issue of political interference by digitizing its financial oversight processes. Pakistan's finance committee now uses real-time digital tools to track audit outcomes and provide timely feedback to the government. These digital reforms have helped overcome resource constraints by streamlining processes and making audit data more accessible to the public and the parliamentary committee.

Findings and Gap Analysis:

A thorough look at how the Bangladeshi parliament oversees audit reports shows that there are many problems that make it harder to make sure that things are open and accountable. Reports A, C, and D show that the current systems aren't working well enough. They point out problems like not having enough internal controls, not checking audit findings consistently, and not using resources effectively. These problems make people think there isn't enough transparency (Report B) and make people less trustful of how the government handles money (Report A). Report B shows that politics can affect the decisions of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC). This shows how important it is to deal with outside pressures that affect oversight.

The reports also stress the system's technological shortcomings, such as the Supreme Audit Institution's (SAI) lack of the right "FinTech" tools (Report C). The suggestion to reduce technological differences, especially for the smooth integration of AMMS.2 and CMIS with iBAS++ (Report C), shows how important it is to have FinTech that is easy to use. Report A talks about how limited technical capabilities make it harder to effectively oversee things. This makes it even more clear that we need to make technological advances to make audit processes easier.

Reports A and B raise concerns about financial irregularities, political interference, and not enough action on high-profile financial discrepancies. These concerns show how important it is to have a stronger system of

checks and balances. The lack of consistency in legal actions to deal with financial problems (Report D) and historical backlogs (Report B) shows that there are systemic problems that need systemic solutions. Also, the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (OCAG) is not independent (Report E), which shows how important it is for institutions to be able to work on their own to make oversight mechanisms stronger.

There is still a gap between recommendations and effective implementation, even though Report B lists some possible solutions. Report C says that the public, media, and civil society aren't involved enough in oversight activities. This shows that a more inclusive approach is needed to make the public more accountable. The fact that there are no success stories in Bangladesh that are similar to those in other countries (Report C) shows how important it is to find solutions that are specific to the problems that Bangladesh faces.

To solve these problems, we need to take a broad view that includes new technologies, changes to institutions, and more public involvement. To improve public finance accountability in Bangladesh, it will be important to put the suggested solutions into action and encourage cooperation between government agencies, civil society, and the public.

The findings from this study highlight the challenges faced by Bangladesh in parliamentary oversight, including political interference, resource constraints, and technological gaps. However, as demonstrated in the case studies from Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and India, similar countries have taken significant steps to address these issues.

- In Sri Lanka, the collaboration between the PAC and civil society organizations has proven effective in strengthening accountability and enhancing public trust in parliamentary oversight. Bangladesh could benefit from adopting a similar model of civil society involvement, ensuring that non-governmental organizations and public advocacy groups play a more active role in the oversight process.
- Pakistan has successfully incorporated digital tools into its oversight processes, which has streamlined audit tracking and increased the efficiency of the PAC. Bangladesh can learn from this by introducing automated audit tracking systems and real-time public access to audit reports, making oversight more transparent and accountable.
- India's PAC has been instrumental in pushing for accountability, especially during the 2G spectrum scam, where its investigation led to significant political repercussions. Bangladesh could replicate this success by ensuring the independence of its PAC and empowering it to investigate high-profile cases without political influence.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MAKING PUBLIC FINANCE MORE ACCOUNTABLE:

The problems with parliamentary oversight of audit reports in Bangladesh call for a full plan to fix the underlying issues and make things work better. The recommendations are grouped into main themes based on a thorough study that included problem tree analysis, risk assessment, risk mitigation strategies, impact assessment, and cost-effectiveness analysis. First, in the area of Capacity Building and Skill Development, it is suggested that a strong program be set up for members of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) that focusses on targeted training programs and resource allocation. Second, Independence and Transparency Reforms call for steps to stop political interference and make sure that the PAC has unbiased leaders. Thirdly, in the area of Digitalization and Automation, the suggestion is to set up a system in the PAC Secretariat for combining digital tools and automated processes. This should be done by doing thorough feasibility studies to find solutions to technological problems. The fourth policy option calls for starting a Comprehensive Open Government Data (OGD) Initiative to make government data available to the public while keeping it safe. Lastly, the recommendation for Strategic Resource Allocation and Capacity Building stresses the importance of a full analysis of resource allocation and enough budget for capacity building. The main suggestion is to use all five options at the same time, hoping that they will work together to get the best results and solve the many problems that come up when parliament looks at audit reports. The main goal of this broad plan is to improve public finance accountability. It does this by promoting economic growth, openness, and good governance. These suggestions are based on in-depth research and are meant to have a synergistic and transformative effect, leading to a more open and effective system of parliamentary oversight in Bangladesh.

The proposed reforms should be introduced through pilot projects that focus on digitalizing audit report management and enhancing the PAC's capacity. A phased approach would involve testing these solutions in a few parliamentary sessions or departments before a nationwide rollout. This would allow for adjustments based on feedback and help mitigate potential risks during the initial implementation phase.

To strengthen parliamentary oversight, there must be a greater emphasis on civil society engagement. Public awareness campaigns that highlight the importance of parliamentary scrutiny can foster a more active citizenry. Additionally, setting up digital platforms where citizens can track audit outcomes, raise concerns, and interact with parliamentary committees will ensure that financial management remains a public concern. Following India's example, Bangladesh should ensure the independence of its PAC, protecting it from political pressures to enhance the credibility of its audits.

International organizations such as the World Bank and UNDP can play a critical role in supporting Bangladesh's parliamentary reforms. These organizations can provide technical assistance for digital transformation, funding for capacity-building programs, and share best practices from countries with stronger parliamentary oversight systems. Their involvement will help ensure that the reforms are effectively implemented and sustainable.

Long-Term Impact Evaluation:

The long-term impact of the proposed reforms is expected to be significant. For example, reforms in South Korea have led to a 2-3% increase in GDP and a reduction in national debt after the implementation of transparent financial oversight systems. Similarly, New Zealand's adoption of IS audit systems improved public financial management, leading to a more efficient allocation of resources. By drawing on these examples, Bangladesh can expect similar positive outcomes by 2029, including increased foreign direct investment and a reduction in the budget deficit.

If we assume that all five options are put into action, they would have a big positive effect on the country's macroeconomy. It is expected that Bangladesh's GDP will rise starting in 2026 (Y2). By 2029 (Y5), the GDP had grown by a total of 195.7548 billion BDT. The growth of foreign direct investment (FDI) will also start in 2026 and reach 3.132 billion BDT by 2029. Starting in 2026, business investment rose sharply, going from 235.493 billion BDT to 941.972 billion BDT by 2029. Consumption and investment both went up in a similar way, with a small increase that brought the total to 3070.901 billion BDT in 2029. Starting in 2026, the budget deficit, interest payments, and debt burden all went down, though. The budget deficit went down by 97.8348 billion BDT by 2029, interest payments went down by 10.2885 billion BDT, and the debt burden went down by 82.1493 billion BDT. These numbers point to a time of a lot of economic activity and restructuring, with a focus on improvements in investment, consumption, and efforts to cut deficits and debts.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that there is an urgent need for reform in Bangladesh to improve public finance accountability by looking at how parliament oversees audit reports. A carefully thought-out set of policy recommendations is suggested to deal with problems like limited technical skills, political interference, and operational inefficiencies. These choices, which include building capacity, reforming institutions, going digital, making government data more open, and strategically allocating resources, are meant to strengthen the foundations of public finance accountability, which will lead to more openness, efficiency, and trust in the government.

The impact analysis shows that these suggestions could have a big effect on more than just how the government works. They could also have an effect on the economy, society, and the environment. GDP growth, more foreign direct investment, and lower budget deficits and debt burdens are some of the good things that are expected to happen. Even though there will be problems, a full risk assessment and mitigation plan has been put together to help deal with them and make sure the implementation process is strategic and strong.

A multicriterial analysis supports a holistic approach, which means that all five policy options should be put into action. Cost-Effectiveness Analysis (CEA) backs this up even more by showing that each option has significant net present values and transformative effects. Long-term projections show a lot of economic activity and restructuring, which paints a bright picture of a Bangladesh with better public finance accountability and long-term economic growth.

In short, the study shows how important it is for parliament to keep an eye on public finances to make sure they are accountable. If the proposed recommendations are carefully followed, they could change the way Bangladesh's finances work, creating a system of government that is open, efficient, and trusted by the people. These results are important not only for academics, but also for policymakers, practitioners, and citizens. They show how a more accountable and resilient financial governance system can benefit everyone.

The research goals are to look into the problems that the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) has with parliamentary oversight. They suggest a multi-faceted approach that includes tailored training modules, digitalization, and automation. Each part is looked at in terms of financial help and full progress indicators. The goal of improving and empowering parliamentary oversight also highlights the need for actionable recommendations, changes to the law, and initiatives for transparency, all of which aim to make audit reports more useful for holding people accountable for their spending. This plan has many parts and aims to improve the audit process by increasing knowledge, skills, and openness. It also emphasizes the importance of accountability and openness in managing finances.

More research is needed in this area to keep improving and changing strategies for making parliamentary oversight mechanisms better. In the future, researchers could look into how the proposed reforms will last over time, how technology is changing the way it helps with oversight, and how public awareness and opinion about financial governance reforms in Bangladesh are changing. Asking more questions will help the ongoing discussion about how to make public finance more accountable and effective.

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