ROLE OF MEDIA AND GOVERNANCE FOR BRIDGING SOCIO-POLITICAL BARRIERS: EXPERIENCES OF JAPAN & BANGLADESH

Md. Jahangir Alam[*]

Abstract

One of the vexatious issues in the twenty first century is media and governance for ensuring human security and freedom. Japan leads the world in the information revolution and in breadth of coverage and sophistication of the media. The role of media and governance in Japan is diversified in nature and encroaches its reality to address the socio-political barriers. Japan's Media and governance could ensure social securities and freedom for the national interest. Narrow understanding of national concentration, antagonism and distrust are mostly responsible for the present situation of media and governance in Bangladesh. Bangladesh could ensure the socio-political barriers based on Japan's model to revive the media and governance issues for regional cooperation. This paper advocates some pronged strategy and policy suggestions which could improve to overcome the constraints of media and governance and open new windows for Bangladesh. The process of governance reforms in Japan is one of the junctions to the universal customary. This paper also attempts to analyze the determinants between governance and media that surely leads a country to the way of socio-political, cultural and economic advancements. Bangladesh should have a clear vision for future so that it can set a common stage of hopes and aspirations of the people by combating all the threats to secure media and governance for human security.

Introduction

Governance is a dynamic social procedure, which is never been ended and persistently threatened by anti and counter democratic ideologies and powers. Good Governance cannot be built without free media it must be constructed in the minds of people.[1] Japan has a strong, pluralistic and independent media which is defending society from the gangrene of corruption by creating and maintaining an atmosphere of transparency and accountability. The independent media of Japan is being considered as one of the vital components for ensuring governance and strengthening democracy. Japan's vibrant mass media disseminates information, informs the public and policy maker, creates space for diverse views regarding socio-political barriers and increases people's

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[*] **Md. Jahangir Alam**, Lecturer, Japan Study Centre, University of Dhaka.

[1] Salauddin M. Aminuzzaman, *Governance and Development-Bangladesh and regional experiences*, (Dhaka: Shrabon Prokashani, 2006), p. 7.

participation for democratization which is ensures good governance and eradicates corruptions.

In Bangladesh, the mass media plays a role in informing the public of governance related concerns such as the government and opposition's political performance and internal governance, electoral process issues and public corruption. Sustainable and successful democracies for governance require more than elections, the existence of an independent judiciary and other democratic institutions and even a free press. For governments to be accountable, responsive and effective, citizens need opportunities to communicate their perspectives and needs not only through the ballot box but also between elections.[2]

The modern communication revolution in Bangladesh including the Internet and mobile phones offers immense opportunities for people to access more information, knowledge and engage with those who govern them. To make the best use of these opportunities requires different kinds of information, communication systems and technologies that become more accessible, transparent and inclusive for governance to minimize the socio-political barriers like Japan.

Objectives of the Study

The Prime concern of the study is to portray the real picture of the current status of media and governance in Bangladesh in the context of Japan. This study further aims to identify the fundamental political causes, economic conditions, the basic social loopholes as well as the unexpected external threats that create unfavourable conditions and hampers the smooth functioning of good governance. The specific objectives are to:

1. Examine the role of media in society.
2. Determine the role of media in national development.
3. Evaluate how the media influence events in society for good governance.

Methodology of the Study

This study follows an intermediary approach, which merges two conventional techniques of media and good governance study namely, social and political accounting matrix and the right-based analysis. These techniques are much more materialistic as they require close observation, careful explanation and critical appraisal. The great advantage of using these approaches lies in the fact that they offer a rigorous, valuable, accurate and

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2   Douglas Cater, *The Forth Branch of Government*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Riverside Press, 1959), p. 69.
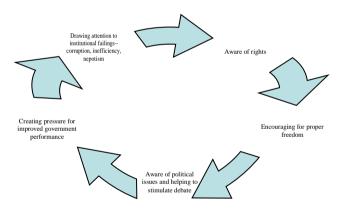
simple way of presenting the real picture of media and Governance in Bangladesh compare with Japan.

Conceptual Framework

Media**,** the process of creating shared meaning through information, is vital for exchanging knowledge to people.[3] Media enables people to understand and facilitate relationships between and among individuals and societies. The word "Media" comes from the plural of the Latin word Medium, and used as to refer newspapers, magazines, radio, television and internet.[4] Further, Medium is described as a high definition channel of communication, such as print or radio, which focuses on a single sensory receptor.

The media have been widely described as the fourth estate, agenda setter, force multiplier, watchdog, and gate-keeper, all in an effort to demonstrate influence on society.[5] Conversely, the media have been viewed as avenue for impression, propaganda, and preconception, factors inimical to national development. Media can be a major force for improving the quality of government in developing and transitional countries. Media is a complex non-state actor whose activities have been made even more complex by massive advancement in technology.[6] Media can make a real difference to the lives of poor and disadvantaged people, Shown in the diagram below:

Diagram 1: Role of Media to the lives of poor and disadvantaged people

Source: Author

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[3]   Stanley J. Baran, *Introduction to Mass Communication*, (McGraw Hill Online Learning Centre, 2002), p. 13.

[4]   Busakorn Suriyasarn, *Internet and National Development*, (Bangkok: Thai Media and Telecommunications, 1998), p. 76.

[5]   Gerald L. Curtis, *The Japanese Way of Politics*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 24.

[6]   James Barry, *Media and Good Governance*, (Paris: Place de Fontenoy, 2005), p. 42.