



FUNCTIONAL TRANSFORMATION OF DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION IN BANGLADESH: OVERVIEW OF THE SHIFT IN DEVELOPMENT PARADIGM

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Abstract:

In Bangladesh, Office of the Deputy Commissioner is the key role player in the district with a big number of traditional functions right from the time of East India Company. Although the original pattern of district administration remains more or less unchanged but there appears to be gradual transformation of the conventional character of district administration. The purpose of the study is to explore the extent of transformation of functions of the Office of the Deputy Commissioner from traditional regulatory system to a new form of public administration with specific aim to identify the factors that induced and or influenced the transformation process. The present features indicate that Traditional Public Administration (TPA), New Public Administration (NPA) & New Public Management (NPM) co-exist in an uneasy manner in the Office of the Deputy Commissioner in Bangladesh. It has significantly moved from TPA towards a mixed approach of NPA & NPM.

Keywords: Deputy Commissioner, functional transformation, factors, development paradigm

1. Introduction

The Office of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) in Bangladesh is said to be the eye, ear and hand of the Government in the district. According to the "Ma-Bap" concept of Government as put forward by Hans Anderson, the concentration of powers in the hands of the Deputy Commissioner was so great and his sharing of these powers so rare and minimal that he would have been called the 'Ma-Bap' (mother and father)ⁱⁱ of

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ⁱⁱ "Ma-Bap" is a Bengali word consists of two words 'Ma' and 'Bap'. 'Ma' means mother and 'Bap' means Father. In Bangladesh, 'Ma-Bap' indicates a person who can exercise enormous power in the society.

his area (Abedin, 1973). Starting its journey in 1772 with the Hastings Plan, the pattern of Office of DC has gone through many ups and downs (Ali et. al. 1983). It was originated as Collectorⁱⁱⁱ in British India in order to gear towards collection of revenue. Then he was empowered as District Magistrate for ensuring security and criminal justice. Another important function is coordination/relationship with other departments. Later on, Collector got more and more involved in local developmental and managerial activities (Ali, 1982). At present, Judicial separation and government principal agenda “Digital Bangladesh Vision 2021” have opened the scope for providing better service. Besides regulatory functions, collectors are now more and more engaged in public management, development and innovative activities. The objective of the study is to explore the extent of transformation of functions of the Office of the Deputy Commissioner from traditional regulatory system to a new form of public administration. It also attempts to identify the factors that induced and or influenced the transformation process. The researcher has ascertained whether the transformation of functional areas of the Office of the Deputy Commissioner resemble the features of changing paradigm of public administration (Traditional Public Administration-New Public Administration-New Public Management). This study is based on two research questions: 1. What are the factors that induced and or influenced the transformation of the function of the Office of the Deputy Commissioner? 2. Does the transformation of functional areas of the Office of the Deputy Commissioner resemble the features of changing paradigm of public administration (TPA-NPA-NPM)?

2. Literature Review

The journey of the Office of Deputy Commissioner started with the land revenue collection together with law and order functions in the district. O'Malley (1931) illustrated that the role and functions of Collector and District Magistrate were changed with the change of time and Governor. Philip Mason (1953) mentioned that the elite ruling ICS (Indian Civil Service) officers held in their hands not only real executive power, but a substantial part of the legislature and judiciary. Focusing on the evolution of district administration, Nazmul Abedin (1973) argued that the style of district administration has undergone considerable changes due to different factors and conditions but the formal structure remained almost unchanged. He showed that during British period, the role of collector was a classical authoritative ruler; but during Pakistan period, a collector became gradually involved and engaged in social welfare and rural development activities. On the other hand, Dr. A.M.M. Shawkat Ali (1982) argued that the function of district administration was mainly law & order and revenue collection, but in the next few decades, Collector came into the mainstream of development process. Ali, Rahman and Das (1983) mentioned that the whole administration had gone through a number of administrative reforms and decentralization process by a large number of Reform Committees and Commissions in

ⁱⁱⁱ Collector, Deputy Commissioner and District Magistrate indicate the same official person.

the past right from the British Rule through Pakistan as well as Bangladesh. They argued that district administration has gone through many changes due the decentralization and reform process. In contrast, Q. A. Ali (1995) argued that for better coordination and performance, district administration has undergone many changes and decentralization process getting involved in many developmental activities in the district.

Nicolas Henry (1975) focused on different paradigms in public administration. He argued that public administration was never in a static condition and is always going through a transformation or changing process. According to G. S. Cheema (2004), traditional public administration has gone through a series of change in order to face the challenge of globalization and modernization. A. E. Sarkar (2006) has observed that developing countries like Bangladesh have embraced the NPM formula under pressure from donor agencies but their success in implementing measures has been limited. Ferdousi & Qiu (2013) found that some administrative reforms in Bangladesh, specially provided by the World Bank and Public Administration Reform Commission, have the reflection of NPM. O. E. Hughes (1998) argued that Managerialism (NPM) has not yet taken over completely in public administration. It contains elements of both modes in an uneasy coexistence. According to the views of O'Flynn (2007), at the end of 20th century, a post bureaucratic model of public management was embedded to enact a break from the traditional model of public administration. The new paradigm is a reaction to perceived weaknesses of traditional bureaucratic paradigm. Similarly, Mark Robinson (2015) argued that public administration in 21st century has undergone dramatic change due to globalization and pluralisation. According to the assessment of M. M. Khan (2013), development of public administration in Bangladesh has been influenced by an amalgamation of factors including foreign innovations within the concept of local socio-political culture. M. S. Haque (2007) found that a major paradigm shift has emerged in the theory and practice of public administration worldwide. The recent trend represents a significant shift/move away from the earlier state-centric colonial bureaucracy.

3. Methodology

This study is based on the qualitative method of research. The process of historical method has been followed here. The researcher has gone for content analysis and archive documents. Data has also been collected from secondary sources like books, texts, articles, internet sources, DC's conference meeting resolution from Cabinet Division, and official documents of DC Office etc. There have been two case studies conducted here in this research. Two districts (Office of the Deputy Commissioner) are selected for the purpose. One is Jessore and another is Gazipur. A total 35 number of respondents have been interviewed in this research. Among them former Advisers of Caretaker Government (former civil servants) 2, former Chief Election Commissioner (former civil servants) 1, Historian 1, Academic 1, former Civil Servants (Secretary) 1,

incumbent Secretaries/Additional Secretaries of different ministries/divisions 4, incumbent Deputy Commissioners/former Deputy Commissioners 8, incumbent Additional Deputy Commissioners 8, media personalities 2, civil society members 3, citizens 3 and former staff of DC office 1. This study is totally an exploratory study. The researcher has gone to thoroughly present the collected data from content/archive documents, case studies and empirical observations. However, the researcher has used textual presentation (narratives text) with coding, charts, figures and tables for easily understanding his arguments.

4. Clarifying Terms

According to the Online Dictionary of the Social Sciences (2006: 1), a paradigm is defined as a framework what is used in thinking about and organizing an understanding of natural or social phenomena. This process can be referred to as a paradigmatic shift, as the sets of assumptions of the phenomena, from place to place, change over time; there emerges a new way of looking at the world.

According to O'Flynn (2007), there is a paradigmatic break of modern public administration from the traditional model. It is a reformed public sector where transformation has taken place by breaking away from the repressive, autocratic and conservative paradigm of public administration that would follow the top down hierarchies underpinned by Weber's (1946) bureaucracy, Wilson's (1887) policy administration divide, and Taylor's (1911) scientific management model of work organization. It is thus seen as a body of managerial thought or as an ideological thought system based on ideas generated in the private sector and imported into the public sector (Hood 1991: 3–19, Hood 1995: 104–117).

Therefore, "Development Paradigm" can be defined as a paradigmatic break from the traditional model of public administration that reflects a shift or transformation from the authoritative and conservative paradigm of public administration towards a technology dependent, development & service oriented, citizen centric administration based on a particular set of activities. It is a paradigm where the features of NPA or NPM may coexist with TPA in order to bring positive changes in development and promote citizen satisfaction. The conventional character of the administration appears to be transformed gradually from the traditional model of public administration. In traditional public administration, the regulatory functions dominate over citizen with a very less or no attention regarding social welfare, development and citizen service. In fact, there had been no development activities observed during TPA. But in development paradigm, social welfare, citizen satisfaction and overall development activities dominate over the regulatory functions of the administration. Administrators play their role not as a ruler, but as an administrative manager. Development coordination, innovation, technology and social media or media play a significant role in this paradigm.

5. Theoretical Concept

5.1 Concept of Traditional Public Administration (TPA)

The traditional model of public administration (TPA) remains the longest standing and most discussed and even debated theory of management in the public sector which predominated for most of the 20th century. Its theoretical foundations were mainly derived from Max Weber, Woodrow Wilson, Frederick Taylor and the Northcote–Trevelyan Report (1854) in the United Kingdom.

The journey of traditional model is best seen to begin in the mid-nineteenth century in Britain. The recruitment in bureaucracy particularly for the Indian Civil Service (ICS) started by open competitive examination under the supervision of a central examination board according to Northcote–Trevelyan Report (1854) and the previous patronage system was abolished. On the contrary, Max Weber (1846-1920) focused on the control from top to bottom in the form of monocratic hierarchy. Here policy is set at the top and carried out through a series of offices, with each manager and worker reporting to one superior and held to account by that person. Total bureaucratic system is based on a set of rules and regulations which flows from public law; the system of control is rational and legal. The role of the bureaucrat is strictly subordinate to the political superior (Pfiffner, 2004).

Woodrow Wilson (1856-1924) was one of the main proponents of the politics-administration dichotomy who had a great contribution to the traditional model of public administration. He argued that administration should be separated from political policy making which allowed public administration to emerge as a self-conscious field of study. Frederick Winslow Taylor (1856-1915) made a contribution to the classical model with his time and motion studies and careful analysis of the role of managers and workers. Taylor's Principles of Scientific Management emphasized tight control of work processes and careful planning by managers. He pointed out that management was a true science resting upon clearly fixed laws, rules and principles as foundation.

5.2 Concept of New Public Administration (NPA)

NPA is a concept or reaction against traditional public administration. It is well illustrated as an anti-positivist, anti-technical and anti-hierarchical reaction against conventional regulatory public administration. It focuses on the ever changing needs of the public and role of government how they can provide these services to the citizens. The concept of New Public Administration (NPA) was emerged in 1960s in the USA from the demand of responsive governance and equity in service delivery (Pandey, 2010). The discipline and practice of traditional public administration gradually underwent a transformation. Change was visible with the abandonment of politics-administration dichotomy and re-establishing a link between the two in the context of public policy making. According to Frederickson (1980), New Public Administration (NPA) adds social equity to the classic objectives and rationale where social equity is enhanced during service delivery.

5.3 Concept of New Public Management (NPM)

The New Public Management (NPM) is a concept that applies the business customer service model to government (Osborne & Gaebler, 1980). More elaborately, the new model advances the use of private sector style models, organizational ideas and values to improve the efficiency and service of the public sector. Citizens are seen as customers and the administrative role is streamlined by converting policy alternatives into market choices. This approach focuses on results and promotes competition inside and outside government. The adoption of new forms of public management means the emergence of a new paradigm in the public sector and traditional public administration discredited theoretically and practically. Initially (1990) during beginning of the new model in most advanced and developing countries, it had several names, including: 'managerialism' (Pollitt, 1993); 'new public management' (Hood, 1991); 'market-based public administration'; the 'post-bureaucratic paradigm' (Barzelay, 2001) or 'entrepreneurial government' (Osborne and Gaebler, 1993).

5.4 Salient Features of TPA, NPA and NPM

From the analysis of different scholars as discussed earlier, the salient features of TPA, NPA and NPM have been derived in the table below. These features are the base of this research study.

TPA	NPA	NPM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal control of political leadership • Secrecy and Citizen avoiding in government business • Rigid and rule bound • A formal hierarchical structure • Public private distinction • Emphasis on rationality in decision making • Authoritative approach • Process oriented inward accountability • Adoption of centralized strategy • Resistance to change • Politics-administration dichotomy • Risk avoidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsive administration to the change • Client centricity • Flexible and comfortable structure • Awareness regarding citizen • Diversity of functional skill • Social equity • Rationality • Multi-disciplinary nature of public administration • Democratic citizenship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mission driven government & transforming rule driven organization • Competition in service delivery • Emphasis on output/result • Contracting out • Private sector style of management • Strengthening steering function rather than rowing • Empowering rather than serving • Satisfying customer or clients' needs • Participation and team work. • Market oriented practice • Improving human resource management. • Optimizing information technology • Stress on better resource use • Explicit standards & measures of performance

6. Functional Shift of District Administration

6.1 Features indicating TPA at Present DC Office:

Firstly, bureaucrats work according to the decision of the political leadership maintaining political neutrality. Deputy Commissioner also has to follow the instructions and guidance of the central government, more clearly, party in power. An eminent former Adviser of Caretaker Government and former Cabinet Secretary mentioned,

“Political government always provides necessary instructions and guidelines to DC. He cannot work independently.”

Another former Adviser of Caretaker Government and former Secretary said,

“All DCs are more or less politically biased. They cannot go beyond the intention of political government.”

A former Secretary who worked as Deputy Commissioner in the past, mentioned,

“At present, DC is doing everything by following the order of higher level political leaders.”

According to the observations of these scholars, DCs are posted on political choice; they work in close connection with the political leaders. Like all other bureaucrats, DC is regulated by the formal control of the political leadership.

Secondly, DC office is fairly guided and motivated by the upper level bureaucracy. In DC office, ADC and other junior officers also maintain a fairly hierarchic relationship with the Deputy Commissioner. An eminent former Chief Election Commissioner and former Secretary mentioned,

“The official hierarchic structure of DC office will remain unchanged, no doubt, but the role and function will change over time.”

Another former Secretary mentioned that the official hierarchic structure of DC Office more or less remained unchanged. Example: official organogram of DC Office prepared by Ministry of Public Administration (MOPA).

Thirdly, for any decision making, Deputy Commissioner considers the rationality regarding citizen or the situation. Recently, all DCs take decision according to the circumstances in his jurisdiction. One of the Joint Secretaries, Cabinet Division, mentioned that DCs are bound to follow the rules and regulations of the government, but during decision making, they have the discretion to take final decision. In many

cases, they become 'tactful' for decision making, even in emergency. In the same way, they decide about the citizen service giving emphasis on rationality. One example is the approval or sanction of relief to the people of different upazilas in the district during flood.

Fourthly, like central bureaucracy, officers in DC office are accountable to their senior and all are accountable to the Deputy Commissioner for every official process, procedure and other activities. Deputy Commissioner Jessore mentioned that, there exists very friendly relationship among the officers in the office. Junior officers obey their ADCs and ADCs are very process oriented and loyal to DC. Example: Annual Confidential Report (ACR).

Fifthly, the pattern of the power practice of DC office is still centralized. For every decision, junior officers or ADCs have to depend on or wait for the decision of DC. Power is not yet decentralized. The researcher found that every file of the section goes up to the Deputy Commissioner. The strategy is still highly centralized.

Sixthly, it is a general task of field administration as well bureaucracy is risk management. One of the eminent historians mentioned that political leaders are very dominant now and DC has to maintain a check and balance relationship with them in order to avoid risk. In the same way, district administration plans and takes action for disaster management and other issue to avoid risk. One example is issuing order of 144 Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) of 1898 for preventing the hazard of political clash or public clash in the jurisdiction.

The above discussed features are the part of present district administration as well as the features of TPA. There are other features like citizen avoiding, rigid and rule bound attitude, public-private distinction, authoritative approach, resistance to change which are not found to be existed in DC office at present. Current Deputy Commissioners are becoming more and more citizen centric; they are hearing from the people every day. DC office is, no doubt, government rule bound, but the rigidity in applying those rules is reducing day by day. Present Deputy Commissioners are not as harsh and authoritative as they were in British period. But, the features that are discussed above indicate that present district administration holds the tradition of classical administration although some features have already been transformed to other paradigms.

Table 1: Summary of the Features of Traditional Public Administration (TPA) at Present Office of the Deputy Commissioner

No.	Salient Features of TPA	TPA Features at Present DC Office	Example
1	Formal control of political leadership	exist	Guidance of political government.
2	Secrecy and Citizen avoiding in government business	-	-
3	Rigid and rule bound	-	-
4	A formal hierarchical structure	exist	Official organogram (by MOPA).

5	Public private distinction	-	-
6	Emphasis on rationality in decision making	exist	Approval of relief during flood.
7	Authoritative approach	-	-
8	Process oriented inward accountability	exist	Annual Confidential Report (ACR).
9	Adoption of centralized strategy	exist	DC is the decision maker by law.
10	Resistance to change	-	-
11	Politics-administration dichotomy	-	-
12	Risk avoidance	exist	Issuing order of 144 CrPC 1898.

6.2 Features indicating NPA at Present DC Office:

Firstly, district administration provides a good response to the citizens' change of demands. DC Jessore mentioned that DC office has taken some innovative actions for mitigating the demands of the people. For example, Jessore DC office has taken initiatives for the introduction of e-mutation in all Assistant Commissioner (Land) offices in the district considering citizens' consecutive demands. Another example of the responsive administration is the new supply system of land records to the citizen through the Union Digital Centre (UDC) in the district.

Secondly, DC office considers citizens as their clients. Present DC office is putting the citizen or client satisfaction to the top of its priorities. Accordingly, it is initiating some innovations in order to mitigate their demands. There is Front Desk or District e-Service Centre introduced in the DC office in order to provide one stop service to the citizens.

Thirdly, DC office has increased awareness building programs in order to create awareness among the people as well as empower them. DC Faridpur said,

"DC is getting mixed with the people without any hesitation. We are empowering people by ensuring their rights."

One example of awareness building is attending the "Uthan Boithak"^{iv} (Yard Meeting) with the village people in their yard.

Fourthly, one of the most important functions of DC is the coordination of all the activities of different departments in the districts. He is the chairperson of different committees in the district in which he has to play major role for the decision in the meetings. On the other hand, he has to also coordinate and cooperate with the NGOs, politicians and all classes of people in the society. So, he has the diversity of functional skill in order to handle all the situations.

Fifthly, DC takes decision rationally. One of the Civil Society members said that DC is the last hope of the people in the district. For this reason, DC has to consider

^{iv} "Uthan Boithak" is a Bengali word consisting of Uthan and Boithak. "Uthan" means yard and "Boithak" means meeting. The full meaning is yard meeting.

everything rationally and put his decision accordingly. For example, DC takes rational decision while approving the compensation money for the land acquisition in his jurisdiction.

The above discussed features are the part of present district administration as well as features of NPA. There are other features like flexible and adaptable structure, social equity, multi-disciplinary nature and democratic citizenship which do not resemble with the features of present DC office. The structure of DC office is also determined by the government which is not flexible. The issue of democratic citizenship was applicable in the 1970s in western countries like USA. DC office has a diversification of activities but the nature is not multi-disciplinary. In broader sense, it appears that some conventional features of DC office have been transformed into the features of NPA.

Table 2: Summary of the Features of New Public Administration (NPA) at Present Office of the Deputy Commissioner

No.	Salient Features of NPA	NPA Features at Present DC Office	Example
1	Responsive administration to the change	exist	Land Records delivery through Union Digital Centre.
2	Client centricity	exist	Front Desk, District e-Service Centre.
3	Flexible and adaptable structure	-	-
4	Awareness regarding citizen	exist	“Uthan Boithak” (Yard Meeting)
5	Diversity of functional skill	exist	DC as Chairperson of different committees of districts.
6	Social equity	-	-
7	Rationality	exist	Approval of land acquisition compensation money.
8	Multi-disciplinary nature of public administration	-	-
9	Democratic citizenship	-	-

6.3 Features indicating NPM at Present DC Office:

Firstly, office of the Deputy Commissioner is result or output oriented. In order to achieve the desired result, government has started agreement signing between DC Office and relevant ministries of the government. Example: Annual Performance Agreement.

Secondly, Deputy Commissioner has started providing guidance and direction to other officers or staff in order to produce desired output or result. For example, DC as a chief coordinator of the district provides guidance and necessary instructions through various coordination meeting with line agencies in a participative manner in order to achieve government goal.

Thirdly, DC together with other officers and staff is working like a team in order to implement the agenda of the central government in the district such as “Digital

Bangladesh.” One example is District Innovation Team. DC is leading the team with active participation.

Fourthly, district administration has given stress on the human resource development in order to make them user friendly with digital equipment such as laptop, computer, internet, scanner etc. For example, in every DC office there is computer lab, where all staff receives training regularly. Similarly, officers are sent to the Prime Minister’s Office, Cabinet Division and other training centre both inside and outside of the country; even DC himself goes for foreign training such as Mid-career Training in India.

Fifthly, in DC office, information and communication technology (ICT) is playing a vital role for service delivery and e-management system. For example, e-filing, digital land record management system, District e-Service Centre.

Sixthly, district administration has given more importance now on better resource management. For example, introduction of audit system for the use of local revenue fund. It was not before in the DC office. It has created a stress on DC for the better utilization of that fund.

Seventhly, DC office provides digital services to the citizen through district e-Service Centre and Front Desk. DC Munshiganj said,

“Citizens are our customers or service receivers and DC Office is service provider. Government services are products and good will is profit. So, we are working in order to satisfy our customer and profit maximization.”

The above discussed features are the part of present district administration as well as features of NPM. There are other features like, mission driven government, transforming rule driven organization, competition in service delivery, contracting out, private sector style of management, market oriented practice, explicit standards and measures of practice which are not observed in DC office during the study. DC office is still a government rule bound organization. Its mission and vision is set by the central government. The provision of private sector style of management is not applicable in this office. The question of contracting out and market oriented practice is quite impractical here. But it is true that private-public distinction is reducing day by day. As a core government organization, DC office is not yet assessed on the basis of performance, but the provision has been initiated recently for bringing out some desired output/results of government. Many conventional activities of DC office have been shifted towards NPM.

Table 3: Summary of the Features of New Public Management (NPM) at Present Office of the Deputy Commissioner

No.	Salient Features of NPM	NPM Features at Present DC Office	Example
1	Mission driven government & transforming rule driven	-	-

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	organization.		
2	Competition in service delivery	-	-
3	Emphasis on output/result	exist	Annual Performance Agreement
4	Contracting out	-	-
5	Private sector style of management	-	-
6	Strengthening steering function rather than rowing	exist	Instructions through various coordination meeting to line agencies
7	Empowering rather than serving.	-	-
8	Participation and team work.	exist	District Innovation Team.
9	Market oriented practice	-	-
10	Improving human resource management.	exist	Training at DC office computer lab.
11	Optimizing information technology	exist	e-Filing, District e-Service Centre.
12	Stress on better resource use	exist	Audit system for the use of local revenue fund.
13	Explicit standards & measures of performance	-	-
14	Satisfying customer or clients' needs	exist	Front Desk.

6.4 Present Features of the Office of the Deputy Commissioner

Empirically the study has found that TPA, NPA & NPM co-exist in an uneasy manner in the Office of the Deputy Commissioner in Bangladesh. A noticeable number of features of transformation resemble with New Public Management (NPM); some features still reflect the Traditional Public Administration (TPA). There are also examples of feature of New Public Administration (NPA). The transformation reflects a mixture of the features of TPA, NPA and NPM.

Table 4: Summary of Features (TPA/NPA/NPM) at Present Office of the Deputy Commissioner

Present Office of the Deputy Commissioner		
TPA	NPA	NPM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal control of political leadership • A formal hierarchical structure • Emphasis on rationality in decision making • Process oriented inward accountability • Adoption of centralized strategy • Risk avoidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsive administration to the change • Flexible and adaptable structure • Awareness regarding citizen • Diversity of functional skill • Rationality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on output/result • Strengthening steering function rather than rowing • Participation and team work. • Improving human resource management. • Optimizing information technology • Stress on better resource use • Satisfying customer or clients' needs

7. Key Factors Affecting the Transformation of the Role and Function of Deputy Commissioner

From the content analysis, secondary data, media sources, interviews and case studies, it is evident that there has been a gradual transformation in the role and function of the Deputy Commissioner. There are several factors that are contributing to this transformation of the conventional character of district administration. This study has identified those factors that are responsible for the transformation.

A. Election Manifesto

The role and function of the Deputy Commissioner has been changed according to the instructions and guidance of the government in power. Government is guided by the election manifesto that they set for the people and country during election. For example, in the Parliament Election 2008, one of the main issues of the election manifesto of Bangladesh Awami League was “Vision 2021” – a charter for change. When they came in power in 2009, formally they declared “Digital Bangladesh and Vision 2021” in order to implement their election manifesto. In the field administration, Deputy Commissioner has to come out of the traditional mentality and go through many new and changing environments for implementing “Digital Bangladesh” in district level.

B. Various Administrative Reforms

A number of Commission and Committees report like Report of the Public Service Commission, 1886-87, Montagu-Chelmsford Reform 1912, Royal Commission on the Superior Civil Services in India, 1924, and Rowland Committee 1944-45 focused some attention on administrative reform. But a major milestone in this context was Montagu-Chelmsford Report 1912 and Bengal District Administrative Committee Report 1913-14 and Rowland Committee 1944-45 (Ali et. al. 1983). During Pakistan period, the designation of District Magistrate (DM) was changed to Deputy Commissioner (DC) according to recommendation of Provincial Administration Commission (Akhtar Hossain Commission) 1959 to strengthen his position. In Bangladesh, on the basis of the recommendations of the Administrative Reform Committee (M. A. Khan Committee) 1982, 42 subdivisions were upgraded into new districts which were inaugurated in 1984 (Ali, 1995).

C. Decentralization

Administrative and Local Government decentralization started from the British period and it continued in Pakistan period up to Bangladesh. Governor General Lord Ripon in 1882, decided to introduce a democratic local government system in Bengal (Ali, 1995). It was implemented by the historic Local Self Government Act, 1885 which provided for the creation of a district board for each district. Initially the District Magistrate became the ex-officio chairman of the board. But a present, in the Zila Parishad (District Council), there are elected chairman and members. In the same way, municipalities and other local government bodies were separated from the central administration replaced by elected representatives.

D. Separation of Judiciary

Judicial function was a part and parcel of Collector from the beginning in British India. Afterwards, several times this function had been separated from the executive and collector regained it again. Recently, in 2007 during Caretaker Government in Bangladesh, judiciary has been separated from the executive due to some constitutional obligation. This study found that the role and function of the Deputy Commissioner has been greatly influenced due to this separation. An eminent former Adviser of the Caretaker Government and former Cabinet Secretary said,

“Separation of judiciary has influenced the power of DC adversely. DC has become meaningless now without judicial power. As a result, they have lost their control over police.”

E. Socio-economic Change

The literacy rate and awareness of the citizens have increased a lot with the passage of time. Particularly, in the age of digitalization, people come to know everything with the help of technology. They know about citizen charter, Right to Information (RTI) Act, web portal etc. that helped them to raise their voice about their demands. The government as well as administration have also been aware of the citizens and showed a very positive approach to this change of citizen’s awareness. At the same time, the economic condition of the people is also improving day by day. Administration is also influenced by these socio-economic changes of the people. The study found that district administration has prepared itself in order to mitigate this change of the society.

F. Citizen Charter (CC) and Right to Information (RTI)

According to the direction of both Cabinet Division and Ministry of Establishment all DC offices and its subordinate offices implemented Citizen Charter on February’ 2008 (Nayem, 2010). Later on, this initiative was more strengthened by the district administration in Bangladesh. Field administration expert, an eminent Professor of Department of Public Administration, Dhaka University mentioned,

“In every DC office, there is a ‘Citizen Charter’ by which they are trying to provide services to the citizen or inform them about their services. It was imaginary in the past. Citizen Charter itself is a big development to the paradigm shift”.

Similarly, The Right to Information (RTI) Act was introduced in Bangladesh in 2009. The Act made provisions for ensuring free flow of information and people’s right to information. President of Jessore Press Club said,

“Nothing can be hidden in the office of the Deputy Commissioner now, because citizens have the right to every information. Right to Information Act 2009 has empowered the citizens and helped to change the scenario of DC office.”

G. Five Year Plan

The government of Bangladesh has made a mega plan to boost up its economy such that it can achieve the target of vision 2021 and become a middle income country within that time frame. Government is trying its best to strengthen finance for 7th five year plan (2016-2020) and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Bangladesh. In the recent past, government successfully achieved Millennium Development Goal (MDG) with the implementation of 6th five year plan (2011-2015). In the field administration, DC Office has to play a leading role in order to achieving these goals including many other developmental as well strategic action plans as directed in the five year plan. The key argument is that the role of the DC Office institutionally has been influenced by the five year plan as set by the government.

H. Innovation & Technology

In the field administration, office of the Deputy Commissioner is leading the district innovation team and innovative activities. Government Innovation Unit (GIU) of the Prime Minister's Office is providing proper guidelines and support for the purpose. Cabinet Division, MOPA and other strategic ministries are also providing necessary support for the innovation. DC Office is coming out of the traditional approach by applying the innovative technique in different service clusters, such as land record management, improving office environment for the citizens, use of face book etc. On the other hand, in the age of globalization; technology is playing a major role for easy communication among the people and bringing desired changes/outcomes. Government has provided huge supports of technology to the DC office through a2i project and ICT ministries. Laptop, computer, printers, broad band and wifi connection, video conferencing equipments, supporting infra structures etc. have changed the office environment into a new and digital one. Here technology is facilitating e-functioning support in DC Office. Use of technology has helped a lot both officers and staff of the office to get rid of traditional mentality.

I. Education and Training

Ministry of Public Administration (MOPA), Cabinet Division and Prime Minister's Office (PMO) have designed and organized different types of training and higher education programs for the field level officers both within the country and in foreign country. For example, MOPA has designed a special project for the government officials for Masters, Post Graduate Diploma, and PhD in the foreign countries in order to strengthen their skill and ability. Many officers have achieved the degree from foreign country and they are coming out of traditional. In the same way, many domestic and foreign training have been designed for the Deputy Commissioner. For example, mid-career training in India for DC. PMO (Prime Minister's Office) also organized some special training on innovation, ICT, development and other issues. These training have helped the officers for setting their mind in a different way such that they can really help the people as a service provider, not as a ruler.

J. Annual Performance Agreement

Annual Performance Agreement (APA) is the latest innovation being signed between DC Office and different ministries/divisions. The purpose of agreement signing is to be result or output oriented. It is one kind of obligation, accountability or visibility of the annual work of district administration that will be evaluated by the central government. On the basis of evaluation of annual performance or result, DC office will be rewarded. An eminent Senior Secretary to the Government of Bangladesh and first woman Deputy Commissioner (former) said,

“It was imaginary in the past that DC Office is signing agreement (Annual Performance Agreement) with the government for their annual performance evaluation. The agreement will make DC Office more innovative, citizen centric, result or output oriented, accountable and transparent, effective and efficient.”

K. Media & Social Media

District administration is using the opportunity of media and social media in order to extend their publicity to all. All DCs have face book account and web portal now. They can publish their developmental and other activities and also provide relevant information publicly through social media. People can also put their comments on DC's activities through social media. Moreover, media is very strong now. DC has to face them regularly. So, nothing can be hidden at present. Deputy Commissioner, Faridpur said,

“People are very conscious and educated now. They are getting all the information from internet, face book and other social media. Electronic and print media is also very strong. So, district administration is also open to all. DC is getting mixed with the people without any hesitation. We are empowering people by ensuring their rights.”

L. Recognition or Reward System

Government has introduced reward system in the field administration particularly in the district administration for their contribution in innovative and other significant role or service oriented activities. For example, Prime Minister Medal and MOPA Medal for the best Deputy Commissioner in National level. Deputy Commissioner Gazipur said,

“Government is formulating new rules and regulations to run the administration, at the same time government is encouraging DC to be innovative and citizen centric, declaring reward for significant innovation and citizen service from Prime Minister's Office, providing budgets, encouraging to be digitized and go for more citizen centric services.”

In previous time, this type of provision was not incorporated in the system by the government. It might not have that much financial value, but it has a big impact on creating moral value and it counts much more than anything.

Table 5: Summary of the Factors Affecting the Transformation of the Role and Functions of Deputy Commissioner

No.	Factors	Interpretive Summary	Example
1	Election Manifesto	Political commitment of government to the people	Digital Bangladesh
2	Administrative Reforms	Administrative reforms by different Reform Commission/ Committees.	Administrative Reform Committee 1982 (M. A. Khan Committee)
3	Separation of Judiciary	Constitutional commitment	In 2007, DC lost magisterial power.
4	Socio-economic change	Increase in citizen awareness and demand due to change of literacy & economy over time	Demand for online service
5	Decentralization	Loss of authority over some institution.	District Council
6	Five Year Plan	Government expenditure and action plan	7 th five year plan
7	Innovation & Technology	Small reform within office for better service delivery. Technology helps visible and in time easy service delivery.	District e-Service Centre, Front Desk, Reception. Laptop, Computer, Scanner
8	Education & Training	Higher education and foreign/domestic training for the officers and staff.	a2i Training, Strengthening Officials Program, Mid career training program in India.
9	Citizen Charter (CC) & Right to Information (RTI)	Openness of official service delivery and access to information.	DC Office Citizen Charter. Focal Point Officer for information providing.
10	Annual Performance Agreement (APA)	Annual Performance Agreement between DC (ADC) and different ministries	Agreement between ADC (Rev.) and Land Reform Board.
11	Media/Social Media	Increases accountability, visibility and publicity of DC Office.	Electronic & print media, face book.
12	Recognition/ Reward System	Increases inspiration and efficiency for service delivery	Prime Minister Medal, MOPA Medal for best DC

8. Conclusion

The importance of District Administration is increasing day by day particularly in development oriented activities. Current Deputy Commissioners are neither punitive rulers nor harsh and remote administrators. The style of British colonial bureaucracy has been reversed at present because Deputy Commissioners are totally pro people and citizen friendly now. People still feel that there is only one office in the district that will stand beside them in their well and woe, that is, the Office of the Deputy Commissioner. Keeping an eye to the demand of the people, Office of the Deputy Commissioner has brought gradual changes in its strategy. As a result, besides traditional regulatory functions, Deputy Commissioners are getting significantly involved in the activities of New Public Management. It was unthinkable in Vice Regal System or even in Pakistan period. In this study, it has been found that Deputy

Commissioners have come out of authoritative and conservative mentality of public administration and they are moving towards a technology dependent, development & service oriented citizen centric administration which indicates a new paradigm. It may be termed as “Development Paradigm”.

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