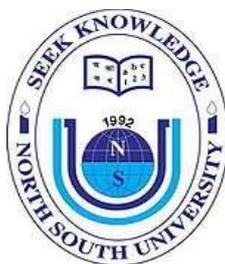


Accountability Mechanisms of the Press Information Department (PID) of Bangladesh

Md. Mahmudul Kabir

ID: 0930014085

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**Master in Public Policy and Governance Program
Department of General and Continuing Education
North South University, Bangladesh**

Dedicated to

Those few civil servants who have made their vows to serve the country by serving the people, to develop the nation by developing their own capabilities, and to remain accountable to conscience by the acts of just deeds.

Abstract

Press Information Department (PID) of Bangladesh is a government press and public relations organization that can be regarded as the “conduit” or “ventilation” through which information on government activities are channeled to the public and feedbacks from public are reached to the government. The importance of accountability issues of such organizations is crucial in a democracy since if they are non-existent, become feeble, or operate in unaccountable manners then the whole democratic system becomes unstable. PID issues government press releases and photos to print and electronic media and arranges press conference for journalists. It needs to keep liaison with large stakeholders of print and electronic media organizations. Therefore, unlike other government organizations, it needs to maintain two-fold accountability towards both government and stakeholders. Being sensitive to the needs and demands of the stakeholders is intertwined with following formal administrative accountability. As a public relations organizations, it also needs to maintain proper relationships with its ‘input’ and ‘output’ environments so that it can response and change in tune with the changes in environments. In view of the above, present thesis attempts to analyze PID’s current state of accountability mechanisms which is the first of this kind in Bangladesh.

The thesis focuses on two types of accountability mechanisms - internal administrative accountability and external informal accountability towards stakeholders, and measures the effect of current state of mechanisms in fulfilling democratic accountability through communication and public relations activities of PID. It adopts both qualitative and quantitative methods. In-depth interview, case study, content and record analysis, and observation methods are used for qualitative analysis, while structured and semi-structured questionnaire are employed for quantitative analysis. Necessary theoretical discussions are included and the observations and findings of previous research works are analyzed.

The research has found some significant problems in PID’s accountability mechanisms. Due to the lack of press and public relations policies and rules, and clear roles and responsibilities, Public Relations Officers (PROs) attached to different ministries and the officials working in the Newsroom are facing uncertainties and conflicts in performing their duties. Current administrative rules cannot guide them; on the contrary hinder their performance due to bureaucratic procedures. There are ambiguities in the exercising of authority and control mechanisms as PROs need to work under multiple authorities. PID is also plagued with other administrative problems that are commonly found in any public organization in Bangladesh. On the other hand, in the view of media houses, PID handouts lack what people want to know, contain insignificant speeches and events of the activities of the ministers, and are inferior to other sources. Media houses have virtually taken the ‘exit’ option with very low use of and dependency on PID’s services. They knock it only on special occasions. PID has been found as ill-prepared for the changing media scenario, and non-responsive to its ‘input’ and ‘output’ environments since only 25% of PID respondents have recognized they have any accountability and responsibility to the stakeholders. The researcher hopes that the findings of this thesis could help bring about necessary policy making by the government so that both government and stakeholders’ interests could be uphold that would ensure proper flow of information and corresponding smooth function of democracy in the country.

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List of abbreviations

| | |
|--------|--|
| ACR | Annual Confidential Report |
| AMO | Authorized Medical Officer |
| BAKSAL | Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League |
| BB | Bangladesh Betar |
| BBC | British Broadcasting Corporation |
| BCS | Bangladesh Civil Service |
| BDR | Bangladesh Rifles |
| BGB | Border Guard of Bangladesh |
| BPSC | Bangladesh Public Service Commission |
| BRAC | Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee |
| BSR | Bangladesh Service Rules |
| BSS | Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha |
| BTV | Bangladesh Television |
| CAG | Comptroller and Auditor General |
| CNN | Cable News Network |
| COI | Central Office of Information (UK) |
| CSO | Counter Signing Officer |
| DG | Director General |
| DPIO | Deputy Principal Information Officer |
| DS | Deputy Secretary |
| FTP | File Transfer Protocol |
| GoB | Government of Bangladesh |
| HC | Hierarchical Control |
| ICT | Information and Communication Technology |
| JS | Joint Secretary |
| MOI | Ministry of Information |

| | |
|------|---|
| MP | Member of Parliament |
| NGO | Non-Government Organization |
| OECD | Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| ORU | Officer Reported Upon |
| OSD | Officer on Special Duty |
| PAES | Public Administration Efficiency Study |
| PIB | Press Information Bureau (India) |
| PID | Press Information Department |
| PIO | Principal Information Officer |
| PPA | Printing and Publication (Declaration and Registration) Act |
| PR | Public Relations |
| PRO | Public Relations Officer |
| RAB | Rapid Action Battalion |
| RIO | Report Initiating Officer |
| RTI | Right to Information |
| R&D | Research and Development |
| SOE | State-Owned Enterprise |
| TO&E | Table of Organization and Equipment |
| UK | United Kingdom |
| UNB | United News of Bangladesh |
| UNDP | United Nation's Development Programs |
| US | United States |
| VVIP | Very Very Important Person |

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Md. Mahmudul Kabir

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1 INTRODUCTION

Press Information Department (PID) is one of the most important departments of the Ministry of Information. It is located inside the Bangladesh Secretariat. Its birth is associated not only with the birth of Bangladesh; rather it had its existence during the days of East Pakistan. After having been free from Pakistan, PID started its work at full length from 1972 having the central and provincial office merged under a single authority. As the spokes organization of the government, PID plays the nucleus role in disseminating information to the people to inform government activities, policy - decisions, development plans etc. in the form of handout distributed to the press and electronic media for having coverage as the main source of government. At the same time it functions as the two way traffic like letting people know about government activities and getting the feedback of the mass and reaching it to the government. It also arranges press conference for journalists, and issues accreditation cards to them. Though PID works like a news agency and keeps constant communications with the media organizations, it is entirely a government organization with a formal bureaucratic set-up.

The present thesis is an attempt to study the two-fold accountability mechanisms of PID - internal administrative accountability and external informal accountability towards stakeholders. The current chapter demonstrates all the technical aspects of the thesis. It depicts the background and objectives of the thesis as well as its significance, scope and limitations. It also touches the problem statement that gives rise to the rationale of choosing the present thesis topic. The analytical framework which the whole thesis work is based upon has also been discussed along with relevant concepts. In the end part the various methods adopted to obtain the required primary and secondary data have been presented.

1.1 Background

An organization involved in disseminating information and doing public relations for the government plays very crucial role in establishing and functioning of democracy in any country. Such organizations not only let people know the policies and activities of the government, but also send people's feedback to the government. Accountability dimensions and mechanisms of such organizations are therefore inherently two-folded. They must show simultaneous accountability to both the government and the stakeholders or people. PID of

Bangladesh is an organization just like that. It is a formal bureaucratic organization but works in a media environment. It disseminates news on government activities to media which adds extra dimension and complexity to its accountability mechanisms. It has a large number of stakeholder organizations in both public and private sector namely state-run Bangladesh Television, Bangladesh Betar, and all other private print and electronic agencies and media. It is also supposed to adopt modern communication tools or techniques for discharging its duties. But serving the master's will and fulfilling people's needs and demands are often at odds in Bangladesh, which is especially true for PID. In the rise of changing scenario of public governance, wide proliferation of media houses, emergence of social accountability issues and the change in service delivery technique, the problem has been exacerbated further. The following research is an attempt to understand and investigate into the nature, dimension and problems of accountability mechanisms of PID as the government spokes organization. The researcher hopes that the findings of this thesis will help to bring about some necessary adjustments in the accountability mechanisms of PID so that both government and stakeholders' interests are maintained which is vital for stabilizing the democratic process in the country.

1.2 Identification of the problem

According to the modern definition of accountability, civil servants are accountable upwards through administrative and political hierarchy and outwards through transparency and openness to stakeholders and to the public at large. For PID, taking the issue of stakeholders into consideration is indispensable as issuing a news item is meaningless if it is not published or aired. Therefore being sensitive to the needs and demands ("*voice*") of the stakeholders, or showing accountability to them, is intertwined with following formal administrative accountability. But PID is facing an uphill task in maintaining and balancing both accountabilities together. The issue is illustrated here.

PID is a government organization in first place and therefore is obligated to serve the government. In absence of civil service Act, accountability of government officers/staff toward government is maintained through formal bureaucratic top-down hierarchy using service rules/regulations and charter of duties of respective posts. PID's internal administrative accountability mechanism is sometimes plagued with unclear and ambiguous job description and lack of proper performance appraisal system. Performance appraisal is based on Annual Confidential Report (ACR). But it is alleged that there are loopholes in such

accountability mechanisms as charter of duties and job descriptions are not clear and specific, it is rather a kind of general guidelines where there are scopes for ambiguities; and social accountability issues are nearly non-present. There is no incentive for extra work/better performance. Similarly most critics are in the opinion that the composition of ACR itself is a faulty one as nearly all the evaluation criteria are based on subjective judgment. Such weaknesses in appraisal system has bred the culture of nepotism, favoritism, “tadbir”, persuasion, building personal connection, corruption and many other ill practices throughout the hierarchy. Accountability in these cases thus becomes “personal” to the superior rather than “professional”.

On the other hand, though PID is a bureaucratic organization, it works in a media environment and therefore it needs to keep liaison with all print and electronic media organizations constantly. It also needs to maintain close collaboration with the public relations sections of all the ministries as well as the office of the President and the Prime Minister. Newspapers and TV/Radio channels are the primary stakeholders who are supposed to receive all the handouts and other news items/articles from PID. Now-a-days, with the proliferation of so many news agencies and private media houses, attitude of the newspapers and channels towards getting government handouts has reached all-time low. Gone are those days when people were only relied upon government news agencies for obtaining information on state and international affairs. Stakeholders and service recipients of PID can actually “exit” from PID handouts. PID as well as BTV, Betar is also losing its credibility of delivering unbiased, factual news/report service. They are being accused of playing partisan role towards ruling party. Therefore government media organizations today are portrayed as ‘low trust’ organizations in people’s minds. Playing a suitable role as a government organization in this environment is truly difficult. PID needs to give extra efforts in order to get its handouts published in the newspapers as it needs to compete with all other private media agencies. This situation has raised two problems in service delivery. First, the news items released by Public Relations Officers of PID attached to the ministries fail to get coverage in the print and electronic media as the media houses are unwilling to publish/cover PID items on the ground that they are not up to their tastes and standards. In their view, PID handouts contain scanty information and are full of only ‘what Ministers say’ in which they have very little interest. Media want ‘background’ information and ‘investigative’ stories which the PROs are incapable of providing under present service conditions and practices. Second, due to bureaucratic procedures and lack of proper logistics, PID handouts are released much later than other agencies. It violates the condition of ‘immediacy’ of news and

therefore fails to get media coverage. Therefore accountability towards government and stakeholders are at odds which aggravates the service delivery of PID. This case may also be taken as an example of the tension and dilemma the civil servants are facing now in between responding to the demands of their political/administrative masters and fulfilling stakeholders' or people's needs.

The present study addresses the nature and limits of the above mentioned problems in accountability mechanisms of PID so that possible improvements can be suggested and chalked out.

1.3 Significance of the research problem

Democracy and democratic governance are dependent on people's mandate. According to the Systems Theory, first put forth by David Easton, in a sound democratic system government actions and policy decisions are dependent on "inputs" in the form of public demands and supports (Easton, D. 1965). The 'system' concept implies an identifiable set of institutions and activities in society that functions to transform demands into government decisions requiring the support of the whole society. It is evident that this indicates a two way communication between government and the people. Government departments involved in public relations and media communications, like PID, can be regarded as the "conduit" or "ventilation" through which information on government activities are channeled to the public and feedbacks from public are reached to the government. By definition, democratic governments should reflect public opinion and work best when the citizens are well-informed. Thus, public relations should have a natural and welcome role in any government. Therefore concept of systems approach has been extended to the public relations and communication theories. Effective two-way communications process between government and citizens takes place with the proper functioning of such organizations operating in the field of press, media, and public relations. They are inherently necessary for building trust between government and citizens. If such institutions are non-existent, become feeble, or operate in unaccountable manners then the whole democratic system will therefore be at stake and government will lose people's trust and will ultimately fall. But it is unfortunate that proper attention has not been paid to the study of operation and accountability mechanisms of such institutions. It has been uncharted territory so far. The present research is the first of this kind which focuses on the accountability mechanisms of a particular government organization. The choosing of PID will also help us to understand the inherent

complexity in the mechanisms of fulfilling both traditional (administrative) and external informal accountability. Other government media organizations namely Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS), Bangladesh Television (BTV), and Bangladesh Betar can also be benefitted with this research.

1.4 Research questions

In analyzing the accountability mechanisms of PID, the following research questions have been addressed:

- What is the current state of accountability mechanisms of PID in terms of internal administrative and external informal accountability towards stakeholders?
- Is there any problem/conflict in the mechanisms?
- What is the effect of current state of mechanisms in fulfilling democratic accountability through communication and public relations activities of PID?

1.5 Objectives

As the title of the thesis indicates, the general objective of the research is to analyze the accountability mechanisms of Press Information Department. The specific objectives are:

- To analyze the current state of internal/administrative and external informal accountability mechanisms of PID.
- To examine problem areas and conflicts in the mechanisms, with particular reference to conflict between internal accountability and external informal accountability towards stakeholders.
- To find out the effect of current state of accountability mechanisms in fulfilling democratic accountability through communication and public relations activities of PID.

1.6 Analytical framework

The analytical framework of this research has been based upon the theoretical concepts developed by Gilbert, Kernaghan, and Thynne and Goldring, discussed in the theoretical discussions chapter (p.19), with particular emphasis on the first and fourth category of accountability mechanisms depicted in table 2.2. For fulfilling the purpose of the thesis,

external informal accountability has been regarded as the outwards accountability and has only been taken the stakeholders (the news agencies, and the print/electronic media) into account, incorporating ‘exit’ and ‘voice’ mechanisms, and informal communication. Second category of accountability matrix presented in table 2.2, the external formal accountability, is beyond the scope of present thesis as legal accountability mechanism is confined to that part of law which lays down enforcement procedures. The main body of the law and judicial control, which civil servants follow as a matter of normal practice, is an instrument for controlling their behavior but not for holding them accountable (Mulgan 2000). Other elements namely Ombudsman, review tribunal, evaluation research etc. are not present in Bangladesh. Only the role of Right to Information (RTI) has been analyzed although it is not the part of the analytical framework as an indicator. The third category of the matrix, internal informal accountability, constitutes some non-clear ambiguous elements focused on ‘personal’, ‘moral’ and ‘inward’ aspects of a self, and therefore difficult to measure. Audit and budgeting mechanisms are excluded as indicators of internal administrative accountability in the framework for the same reason which is applicable for the exclusion of second category accountability mechanism (external formal accountability) in the table 2.2. Also, financial accountability is beyond the objectives and scope of this thesis, and there are debates whether audit is a component of ‘vertical’ or ‘horizontal’ accountability mechanisms.

In the analytical framework, the accountability mechanisms of PID as a whole is the dependent variable, and the internal administrative accountability and the external informal accountability towards stakeholders are the independent variables which have been measured by some indicators pointed out in Figure 1.1 below (indicators are in parenthesis). To put in equation, the study is centered on the following:

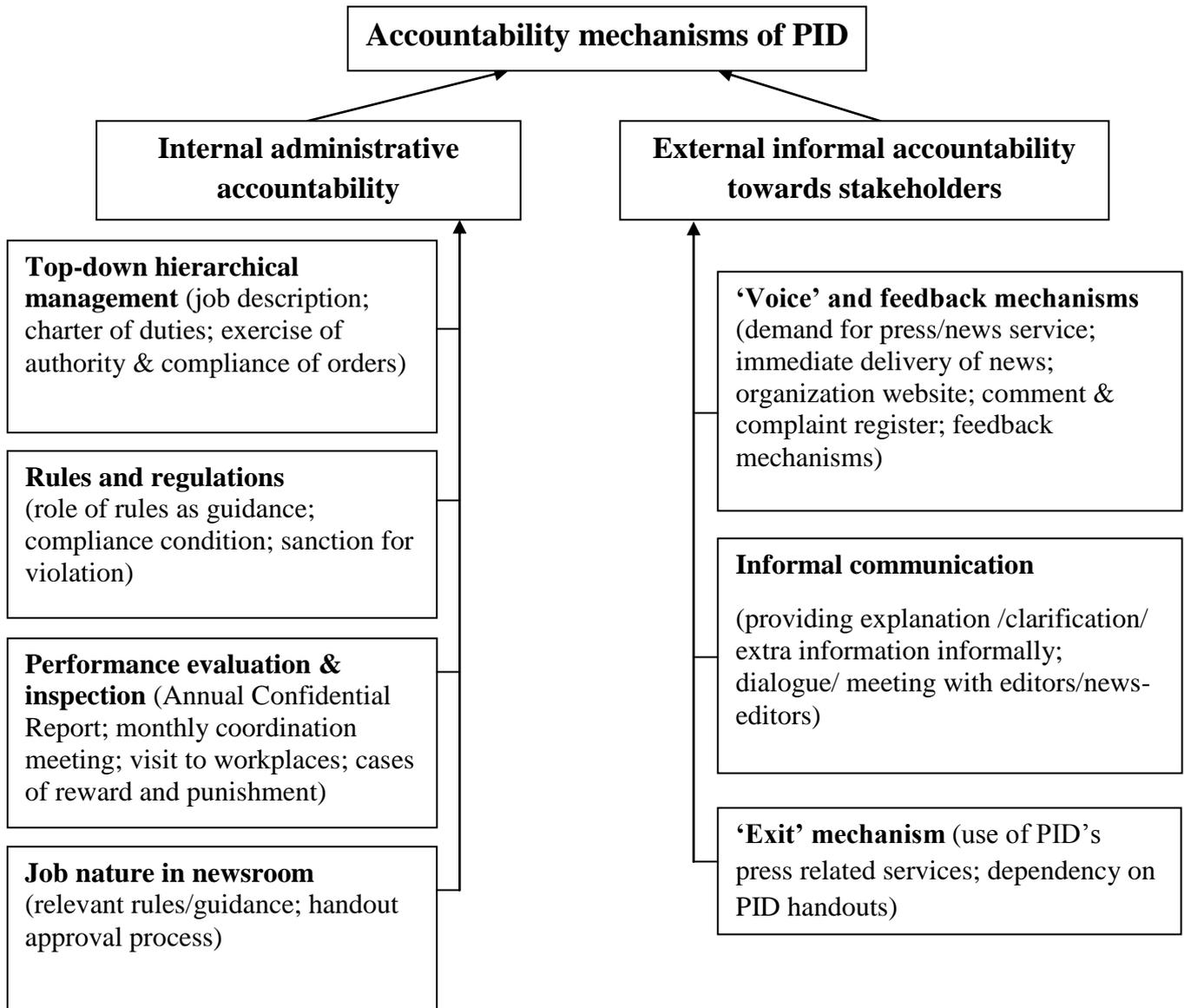
Accountability mechanisms of PID \approx f {internal administrative accountability, external informal accountability towards stakeholders}, or

Accountability mechanisms of PID \approx internal administrative accountability + external informal accountability towards stakeholders.

To analyze the effect of current state of accountability mechanisms of PID in fulfilling democratic accountability through communication and public relations activities, the researcher has adopted the Open Systems Model or Functional Model of public relations, put forwarded by Cutlip, Center and Broom, which depicts public relations similar to systems theory models presented in the figure 2.2 (p.26).

Figure 1.1

Analytical framework for measuring accountability



Indicators for the two independent variables can be summarized in the following table:

Table 1.1

Independent variables and indicators

| Independent variable | Indicators |
|---|--|
| Internal administrative accountability | Job description; charter of duties; exercise of authority & compliance of orders; role of rules as guidance; compliance condition; sanction for violation; Annual Confidential Report; monthly coordination meeting; visit to workplaces; cases of reward and punishment; relevant rules/guidance; handout approval process. |
| External informal accountability | Demand for press/news service; immediate delivery of news; organization website; comment & complaint register; feedback mechanisms; providing explanation/clarification/extra information informally; dialogue/meeting with editors/news-editors; use of PID's press related services; dependency on PID handouts). |

It is evident from the table that not all indicators are quantitatively measurable. Therefore the thesis has been a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods.

1.7 Methodology

This thesis has adopted the combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods. According to Creswell (2003), it is advantageous to a researcher to combine methods to better understand a concept being tested or explored. Each approach has its strengths and its weaknesses, and over reliance on any one method is not appropriate. The researcher believes that the discovery of the true nature like a sensitive issue of accountability mechanisms demands both approaches. Content and record analysis, in-depth interviews, and case studies methods has been used for qualitative analysis, while structured and semi-structured questionnaire have been employed for quantitative analysis.

Data collection method

The study has been conducted on the basis of both primary and secondary data. Quantitative primary data has been collected through Questionnaires. Structured and semi structured questionnaire containing both open and closed ended questions have been used. Multiple

answers have been possible in several questions. For gathering qualitative primary data, the researcher has adopted in-depth interviews with the selected officials, and case studies methods. Secondary data have been collected through content analyses using various books, records, journals, documents, published and unpublished reports, articles, handouts, papers/materials used in training courses, government circulars and memorandums, newspaper reports, and online contents. Various theoretical and descriptive contents have been taken from authentic sources available on internet with due mention. The methods that have been applied for measuring the indicators will be found in Appendix-I at the end of this thesis.

Sampling method

For questionnaire survey, stratified and judgmental/purposive sampling method has been adopted. This has ensured the right person in the respective offices who has been either the officer/staff of PID or the news reporters/editors of the media houses. Sample size are around 50 persons, of who 20 are taken from PID comprising Public Relations Officers attached to various ministries and officers engaged in Newsroom and administration section. 8 persons are selected from Bangladesh Betar and Bangladesh Television (4 persons from each), and the rest 22 are chosen from news agencies (BSS, UNB etc.), private print and electronic media houses. For in-depth interview, two senior officials of PID working in the Press section and two news editors from each of the print and electronic media have been selected.

Composition of respondents is presented in detail in the Appendix-II.

Data analysis

The responses from close-ended type of questions are analyzed in terms of number (frequency) of responses. The frequencies are further converted into percentages to describe the result of the items to arrive at the findings. The data collected from the respondents of the open-ended questions are categorized on the basis of their contents into different clusters along with their frequencies and percentages. Necessary statistical tools and techniques are used for data presentation and analysis.

Presentations on the findings from the in-depth interviews and case studies are exploratory or descriptive in nature. The aim of the researcher in this case has been to expand and generalize the analysis and not to enumerate frequencies. However the findings are cross checked with the findings of quantitative analysis. This has ensured the data validation also.

1.8 Scope and limitation of the study

For meeting the purpose/objective of the research and keeping things simple and clear, this thesis has only used two types of accountability mechanisms: internal administrative/bureaucratic accountability and external informal accountability towards the stakeholders. Financial and audit related accountability mechanisms have been omitted in studying internal accountability since the focus of this study has been on bureaucratic administrative management currently in practice. External accountability towards stakeholders is measured in terms of press related service of PID omitting protocol service, as press related service is PID's main responsibility and it is known and counted for this service.

PID shares various attributes in its accountability mechanisms which are common in all government departments in Bangladesh. Therefore many of the findings can be compared to other departments. At the same time its nature of job is quite different from other bureaucratic organizations in some respects, as preparing and disseminating news/press releases does not always call for formal approval procedures in bureaucratic decision making. In that case the findings will be confined to the organization and may only apply to similar type of organizations.

The thesis has not followed the true survey method using sophisticated sampling technique; rather it has adopted a mixture of purposive/judgmental and convenient sampling. In some cases access to the official records/documents have been limited and have depended upon the availability.

2 THEORETICAL DISCUSSIONS

The aim of this chapter is to present main subject matter of the thesis before exploring it through the later chapters. This chapter is a short introduction to the theory of accountability and its mechanisms as depicted in various literatures. This will clarify the analytical framework of the current thesis and give readers the clue to understanding both the administrative accountability in terms of control mechanisms and the informal external accountability towards stakeholders of an organization measured mainly with 'exit' and 'voice' mechanisms. The definition and model of communication and public relations activities are presented in order to analyze how the activities are related to ensuring democratic accountability by reacting properly with surrounding 'input' and 'output' environments. In the end other relevant research works have also been discussed along with their main findings, with pointing out the scope and position of the present thesis which fills in the gaps of previous works.

2.1 Meaning and types of accountability

The word 'accountability' has its root in the Latin word *Accomptare* which means 'to account'. Historically and semantically, it is closely related to accounting, in its literal sense of bookkeeping. Dubnick in 2002 (cited in Bovens 2006) states that the roots of the contemporary concept can be traced to the reign of William I, in the decades after the 1066 Norman conquest of England (Bovens 2006)¹. In 1085 William required all the property holders in his realm to render *a count* of what they possessed. These possessions were assessed and listed by royal agents in the so-called Domesday Books. This census was not held for taxation purposes alone; it also served as a means to establish the foundations of royal governance. The Domesday Books listed what was in the king's realm; moreover, the landowners were all required to swear oaths of fealty to the crown. By the early twelfth century, this had evolved into a highly centralized administrative kingship that was ruled through centralized auditing and semi-annual account-giving. Nevertheless, in contemporary political discourse, 'accountability' and 'accountable' no longer convey a stuffy image of bookkeeping and financial administration, but they hold strong promises of fair and equitable

¹ Available at <http://www.connex-network.org/eurogov/pdf/egp-connex-C-06-01.pdf>, accessed on 13/09/2010

governance. Its meaning is associated with answerability, responsibility, liability and other terms which indicate account-giving (ibid).

Accountability can broadly be defined as the obligation of those holding power to take responsibility for their behavior and actions. This obligation might stem out of a moral-ethical need to account for one's behavior, or out of a legal requirement. It is a relational concept as it concerns the relationship between those that perform an action or deliver a service, and those on whom the action or service has an effect. In this sense, it is often conceptualized in terms of principals and agents, where accountability is a function of the leverage that the agents have over the principal. Actualizing accountability involves two critical aspects: first is determining who should be accountable to whom and for what, and second is developing the institutional mechanisms and incentive-sanction structures on the basis of which accountability is realized (Wikipedia). Leonard D. White, a famous historian of the field of public administration in the United States, defines accountability as 'the sum total of constitutional, statutory, administrative and judicial rules and precedents and the established practices by means of which public officials may be held accountable for their official actions' (White 1926)². According to Karen Sirker (2006), accountability refers to the obligation of power holders to account for or take responsibility for their actions in both their conduct and performance. To Samuel Paul (1992), accountability means holding individuals and organizations responsible for performance measured as objectively as possible. The agreed upon definition of accountability is that it is associated with the process of being called 'to account' to some authority for one's action (Mulgan 2000). In an extreme situation accountability means enforcement or punishment (Robert Behn 2001).

The types of accountability include public, political, administrative, bureaucratic, legal and constitutional, fiscal, performance, social, and moral accountability. They can be formal or informal, internal or external, individual or collective, and can work through either vertically, horizontally, and diagonally (Bovens, M. 2005). *Public accountability* i.e., the need for the state to be accountable to its citizens stems out of the 'social contract' that the citizens share with the state. In a democracy, this contract is operationalized when citizens elect a government and invest the elected representatives with the power to govern them. The government on its part is obliged to perform its duties of governance in a manner that keeps the citizens' interests at heart. There are institutional provisions to ensure that the government

² <http://free-books-online.org/management/introduction-to-public-administration/administrative-control>, accessed on 23/02/2011

respects this contract. Elections are the main mechanism through which citizens are given the power to ensure accountable governance. Citizens make their voting decisions and either vote the government back into power or out of it depending on their evaluation of whether it delivered on its promises during its term. Accountability claimed through this channel has been called *vertical accountability*. There are also provisions for *horizontal accountability* - institutional checks and balances to ensure that the government is performing its duties in the interest of its citizens. Constitutional separation of powers into judiciary, executive and legislature, and official oversight of one's performance by the other are some of these. Also in this channel are specialist bodies like Auditor General, Anti-Corruption Commission, Ombudsman, and Human Rights Commission performing oversight of various government activities, and conducting investigations into misdoings, all with a view to create a restraint on abuse of power and in effect deliver accountable governance. *Political accountability* is the accountability of the government, and politicians to the public (through election process) and to legislative bodies such as a congress or a parliament (Wikipedia). In parliamentary systems, the government relies on the support of parliament, which gives parliament power to hold the government to account. For example, some parliaments can pass a vote of no confidence in the government. *Administrative accountability* is ensured by reporting systems that links bureaucracy with ministers and the legislature. Similar hierarchical reporting relationships within bureaucracies assure *internal/bureaucratic accountability* (Goetz, A. M. 2001).

Regarding administrative/ bureaucratic accountability Jabbra and Dwivedi (1988) state that "... public service accountability involves the methods by which a public agency or a public official fulfills its duties and obligations, and the process by which that agency or the public official is required to account for such actions". According to Richard Mulgan (2000), such accountability has a number of features: it is *external*, in that the account is given to some other person or body outside the person or body being held accountable; it involves *social interaction and exchange*, in that one side, that calling for the account, seeks answers and rectification while the other side, that being held accountable, responds and accepts sanctions, it implies *rights of authority*, in that those calling for the account are asserting rights of superior authority over those who are accountable, including the rights to demand answers and impose sanctions.

But the concept and meaning of accountability is far from being conclusive and exhaustive which is evident from the famous and seminal debate between Carl Friedrich and Herman

Finer over how far public servants should rely on their professionalism and sense of personal morality and how far they should simply be following instructions from their political masters (Friedrich 1940 & Finer 1941, cited in Mulgan 2000). This debate was originally couched in terms of different senses of ‘responsibility’, with Friedrich emphasizing the inward responsibility of public servants to their professional standards/values and Finer reasserting the primacy of responsibility to external political direction. Hence the ‘accountability’ and ‘responsibility’ terms sometimes have been used interchangeably (Wikipedia), but responsibility is now increasingly confined to its more accustomed ethical territory of personal liability, freedom of action and discretion, that is to the more internal aspects of official activity (Harmon and Mayer 1986, cited in Mulgan 2000). Responsibility is now considered as a part of accountability. Nonetheless the meaning of accountability has recently increasingly been extended beyond the core and central concerns mentioned earlier. It now incorporates moral accountability, horizontal accountability to the stakeholders, responsiveness toward citizen’s needs and opinions, and social accountability in the form of active citizen participation and control in government decisions and actions (Mulgan 2000). Therefore according to the modern definition of accountability, civil servants are accountable *upwards* through administrative and political hierarchy and *outwards* through transparency and openness to stakeholders and to the public at large.

Democratic accountability and the identification of stakeholders

When we use the term accountability we can break it down into four questions. Who is accountable? To whom? For what? And how? Jem Bendell (2006)³ argues that if we look at how these questions have been answered by different organizations and individuals throughout history, immediately problems arise with the assumption that accountability is necessarily a good thing. “I was just following orders” is an oft-heard refrain at war crimes trials from Nuremburg to present day scandals in Iraq and elsewhere. Repressive regimes often have very thorough systems of accountability. People’s devotion to a specific group, its leaders, and the unquestioning following of orders are all aspects of accountability that have facilitated some of the worst atrocities in the history of humankind. So accountability is not always a good thing in itself, and a lack of accountability is not necessarily always a bad thing either, particularly in societies that tend towards the centralization of power and

³ http://www.un-ngls.org/orf/pdf/NGO_Accountability.pdf, accessed on 27/01/2011

autocracy. So is there a particular form of accountability that merits being regarded as desirable?

According to Bendell (2006), the answer to the above question lies in a deeper understanding of rights and democracy. Some assume democracy to be a process of elections for majority-rule government. This narrow and historically-specific understanding of democracy is contestable given the power of other institutions in governing our lives and the cooptation of electoral processes and governments. The basic idea of *demos kratos*, or people rule, is that people govern themselves. Therefore in a democratically-governed society, a community of people ideally has meaningful participation in decisions and processes that affect them and are not systematically adversely affected by another group of people, without being able to rectify the situation (Dahl 1964, Held 2000, Isbister 2001; cited in Bendell 2006).

Organizations of all forms, not just governmental, influence people's lives. The concept of "stakeholder" here can be useful as it groups together people on the basis of their being affected by an organization. Because the "demos," or population, that makes claims for the democratic control (directly or indirectly) of organizations are those affected by the organization, this can be understood as "stakeholder democracy." The ability of a system of democracy by stakeholder groups to ensure that all decision making is accountable depends on those stakeholder groups being democratic in themselves. As most stakeholder groups form organizations themselves, their accountability is a valid question in terms of the ideal of stakeholder democracy. Thus stakeholder democracy can be defined as an ideal system of governance of a society where all stakeholders in an organization or activity have the same opportunity to govern that organization or activity. Stakeholder groups are key to this process, as well as being the subjects of democratic governance themselves (Bendell, 2006). As democracy is a universal concept, recognizing the dignity of all human beings, so we should seek democratic accountability in the largest community or system as possible. True democracy, providing means for everyone's self-rule, is the mechanism for enabling people to express themselves in harmony with others. Therefore all organizations can be assessed in terms of how they contribute to democratic governance of society, he further argues.

With these concepts in mind, the ideal is a society where all decision making is accountable to those affected by those decisions or indecisions. This ideal of "democratic accountability" is one that concerns the whole of society, not just a particular organization. However, for this principle to be workable for the management and regulation of organizations, the challenge is

to identify a form of accountability for individual organizations that is constitutive of this broader societal democratic accountability. The implication is that social systems rather than just organizational units within those systems need to be considered. The accountability of one part of a social system helps create a more democratically accountable system if a) it is accountable to those parts affected by its decisions/actions; b) that have less power; and, c) that are accountable to other parts of the system in the same way (Bendell 2006). Therefore democratic accountability can be defined as the quality of being accountable to those with less power who are affected by one's actions or decisions, when they in turn exhibit the same accountability, where accountable means both justifying to and being regulated by those to whom one is accountable.

Social accountability

Social accountability affirms direct accountability relationships between citizens and the state and puts them into operation. In particular, social accountability refers to the broad range of actions and mechanisms (beyond voting) that citizens can use to hold the state to account, as well as the actions on the part of government, civil society, media, and other societal actors that promote or facilitate these efforts (World Bank 2007).

Recent years have witnessed growing concerns about issues of governance and accountability in developing countries. According to Samuel Paul (2005, cited in World Bank 2007), several reasons explain this trend. First is the mounting dissatisfaction with the manner in which states have performed their functions in these countries. Ample evidence shows that in many cases, public investments have resulted in meager returns and low productivity. Some of the key contributing factors underlying this phenomenon are lack of transparency, inadequate rule of law, and corruption. Second is the failure of many developing countries to achieve significant poverty reduction, and the consequent inequity and injustice millions of marginalized people face. The weak bargaining power and organizational capabilities of the poor have no doubt contributed to this outcome. Third is a growing realization that existing mechanisms for ensuring public accountability have not been able to resolve governance and accountability problems.

In democratic states, periodic elections are seen as the most potent option that citizens can exercise to hold the state accountable for its performance. However, the dilemma is that although much occurs between elections in terms of transactions between the state and its citizens, individual citizens can do little in the short run if things go wrong during the

discharge of functions or provision of services by the state's agencies. Waiting for the next election is of little help to a citizen who needs immediate corrective action. The problem is further compounded by the fact that citizens have no option for exit as in the marketplace, where they can exit from one supplier of a good or service to another. Thus an emergent need clearly exists for identifying and promoting approaches toward building accountability that rely on civic engagement, that is, in which ordinary citizens or Civil Service Organizations (CSOs) participate directly or indirectly in exacting accountability.

2.2 Accountability mechanisms

Regarding mechanisms of accountability, the experience of countries over time has resulted in multiple measures being adopted leading to a "redundancy of control" rather than a single instrument. This has resulted in a system of overlapping constraints and permissions, which, in combination, are designed to promote responsible bureaucrats and organizations (Smith, T. B. 1991). In the United States, the traditional and prevailing view of how accountability works is summed up in Emmette Redford's phrase "overhead democracy" (Deleon 1998). This model asserted that—

Democratic control should run through a single line from the representative of the people to all those who exercised power in the name of the government. The line ran from the people to their representatives in the Presidency and the Congress, and from there to the President as chief executive, then to departments, then to bureaus, then to lesser units, and so on to the fingertips of administration (Redford 1969, cited in Deleon 1998).

The model was based on the presumption that governmental organizations would be arranged hierarchically ('successive levels of organization, each controlling the level immediately below it') and that they would be politically responsive ('subordination to political direction and supervision'). Of course this model is too simple—but the fundamental notion that the public sector should be tightly controlled and politically responsive remains part of American political ideology to this day.

Bureaucratic accountability mechanisms

Because the theory of overhead democracy is so pervasive, a frequent reaction to the suggestion that the bureaucracy is out of control is to tighten the screws of bureaucratic accountability ever further. Strengthening hierarchical authority may be the most common, but it is not the only way of controlling public agencies. Accountability for public

administration has an external as well as an internal component. The variety of possible mechanisms currently in use is suggested by a typology offered by Romzek and Dubnick in 1991 (cited in Deleon 1998). They separate four kinds of accountability according to whether the *source of control* is (a) internal or (b) external, and whether the *degree of control* is (a) tight/high or (b) loose/low.

Table 2.1

Various Types of Accountability Mechanisms

| Degree of control | Source of control | |
|-------------------|-------------------|-----------|
| | Internal | External |
| High | Bureaucratic | Legal |
| Low | Professional | Political |

Source: Deleon, L. (1998): Accountability in a ‘Reinvented’ Government; *Public Administration*, Vol. 76, Autumn 1998. Available at <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1467-9299.00116/pdf>; accessed on 15/02/2011

Bureaucratic accountability mechanisms stress the need to follow orders and close supervision. Legal accountability obtains when there are two relatively autonomous parties, one who can mandate expectations with the force of law, and another whose responsibility is to implement the law (a fiduciary or principal-agent relationship). Legal accountability depends upon monitoring, auditing, and other forms of oversight. Political accountability allows the agency or administrator to have the discretion to decide whether or not to respond to external expectations; its mechanisms involve the participation of the parties whose expectations are relevant (for example open meeting, freedom of/right to information). Finally professional accountability relies upon the integrity and trustworthiness of the expert who has the special skills to get the job done.

Similarly, a useful procedure for bureaucratic accountability mechanisms (summarized in Table 2.2), which has been developed over time by Gilbert, Kernaghan, and Thynne and Goldring, outlines some of the various methods of control categorized along two dimensions. Instruments to promote accountability can either be *internal* to the bureaucracy, or they may be *external* to the bureaucracy. Additionally, they may be considered as either *formal* or direct controls, or they may be *informal* or indirect influences (Smith, T. B. 1991).

Table 2.2

Bureaucratic Accountability Mechanisms

| | INTERNAL | EXTERNAL |
|----------|--|--|
| FORMAL | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hierarchy • Rules and Regulations • Budgets • Personnel management • Performance evaluation • Auditing • Program monitoring • Code of conduct | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislative review • Advisory committees • Judicial action • Ombudsman • Review tribunals • Evaluation research • Freedom of information |
| INFORMAL | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal ethics • Professionalism • Representative bureaucracy • Commitment • Anticipated reactions from superiors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders • Public comment • Interest group pressure • Peer review • Media scrutiny • Political parties • Politicians and officials at other levels of government |

Source: Smith, T. B. (1991): The Comparative Analysis of Bureaucratic Accountability; *Asian Journal of Public Administration*; Vol. 13 No. 1; p97. Available at <http://sunzi.lib.hku.hk/hkjo/view/50/5000334.pdf>, accessed on 18/09/2010.

The first category of the table -- Internal/Formal mechanisms are the bureaucratic hierarchy, rules and regulations, personnel management procedures, auditing, and so on. All exist within the bureaucracy and require compliance. The fourth and very important category of accountability mechanisms are External/Informal – stakeholders, public comment, interest group activity, citizen claims and participation, and the role of the media as a watchdog on the process of government. Together, these mechanisms provide a multiple-source and multi-directional accountability framework which promotes responsible behavior. This thesis will give particular emphasis on the first and the fourth category for fulfilling its purpose, as explained in the problem statement.

'Exit' and 'Voice' mechanisms on the part of stakeholders

The fourth mechanism can also hold an organization accountable with two unique tools called ‘exit’ and ‘voice’. Albert O. Hirschman first propounded these two mechanisms in his seminal work *“Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and*

States” in 1970. He suggested that individuals dissatisfied with the performance of an organization they belong to or do business with may try to improve their lot either by ‘exiting’ from the organization and thus forgoing the goods or services it provides, or by remaining with the organization but attempting to improve its performance by ‘voicing’ their discontent. Though the original idea was developed in reference to the private firms/organizations, Samuel Paul (1992) later showed that the concept can also be applied to the public sector organizations. He argued that the positive impact of public accountability on public service performance and governance in general can be augmented by moving away from an exclusive reliance on control mechanisms such as hierarchical monitoring and use of organizational incentives to a system that uses “exit” or “voice” mechanisms in conjunction with control. One is the scope for the public to *exit*, i.e., the extent to which the public has access to alternative suppliers, public or private, of a given public service (or access to good substitutes for the service). The other is *voice*, the opportunity for the public to seek better performance from public service providers, without opting for alternative sources of supply. Voice refers to the degree to which the public can influence the access to or quality of a public service by some form of participation or expression of protest or views (irrespective of whether the exit option exists). To meet collective needs efficiently, governments ought to be able to ascertain the needs of all segments of the population, including the poor and marginalized groups. Exit is more of an economic response mechanism, prevalent in the competitive market, while voice is more of a political response, through political parties, voluntary agencies, and citizen groups. However, exit and voice options can both substitute for and complement each other.

Paul (1992) also presented a menu of options for improving public accountability through the use of exit and voice mechanisms along with their policy implications. According to his argument there are two basic factors that influence accountability, viewed from the standpoint of the public. One is the extent to which the public has access to alternative suppliers of a given public service. The question here is whether there is potential or scope for the public to *exit* when dissatisfied with a public service. The second is the degree to which they can influence the final outcome of a service through some form of participation or articulation of protest/feedback irrespective of whether the exit option exists. In other words, can they exert their voice in order to enhance accountability?

Both exit and voice mechanisms bear particular importance to the accountability mechanisms of PID. As explained earlier, service recipients can ‘exit’ PID as several other service

providers are available. PID accountability also rest on their ‘voice’ as PID needs them for its materials be published.

Social accountability mechanisms

This type of mechanisms include a wide range of tools, methods, and strategies that involve ordinary citizens and civil society in the process of allocating, tracking, and monitoring the use of public resources. Social accountability mechanisms both complement and enhance conventional “internal” mechanisms of accountability, underscore citizens’ rights to expect the government to act in the best interests of the people and to ensure that it does so, and use a range of both formal and informal rewards and sanctions. Social accountability mechanisms come into play in the following five critical areas (World Bank 2007)⁴:

- *Budgets.* Citizen involvement in preparing and analyzing budgets is a rapidly expanding domain of social accountability. At the national level, more common examples of budget-related social accountability practices include efforts by civil society to analyze the impact and implications of budget allocations, demystify the technical content of the budget, raise awareness about budget-related issues, point out discrepancies between government policy priorities and resource allocations, and undertake public education campaigns to improve budget literacy.
- *Policy making and planning.* Examples include participatory policy making (for example, the participatory formulation of poverty reduction strategies) at the national level and participatory processes in development planning at the local level.
- *Public goods and services.* This involves citizen participation in the monitoring and evaluation of priority services, often according to indicators that citizens themselves have selected. Examples include public opinion polls, citizen report cards, community scorecards, public hearings, and social audits.
- *Expenditures.* An important aspect of social accountability is citizens’ ability to hold government accountable for how it handles public monies. Public expenditure tracking surveys are an example of an expenditure-related social accountability practice that can be

⁴ The World Bank (2007): Empowering the Marginalized: Case Studies of Social Accountability Initiatives in Asia; Public Affairs Foundation (Bangalore, India)/Karen Sirker and Sladjana Cosic (World Bank Institute).

applied at the national level, with the aim of monitoring the flow of financial or physical resources and identifying leakages or bottlenecks in the system.

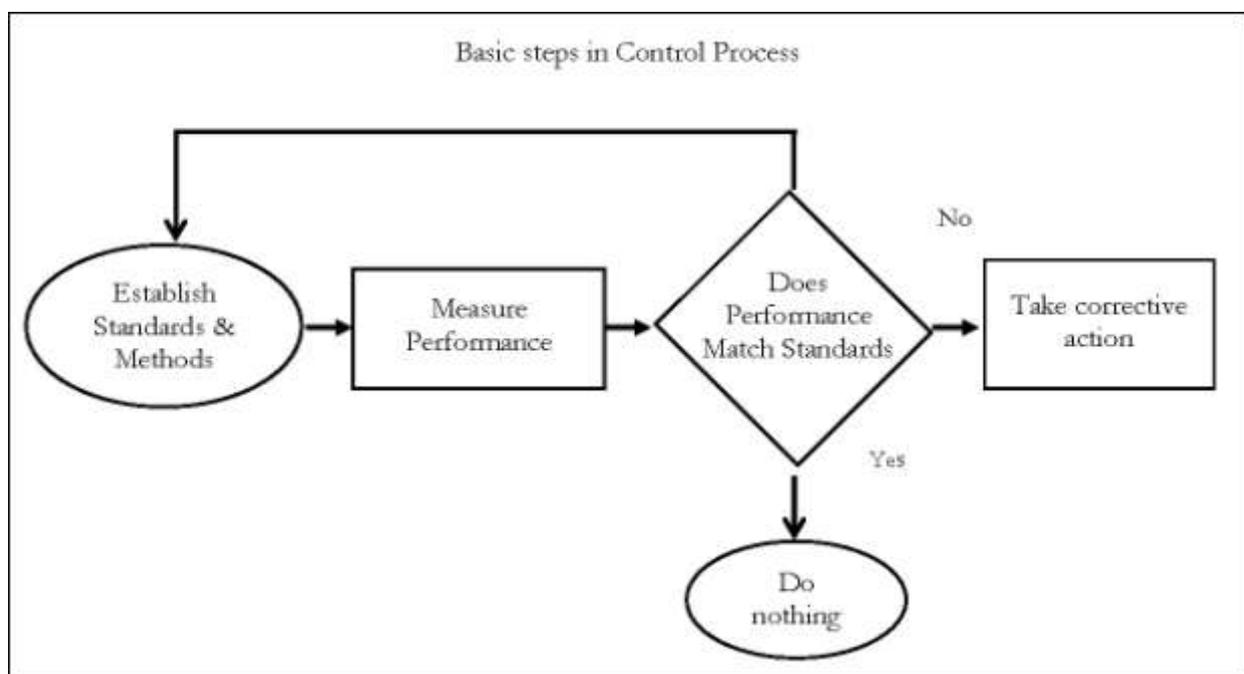
- *Public oversight and monitoring.* A final category of social accountability practices includes those that aim to improve public oversight and monitoring. Examples include the creation of independent citizen oversight committees or watchdog groups at the local or national level or forms of civic engagement that aim to enhance the effectiveness of existing oversight mechanisms.

2.3 Administrative accountability and control

Accountability is also a kind of administrative/management *control* which ensures actual activities in conformity with the established standards and laid down procedures as depicted in the following figure. Control helps administrators/managers to monitor the effectiveness of administration/management.

Figure 2.1

Basic steps in control process⁵



⁵ <http://free-books-online.org/management/introduction-to-public-administration/administrative-control>, accessed on 23/02/2011

Figure 2.1 shows the basic control process. This process is essential to accountability. As shown in figure, before control process is initiated standard and methods are established against which performance is measured. Then it is measured or assessed if the performance matches the laid down standard. If it matches then it is satisfactory performance. But if it does not match corrective actions are taken. This is a general process of control and accountability. These general steps can be adapted to any work situation. PID as a formal bureaucratic organization is also under such control mechanisms which constitutes the foundation of its internal administrative accountability mechanisms.

Types of control⁶

There are two types of administrative control mechanisms that make government organizations to continue to achieve goals. They are:

Internal Control: It is exercised either by superior over the subordinates within the chain of hierarchy or by other parallel agencies in the executive branch of government. It consists of directing, regulating, supervising, advising, inspecting and evaluating. The chain of hierarchy in the administration of Bangladesh will be discussed in section 4.2 of this chapter.

External control: It is fitted outside the administrative machinery and works within the general constitutional framework of the system. It is exercised by the external bodies such as legislature and judiciary.

Internal control mechanisms:

In internal control mechanisms following methods are used:

Administrative process: In a parliamentary system like that of Bangladesh, Cabinet stands at the apex of the executive. Prime Minister directs the ministers who are in-charge of their respective ministries and are responsible for the efficient working to the cabinet and prime minister. The whole workings of the ministries are reviewed by the Prime Minister and his/her Cabinet. Departments work under the guidance and supervision of the respective ministries. For example, PID's functional authority is the Ministry of Information in Bangladesh.

⁶ Ibid

Hierarchical order: Every administrative ministry/department is arranged on scalar pattern and executives are organized in hierarchical order. The executives are linked with superior-subordinate relationship with certain authority and responsibility. They are accountable to their respective superiors for their actions and dealings. Thus hierarchy itself a powerful instrument for monitoring subordinates behavior and for enforcing accountability in a government organization. Section 3.6 presents the organizational chart of PID, responsible for hierarchical control and management of the organization.

Rules and regulations: PID as well as any other government organization is subject to compliance of various service rules and regulations. Functions of various ministries are defined in accordance with the Rules of Business and Secretariat Instructions framed by the government of Bangladesh in 1975 (amended and updated in 1996) and 1976 respectively. Some of the most practiced rules/regulations/ordinances applied to public sector organizations and individual officials are briefly described in the Appendix-IV.

Annual Confidential Report as performance evaluation: The superior officers prepare annual confidential reports (ACRs) of their subordinates every year. In Bangladesh, it is virtually the only tool for evaluating performance through which the work of each public servant in a year is assessed.

Budgetary control: A budget is not only a complete policy statement of the total activities of the government but it also reflects the aspiration of the people. The Ministry of Finance prepares budget, and operations of the budgetary sanctions and appropriations.

Audit: The aim of this tool is to check financial irregularities, help attain targets and hence enhance overall performance. In Bangladesh, audit department acts horizontally to other government organization under the leadership of Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG).

Supervision: Supervision of subordinate officials and staff is another mechanism of accountability. Subordinates have to make sure that they are working in accordance with the direction given by supervisors on important matters such as disposal of cases within the prescribed time limit, proper documentation and systems of filing, organization of offices, utilization of equipment, and so on.

2.4 Communication and public relations: tools of democratic accountability

Democracy and democratic governance are dependent on people's mandate. According to the Systems Theory, first put forth by David Easton, in a sound democratic system government actions and policy decisions are dependent on "inputs" in the form of public demands and supports (Easton, D. 1965). The 'system' concept implies an identifiable set of institutions and activities in society that functions to transform demands into government decisions requiring the support of the whole society. It is evident that this indicates a two way communication between government and the people. As analyzed earlier, government departments involved in public relations and media communications, like PID, can be regarded as the "conduit" or "ventilation" through which information on government activities are channeled to the public and feedbacks from public are reached to the government. By definition, democratic governments should reflect public opinion and work best when the citizens are well-informed. Thus, public relations (PR) should have a natural and welcome role in any government. Therefore concept of systems approach has been extended to the public relations and communication theories. Effective two-way communications process between government and citizens takes place with the proper functioning of such organizations operating in the field of press, media, and public relations. They are inherently necessary for building trust between government and citizens. If such institutions are non-existent, become feeble, or operate in unaccountable manners then the whole democratic system will therefore be at stake and government will lose people's trust and will ultimately fall.

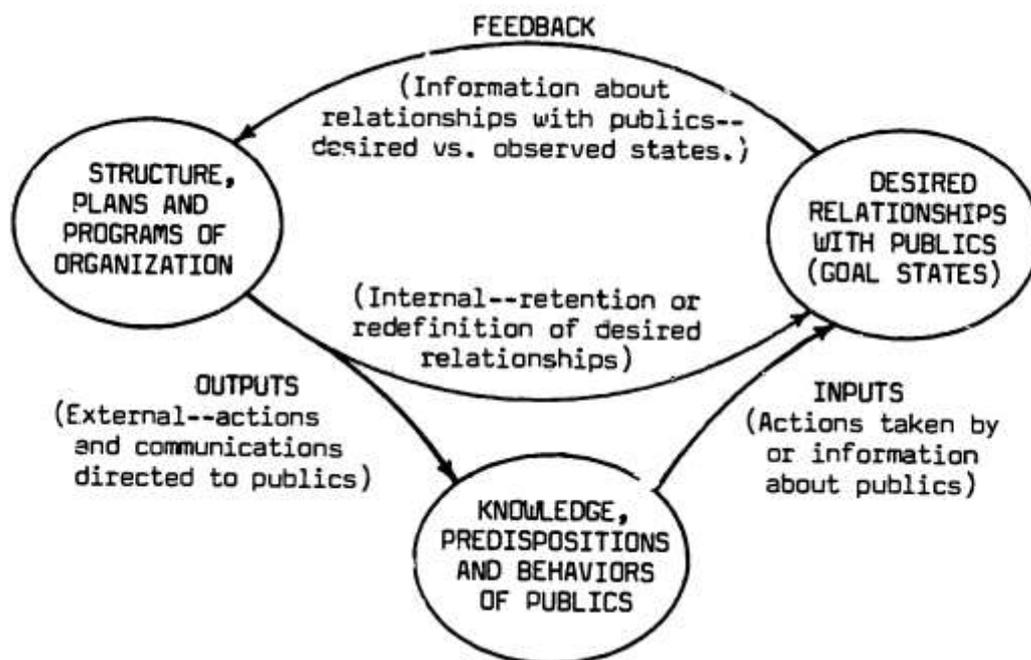
To look up the things in theoretical perspective, it can be said that PR is intertwined with communication which is a two way process where messages and information sent are just as important as those that are received. It is all about communicating with others, either through the spoken word or written word, or by using a visual or some other means. PR involves i) a two way communication process between an organization and its public, ii) communication with a view to changing the mindsets of the public in a certain direction. We can therefore define public relations as a form of communication used to persuade or influence people using ethical means. Also, its purpose is to create goodwill for the communicating organizations, eventually leading to support from the public. This support is a sine qua non for the success of the given organization.

An earlier definition of PR (by The first World Assembly of Public Relations Associations, held in Mexico City in August 1978) was "the art and social science of analyzing trends,

predicting their consequences, counseling organizational leaders, and implementing planned programs of action, which will serve both the organization and the public interest" (Wikipedia). Others define it as the practice of managing communication between an organization and its publics (Wikipedia). Public relations provides an organization or individual exposure to their audiences using topics of public interest and news items that provide a third-party endorsement and do not direct payment (Answers.com). The European view of PR as practice notes that besides a relational form of interactivity there is also a reflective paradigm that is concerned with publics and the public sphere; not only with relational (which can in principle be private), but also with public consequences of organizational behavior.

Open Systems Model or Functional Model of public relations, put forwarded by Cutlip, Center and Broom in 1985, depicts public relations similar to systems theory models as in figure 2.2 below (Broom 1986):⁷

Figure 2.2 Open systems model/Functional model of public relations



According to this model, organizations select structures and processes based on the inputs. In theory, as the inputs change, so do the structures and processes selected- including those for

⁷ Available at <http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED275023.pdf>, accessed on 27/05/2011

the public relations unit. To the extent that inputs do not change, public relations responses also remain unchanged. The key point, of course, is that the nature and roles of public relations in an open systems model are selected on the basis of their consequences as responses to inputs about the organization's environment. "Communication technicians" dominate in organizations with relatively stable and non-threatening environments, suggestive of little need to be sensitive to environmental change. On the other hand "Communication process facilitators" appear most frequently in organizations whose environments, while unstable, likewise pose little threat to the organization. "Expert prescribers" frequently function in organizations whose unstable and threatening environments allow little time for diagnostic environmental scanning-- input. "Problem solving process facilitators" dominate in organizations with threatening but relatively stable environments. Similarly, in 1967 Wilensky (cited in Broom 1986) concludes that a functional causal relationship exists between an organization's environment and its internal capacity for environmental inputs. The amount of resources devoted to organizational intelligence depends on the nature of an organization's internal and external environments. The greater the conflict or competition with the external environment, the greater the dependence on internal support and unity, the more the external environment is viewed as subject to planned influence, and the greater the size and complexity of the organization itself, then the more elaborate the structure and greater the activities devoted to organizational intelligence (Broom 1986).

The bottom line of the above model is organizations have to succeed in interplaying in the input and output environments by employing communication and public relations effectively. In the democratic environment the role of government public relations organization should be contrasted with other organizations in this regard. The accountability of such organization, therefore, should also be measured in terms of its relative success or failure in fulfilling the criteria that are mentioned in the above model. In the following chapters we will analyze the performance of PID in working with the environment where at one side there are other government organizations in vertical and horizontal ladders, and at another side there are all media houses—the service recipients or stakeholders of PID. If organizational structure and rules/regulations are rigid and immutable, then according to the prediction of the model the organization will face the risk of being unstable or ineffective, and cannot bring necessary changes in tune with the environmental changes. We will examine whether this holds true in case of PID.

2.5 Relevant researches

Literatures and research works on the issue of accountability in public sector or any public organization in Bangladesh are very hard to find, though there is increasing urgency to make government more accountable in countries such as Bangladesh. Almost no research study has been done on the problems/issues of accountability mechanisms of any particular government/bureaucratic organization in Bangladesh. The researcher has found only two research books that have addressed issues of accountability in government and bureaucracy as a whole, but not focusing on ‘mechanisms’.

First one is written by Talib A. Younis & Iqbal M.D. Mostafa in 2000. They addressed issues of overall accountability in government of Bangladesh. Their book “Accountability in Public Management and Administration in Bangladesh” was an attempt to provide an analysis of aspects of accountability within the Bangladesh system of government in historical perspectives’ with particular reference to comparisons with the UK, India, and Sri Lanka. Their aim was to explain why accountable government was important if a developing country wished to become a democracy; to examine the problems that had been encountered in Bangladesh along with other democratic countries; and to consider whether the reform measures taken by other countries might be transferable to Bangladesh itself. They carried out field work in Bangladesh during November 1994 – January 1995 and collected data on various aspects of accountability in Bangladesh public management and administration. They noted that many of their respondents, while familiar with the concept of accountability, were not entirely sure of its exact meaning. In practice, many believed that their government was not accountable to the people, but were unable to satisfactorily explain how and why this was the case. Therefore, it was one of their findings that there was some gap between general awareness of the concept and understanding of it which could be regarded as a cause of low public demand on government when accountability was concerned. They observed that Bangladesh faced numerous accountability problems concerned with legitimacy, bureaucratic dominance, politicization, centralization, administrative culture, secrecy, corruption, and the rule of law. They also found that though Bangladesh has nearly similar political and administrative structure compared to western democratic societies, its accountability institutions and dimensions had not been operating in the light of western notions of the concept, and in the sense, government remained unaccountable. They concluded that the role of government and public opinion in creating and applying positive conditions for

accountability could never be ignored. The present researcher consulted their works many times while analyzing internal administrative accountability of PID.

Second book titled “Bureaucratic Accountability in Bangladesh: The Role of Parliamentary Committees in Bangladesh” by Taiabur Rahman (2008) attempted to explore the role of parliamentary committees in securing bureaucratic accountability particularly after the restoration of parliamentary system in 1991 in Bangladesh. The study was based on three core questions: “Does history shape institutional performance? Do institutions (rules, procedures) matter for the way they perform? Does culture matter for institutional performance?” The study has found that political stability as well as the continuity and robustness of parliament are prerequisite for securing bureaucratic accountability by the parliamentary committees. The role of committee system is bounded, sporadic and its efficacy is marginal and contingent simultaneously upon the institutional growth, institutional rules and cultural settings. But institutionally Bangladesh has got a weak committee system. Consequently, the performance of the committees in ensuring bureaucratic accountability is largely influenced by the development and dynamics of political and cultural values of Bangladesh society.

In another research work in the similar field, Ahmed, N. and Ahmed, A. (1996) examined the scope and limits of parliamentary control over public administration in Bangladesh. They therefore adopted a comparative approach, focusing on the use of surveillance techniques by members of Bangladesh's first, second, and fifth parliaments. They found that the various surveillance techniques did not generally appeared to be very effective in probing into the operations of the government. They identified two factors that accounted for this: first, the intransigent attitude of the bureaucracy; and second, the lack of willingness and ability of MPs to seriously enquire into government policies and operations. They suggested that the traditional control mechanisms be supplemented by new measures; otherwise the quest for accountability might remain elusive.

Zahir Uddin Ahmed (2004) in his Ph.D. thesis studied accountability and control systems in local indigenous NGOs.⁸ He examined how control systems relate to accountability and transparency of NGOs of developing countries like Bangladesh, and the efficiency and effectiveness of these types of organizations in delivering services. He took Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) as a case and found that the successful control

⁸ Available at <http://www.smu.edu.sg/events/apira/2004/Final%20Papers/1262-Zahir.pdf>, accessed on 22/08/2010

mechanisms, learning, trusts, visionary leadership quality and dynamisms helped BRAC to ensure accountability and transparency to its fullest extent; though he admitted “NGOs have become seen as highly ambiguous and professional organizations within the various moral and political frameworks of development policy and practice. Thus they can often display a dual character, alternating between theoretical and activist discourse, between identities of public and private, professionalism and amateurishness, market and non-market values, radicalism and pluralism, modernity and tradition, and ultimately perhaps, good and evil” (Ahmed, Z. U. 2004, p 14).

In global context some studies have been undertaken on the general characteristics of administrative/bureaucratic accountability mechanisms and their relationships with democracy and service delivery process. Focuses of some studies were on media and broadcasting accountability. Luke, B. G. (2010) examined accountability in the context of New Zealand's state-owned enterprises (SOEs), and considered an accountability framework which extends beyond traditional (upward and outward) dimensions. While traditional accountability dimensions were clearly detailed in the legislation, less clear were the dilemmas and contradictions faced by SOEs, balancing multiple interests, and at times, conflicting objectives. His findings reveal a number of dimensions of accountability that extend beyond current conceptualizations of accountability in the public sector, often including multiple directions of accountability. Richard Boyle⁹ examined the governance and accountability implications of recent legislative changes in Irish civil service management. He also put the context into the changes taking place in international arena, and to raise issues and distil lessons being learned from international experience. Goetz, A. M. and Gaventa, J (2001) identified the means of amplifying citizen ‘voice’ (external informal accountability) such that engagement with the state can move beyond consultative process to more direct forms of influence over policy and spending decisions. They found that citizens must enjoy rights to a more meaningful form of participation. Public sector providers, for their part, need assurances regarding the mandate of such citizens’ groups and internal accountability. Deleon, L. (1998) studied accountability in a ‘reinvented’ government and argued that accountability mechanisms can be matched to public problems and agency structures and that changes in perceptions concerning the nature of public problems is at the root of contemporary enthusiasm for non-hierarchical modes of organizing. Schultz, J. (1998)

⁹ <http://www.cpmr.gov.ie/Documents/Governance%20and%20Accountability%20in%20the%20Civil%20Service.pdf>, accessed on 14/09/2010

systematically analyzed the role of journalism accountability in Australia and the scope of its democratic purpose. She examined key news stories, and looked at the attitudes of Australian journalists themselves. Hargrave, A. M. and Shaw, C. (2009) chose Australia, India, the United Kingdom and the United States for conducting their research work on accountability and the public interest in broadcasting. Their study was designed to test how relevant the concepts of accountability and the public interest remained in broadcasting and in the newer forms of delivery of media content. The study explored the views and attitudes of those working in the communications industry and those that are observers of it.

It is noteworthy that none of the above mentioned studies addressed the mechanisms of accountability per se either in particular government organization or in any media agency/house. Moreover, there is a research gap in the recent burning issue of identifying and fulfilling stakeholders' needs. Therefore the present researcher hopes that raising those issues in this thesis would open up fresh chapters of academic research and discussion in this field.

3 PUBLIC RELATIONS AND PID

In this chapter, the roles and responsibilities of PID as a government public relations organization are clarified. History of government public relations as well as its application in governments in the context of both global and sub-continent is discussed as an orientation to understanding the roles of such organizations. Introductions and necessary descriptions are made on the functions of PID along with its various sections and sub-sections, organization chart, and charter of duties of key officials. In order to fully comprehend its domain of activities, brief discussions are made in regional and global context referring other similar type of organizations working for government press or public relations in the sub-continent, in the United States, and in the United Kingdom. It should be noted that the aim of presenting this chapter is not to analyze things in accordance with the research questions of present thesis. Rather the objective is to introduce PID as an organization, and describe its various functions and activities as found in Rules of Business, official organogram/organizational set-up, and allocation of functions. Observations and analysis on those aspects are covered in the following two chapters where its accountability mechanisms are examined at length.

3.1 History of government public relations

Interestingly, Governments were among the first organizations to need, and to practice, public relations as a way of maintaining appropriate relationships with their citizens. By definition, democratic governments should reflect public opinion and work best when the citizens are well-informed. Thus, public relations should have a natural and welcome role in any Government. But the PR in government got its root from ‘propaganda’, which is a deliberate attempt to persuade people to think and then behave in a manner desired by the source. Propaganda has always been a strategy of government and the military and has always been a necessity for any government actively seeking to mobilize its citizens. Not surprisingly, propaganda came of age in World War I, as all major combatants created agencies to regulate and censor the flow of information, aid in recruitment, and sell the moral validity of the war effort to those on the home front and battlefield (encyclopedia.com). Most of today’s governments are still using this tool instead of the true practice of public relations. In a result the people always considered propaganda a synonym for government lies, and that interpretation has remained to today.

The 1920s saw the emergence of public relations, first in United States, when Edward L. Bernays introduced *public relations counsel* in his *Crystallizing Public Opinion* (1923), and the decade saw the general acceptance of the profession by business and government (encyclopedia.com). New Deal America institutionalized propaganda and public relations within American society. President Franklin D. Roosevelt promoted his policies directly through public press conferences and “fireside chats,” radio addresses to the American people. His promotion of the Lend-Lease Act and Agreements in 1940–41 is an example. At a press conference in December 1940, Roosevelt introduced the idea of giving away war material to those fighting Nazi Germany with a simple analogy: “Suppose my neighbor’s house is on fire and I have a length of garden hose ...” In a “fireside chat” two weeks later, the president invoked a larger moral purpose: “America must be the great arsenal of democracy.” Here was the selling of policy using the talents of the propagandist and public relations counsel (encyclopedia.com)¹⁰.

Government public relations in the sub-continent

In the sub-continent, beginning with the Mughal rule followed by the Englishmen brought in its wake a new type of Public Relations on the part of the rulers. The rulers tried to put forth that they were working for the people of this country and that people should cooperate in their continuance. Besides adopting various administrative and political policies, they launched communication strategies. Government public relations started with preliminary handwritten news sheets, prepared by government news-writers during the Mughal rule. Such news sheets provided the rulers with information from all corners of the empire, regarding public occurrences, current-events, mischief in societies and hardships faced by the people. From this information, the rulers used to take decisions and plan initiatives to uphold good governance. News-writers or stringers were assigned in all the areas of the empire to collect news and assemble it in the paper for the court of King. At that time, there were no trains or by no means any electric channel. Nonetheless, a first-class postal system existed, that stringers used to send their news sheets to the capital. Muhammad Bin Tughlaq was the first Muslim ruler who resourcefully structured postal system in the sub-continent. There were two kinds of post. First, the pedestrian’s post and second through horse-rider’s. Horse rider’s trend initiated during the Mughal’s time.

¹⁰ <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1O126-PropgndndPblcRltnsGvrnmnt.html>, accessed on 24/11/2010

With the downfall of Mughal rule, Britain started offensive invasion into the sub-continent. Wherever hatred for British surfaced, people started privately-owned secret handwritten papers in order to induce and stimulate more abhorrence against East India Company. The first printed newspaper of sub-continent appeared in 1780, with the name of “Hickey Gazette”, published by James August Hickey. The size of that paper was 12" x 8" with only 4 pages. For the reason that William Augustus Hickey was against East India Company and always brought forth the corruption of Government, he was soon jailed. But, Hickey continued editing in the jail too. So, in November 1781, a newspaper with name of “India Gazette” was introduced which was pro Government and against Hickey. Within twenty years of the installation of printing press in sub-continent, dozens of (English language) newspapers and periodicals appeared in the cities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. In course of time newspapers soon became a means of educating and enlightening the people. They also highlighted various socially-important issues, acting in the process as a catalyst for the growth of public opinion (encyclopedia.com).

Before 1857, the British government promulgated four press laws (in 1799, 1818, 1823 and 1835) to curb newspapers. They tried their best to control prevailing press and strived to mold public opinion in favor of the then government. But the endeavors of journalists and editors remained a major barrier in British intentions. After 1835, many newspapers of regional languages came at frontline. Among them Urdu language newspapers were most important because Urdu was the official language. As journalism flourished, many broad-minded people of sub-continent entered into the arena of journalism. With the development of press, not only stringers, news-writers and editors enhanced their journalistic practice and skills, but an audience responsive to a mass press took birth. Being the rulers, British supported the idea of free press but with certain limitations.

In the present century the outstanding example of a master communicator is that of Mahatma Gandhi. On 9th August 1942, he gave a call to the British rulers to quit India. This resulted in hundreds of thousands of citizens coming out for their exit once and for all. Within five years, i.e., 15th August, 1947, centuries of slavery ended and India and Pakistan became independent.

A systematic and organized practice of public relations in India began with the Indian Railways. The Great Indian Peninsular (GIP) Railways, for example, carried on a campaign in England in the 20s to attract tourists to India. Within the country, its Publicity Bureau introduced a travelling cinema which held open air shows at fairs, festivals and other places.

This Bureau also undertook extensive advertising in newspapers and journals besides participating in exhibitions abroad to popularize the Indian Railways and tourist traffic.

During the First World War (1914-1918), the then British Raj set up a Central Publicity Board. This was the first organized PR/Information set-up in the Indian sub-continent. It was later renamed as Central Bureau of Information, and again afterwards renamed as Bureau of Public Information, and functioned as a link between the Government and the Press. One of the items on its agenda was to find out where the action of the Government was criticized. In today's parlance, we call it "feedback". For the first time, an Indian, namely, J. Natarajan of *The Pioneer*, Lucknow, was appointed as its Deputy Principal Information Officer. The Bureau also formulated a policy in 1938 for release of government advertisements. As of now, the functions of publicity and public relations and of broadcasting, television, advertising, films, publications etc. are looked after by professionals.¹¹

After Independence (1947), both the Governments of India and Pakistan set up a full-fledged Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. This was a revolutionary measure in the reorganization of the information and public relations setup of the Government. In India, Press Information Bureau (PIB) was set up under this ministry to carry out the specific task of releasing news, press notes and photographs of government activities, as well as speeches and instructions. In Pakistan, newly established Press Information Department (PID) undertook the same responsibility under Ministry of Information.

Therefore, the birth of Bangladesh PID is associated not only with the birth of Bangladesh; rather it had its existence even before the liberated Bangladesh, during the regime of East Pakistan (it was then the provincial office of central PID of Pakistan). After having been free, under the free sun of Bangladesh, PID has started its work at its full length from 1972 while the central and provincial office merged under PID. It is very important to mention that PID carried on its work even during the days of the liberation war of 1971.

3.2 PID: A Government Public Relations Organization

Press Information Department (PID) of Bangladesh is a government public relations organization and can be considered as the spokes organization of the government. Although it is a formal bureaucratic organization, it works in a media environment. It disseminates news on government activities to media which adds extra dimension and complexity to its accountability mechanisms. It has a large number of stakeholder organizations in both public

¹¹ <http://pib.nic.in/feature/fe0999/f1509991.html>, accessed on 27/01/2011

and private sector namely state-run Bangladesh Television, Bangladesh Betar, news agencies, and all other private print and electronic media organization.

As the spokes organization of the government, PID plays the nucleus role in disseminating information to the people to inform government activities, policy - decisions, development plans etc. in the form of official press release/handout distributed to the press and electronic media for having coverage as the main source of government. At the same time it functions as the two way traffic like letting people know about government activities and getting the feedback of the mass and reaching it to the government. It also arranges press conference for journalists, and issues accreditation cards to them.

PID works every day from the early morning, six o'clock till the midnight as news-flow never stops for a single bit of moment around the world. PID even remains open during all the national and government holidays and carries on its regular work with its three main sections, sub sections and cells.

Similar organizations in other countries

After getting independence from the British rulers in 1947, both the Governments of India and Pakistan set up a full-fledged Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. This was a revolutionary measure in the reorganization of the information and public relations setup of the Government. In India, Press Information Bureau (PIB) was set up under this ministry to carry out the specific task of releasing news, press notes and photographs of government activities, as well as speeches and instructions. In Pakistan, newly established Press Information Department (PID) undertook the same responsibility under Ministry of Information. Bangladesh PID inherited its status from Pakistan PID after the liberation war in 1971, while Pakistan PID has been continuing same activities in Pakistan with the same name.

Press Information Bureau (PIB) of India (website: pib.nic.in) is the nodal agency of the Government of India to disseminate information to the print and electronic media on government policies, programs, initiatives and achievements. PIB has its headquarters in New Delhi. It is headed by the Principal Director General (Media & Communication) who is assisted by a Director General and eight Additional Director Generals at headquarters. Besides, the Bureau has Departmental Publicity Officers varying in ranks from Directors to Assistant Directors and Media & Communication Officers who are attached with different ministries, like Public Relations Officers in case of Bangladesh PID. PIB has eight Regional

Offices headed by Additional Director Generals and 34 Branch Offices and Information Centers to cater to information needs of regional press and other media.

Press Information Department (PID) of Pakistan (website: www.pid.gov.pk) has roles and functions almost similar to its younger relation—PID of Bangladesh. It works under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, and is headed by the Principal Information Officer (PIO)—as same as in Bangladesh. It also shares same names for its other posts, and in similar manner Information Officers are attached to ministries and other key public organizations as *Publicity Officers*.

In Sri Lanka, Department of Government Information is responsible for disseminating news on government activities. Press releases can be found at the official news portal: www.news.lk.

In the United States, Press Office (website: www.state.gov/r/pa/prs) supports the President and Secretary of State by explaining the foreign policy of the United States and the positions of the Department of State to domestic and foreign journalists. It works under the Bureau of Public Affairs. It also provides logistical support and expertise to the Secretary of State and other Department officials for events involving media coverage/participation. Specifically, the Press Office responds to press queries, conducts media interviews, monitors media for breaking international events, and coordinates special press briefings and conference calls. They also support the Secretary of State's public events in addition to those of the Deputy Secretary and other senior Department officials. In addition, it coordinates interview requests from the national media for senior State Department officials other than the Secretary of State. The staff proactively pitches interviews on a wide variety of issues to national media outlets and places editorials in major U.S. newspapers. Official spokesperson of Press Office is called Press Officer.

Central Office of Information (COI) is the agency responsible for press and public relations matters in the United Kingdom (website: coi.gov.uk and news distribution service: nds.coi.gov.uk). It can be regarded as the UK government's marketing and communications agency. COI helps its colleagues across the public sector deliver policy objectives and public services efficiently and effectively, from a network of offices across the U.K. Its Chief Executive reports to the Minister for the Cabinet Office. The Minister is accountable to Parliament and its Select Committees for all COI's activities. It started its functions in 1946, taking over the aspects and works of the Ministry of Information after World War II. Through

the decades, public information campaigns of COI have provided important information on every aspect of life in the U.K.

Public relations specialists

An organization's reputation, profitability, and its continued existence can depend on the degree to which its targeted public supports its goals and policies. *Public relations specialists*—also referred to as *communications specialists*, *media specialists*, and *public relations officers*, among other titles—serve as advocates for clients seeking to build and maintain positive relationships with the public. Public relations specialists handle organizational functions, such as media, community, consumer, industry, and governmental relations; political campaigns; interest-group representation; conflict mediation; and employee and investor relations. They must understand the attitudes and concerns of community and public interest groups to establish and maintain cooperative relationships between them and representatives from print and broadcast journalism.

Public relations specialists draft press releases and contact people in the media who might print or broadcast their material. They also arrange and conduct programs to maintain contact between organization representatives and the public.

In government, public relations specialists may be called *press secretaries* or *public relations officers (PROs)*. They keep the public informed about the activities of agencies and officials. For example, *public affairs specialists* in the U.S. Department of State alert the public of travel advisories and of U.S. positions on foreign issues. A press secretary for a member of Congress informs constituents of the representative's accomplishments¹². In India, similar functions are assigned to *departmental publicity officers* and *media & communication officers* who work under Press Information Bureau of India—the central press and public relations office. In Bangladesh, PID acts as the organization responsible for overall public relations of the government; and the officials of PID are attached as Information Officers, also known as Public Relations Officers, in all ministries. Besides PID, there are posts of *press secretaries* in both President and Prime Minister's offices to coordinate public relations with PID and media houses.

¹² <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos086.htm>, accessed on 27/05/2011

3.3 Key Responsibilities of PID

Rules of Business 1975 (amended in 1996) have allocated certain functions to the Ministry of Information to be carried out. Those functions are then delegated to its various departments and institutes. The functions that are delegated to the PID¹³ can be broadly divided into five categories namely press, protocol, facts and personalities, research and reference, and feature.

PID's press related services are: making press coverage arrangements in connection with tours, activities along with photographic coverage of the President, Prime Minister, Ministers, foreign delegates and VVIPs; arranging time-to-time press conferences of the President, Prime Minister, Ministers, foreign delegates, guests and journalists; preparing handouts for general and press notes for emergency purpose; attaching *Public Relations Officers* to different ministers for publicity and monitoring and helping organize their activities; supplying important paper clippings from the dailies to the President and Prime Minister and all the Ministers of different ministries; working as the advisor for the government and advising the government on introducing publicity policy and coordinating overall policies; making arrangements for publicity of different aspects of Bangladesh government for the foreign state heads and VVIPs; maintaining liaison with the national press and representatives of the foreign media along with the Dhaka based foreign diplomats; publishing special supplements on special days and occasions in different important dailies; arranging press and media coverage of the different national and international summits, seminars and workshops; and maintaining liaison with the visiting journalists; providing news brief, photograph and publicity related papers to the different Bangladesh embassies abroad.

Functions and activities related to protocol are: issuing accreditation cards for national and foreign journalists; presenting photo albums to the visiting Head of the States, foreign delegates and VVIPs with photos of their visits to different places; publishing and distributing PID telephone guides on media organizations; providing protocol services during reception and farewell to the state guests and identifying the news and media men for their entrance to the high-risk security zones.

Facts and personality related services are: compiling biographies and life sketches of the President, Prime Minister, Ministers and all reputed figures of politics, culture and

¹³ Organization website: www.bdpressinform.org

economics; and preparing and preserving reports and articles on the facts of history, geography, culture, agriculture, industry, communication, health and population of Bangladesh.

Research and reference are entrusted with making daily and weekly news trend along with report on news; interpreting the policy and activities of the government through the medium of press for the national and international level; preparing highlights of national and international news press trend of public opinion, criticisms, reference materials, development activities and periodicals; preserving reference materials, national newspapers, informative publications and maintaining the library and microfilm unit; transmitting regular information and feedback materials to the government and other sources; preserving the clippings of important national and international news and views, published in the national press; and making different slogans, cartoons and fillers to make the people aware on different health and development issues.

Finally, feature services are preparing and publishing comprehensive and evaluation reports and features on national issues and development activities of the government; and monitoring foreign reports and thus providing news digest.

The above functions manifest the role and responsibilities of an organization which performs overall public relations for the government: from arranging press coverage, press briefing and press conference to issuing handouts, releasing photos, sending press clippings to all government ministries, preserving reference materials and life sketches, issuing accreditation cards for journalists etc.

3.4 Manpower strength

PID is headed by Principal Information Officer (PIO) who is supported by 351 officers and employees, including 67 Class I and 28 Class II officers, and 198 Class III and 57 Class IV staffs. PIO is assisted by one Additional Principal Information officer (APIO), three Senior Deputy Principal Information Officers (Sr. DPIO), five Deputy Principal Information Officers (DPIO), forty Senior Information Officers (Sr. IO), thirteen Information Officers (IO), and twenty four Assistant Information Officers (AIO).

3.5 Composition of PID

The three main sections of PID are Press, Protocol, and Administration. The subsections are Research & Reference (R&R), and Facts, Personalities and Reference (FP&R).

Establishment, Coordination, Press Trend, Clipping and Feature are different cells. There are three Regional Offices of PID in Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi. All these sections, subsections, cells and regional offices function directly under the Principal Information Officer (PIO) who is the head of this department and enjoys the rank equivalent to Additional Secretary. One Senior Deputy Information Officers (Sr. DPIO) looks after each of the main three sections. There is also an Additional Principal Information Officer (Addl. PIO) equivalent to the Joint Secretary, who assists the PIO in all respects. Photographic and Newsroom units work under Press Section. Facts, Personalities and Reference (FP&R), Research and Reference (R&R) are the sub sections of PID. These subsections are headed by Deputy Principal Information Officers (DPIOs). Each of these subsections has some units, which are monitored by Senior Information Officers (Sr. IO). Below is a brief description of the sections/sub-sections of PID:

Press section

Press section takes the main responsibility in organizing press and media coverage with its newsroom and photographic units. Newsroom coordinates the Public Relations Officers (PROs) attached to different ministries and works non-stop 365 days from morning till midnight regularly. This section, with the help of photographic section provides and distributes photographs, rejoinders and handouts on regular basis and issues press notes on emergency for having media coverage. It is the only government source of news. It also prepares news brief on behalf of Press Trend section and sends to all Ministries and Bangladesh embassies abroad. Press section also arranges press conferences and press briefing sessions. It organizes media center equipped with modern communication tools on the arrival of state guests and important foreign delegates. Special media centers are also organized to provide all necessary support to the national and overseas media during important occasions like special national and International events like conference, seminar, symposia, summit, VVIP visit, election disaster etc. Senior Deputy Principal Information Officer (Sr. DPIO) heads the Press section.

The key responsibilities of a Duty Officer/Senior Information Officer of newsroom are:

- To prepare handouts, news articles, press notes, unofficial releases for having media coverage.
- To arrange press coverage of President, Prime Ministers, Ministers, various government events, and tours/programs of Ministers.

- To send still photos/videos of important government events/programs to print and electronic media.
- To arrange proper publicity of the ministries, divisions under the supervision of Sr. DPIO (Press).
- To scan daily newspaper reports.
- To supervise over the newsroom staff and take administrative decisions related to newsroom.
- To prepare such other duties assigned by Sr. DPIO (Press).

The newsroom environment in the evening shift is quite different. At that time a lot of news items are to be collected, edited, and disseminated. Sometimes the duty officer needs to take quick decisions on certain matters relying on his/her own judgment and discretion without consulting his/her superior. He/she also must be always ready to provide supplementary information/explanation to the queries of media houses (stakeholders).

Protocol section

One of the three main sections of PID is 'Protocol Section' that issues accreditation cards for national and foreign journalists. Besides, the section presents photo albums to the visiting Head of the States, foreign delegates and VVIPs with photos of their visits to different places. Publishing and distributing PID telephone guides is another important assignment of this section. It also provides protocol services during reception and farewell to the state guests and identifies the news and media men for their entrance to the high-risk security zones. The head of the section is Sr. Deputy Principal Information Officer (Protocol).

Administration section

Administration section is the heart of any govt. organization and so for PID too. The section is a combination of two cells, namely Coordination and Establishment. Coordination section coordinates in buying all necessary things for office, maintaining and renovating all necessaries, buying and maintaining vehicles, maintaining accounts and preparing monthly bills for vehicle fuel, comparing the accounts with the released photographs, and keeping the records of all things in store. As a whole, the responsibilities of this section is directing and maintaining departmental vehicles, collecting photographic and other stationary things (functioning as indenting officer), doing everything on maintenance, renovation and

direction, maintaining, renovating and distributing office furniture, buying and distributing all necessary office equipment, newspapers and magazines, maintaining all types of coordination and communication with the regional offices, coordinating inter departmental issues, and performing all delegated duties from the Head of the Department. Sr. Deputy Principal Information Officer (Sr. DPIO) is in charge of this section.

Facts, Personalities & Reference sub-section

This subsection collects facts and information on history, geography, tradition, custom, culture, agriculture, education, health, population, crafts and trends etc. and preserves them in its library and media cell. It has huge collection of paper clippings from 1972 onwards. This subsection also prepares and preserves the life sketches of the President, Prime Minister, Ministers and different VVIPs and intellectuals in the fields of politics, culture, and economy. It is well equipped with a modern library and computerized permanent media cell. Under this subsection, there is a Basic Facts unit which is further divided into three sub units- Basic Facts, Media Cell and Library.

Research and Reference (R&R) sub-section

Press Trend and Press Clippings are the two main units of this subsection, monitored by a Senior Information Officer for each unit. Press Trend unit prepares news trend on the daily published newspapers for the ministries and Bangladesh missions abroad. It also monitors different foreign reports, prepares foreign press digest, translates important news and reports, and arranges their republication and reprint. Press Clipping unit makes news clippings from the dailies and sends to the President, Prime Minister, and all Ministers. This unit starts their work very early in the morning and finishes their job within 11 a.m.

Feature cell

Feature is the separate cell of PID which is headed by a Senior Information Officer with the designation of Chief Feature Writer. This cell prepares feature articles on the development activities of the government along with population and gender welfare activities of the ministries, and ensures their publication in national dailies. It also publishes special supplements in important dailies on special national occasions, and makes and distributes different mass awakening slogans for bringing positive changes in people's attitudes.

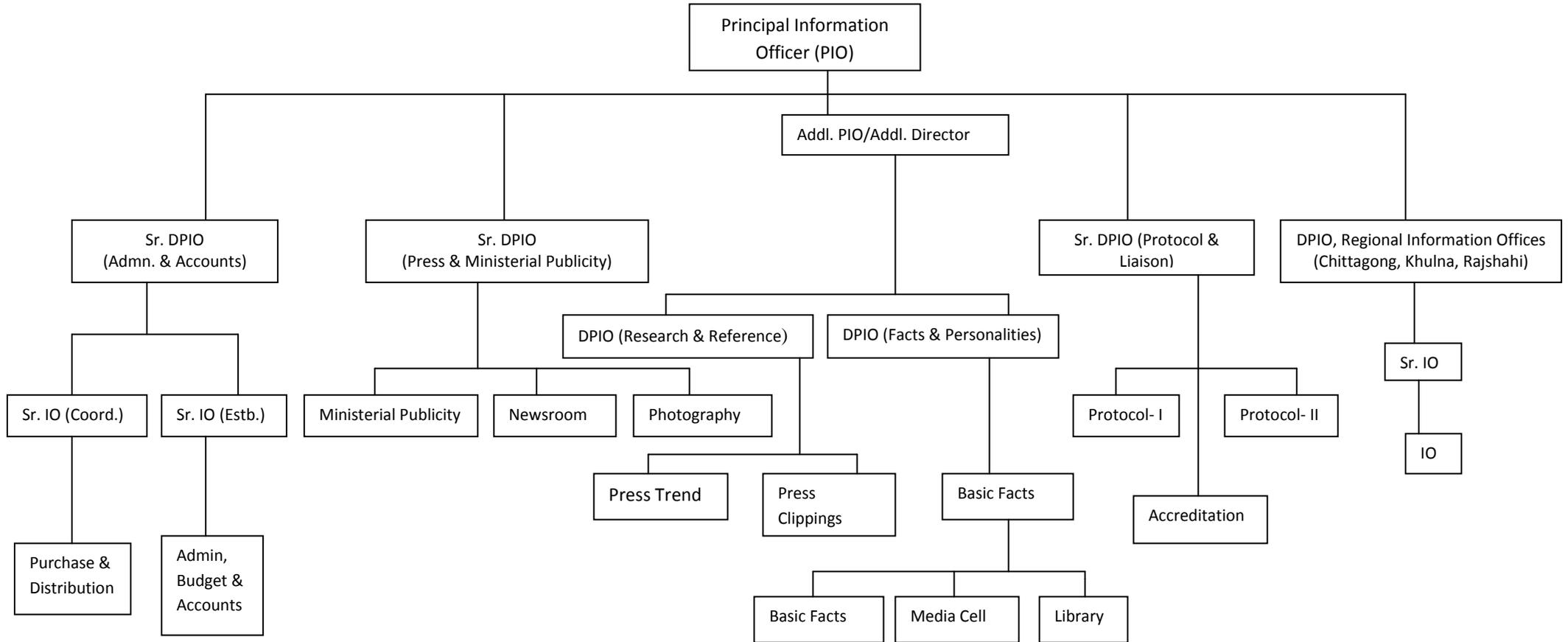
3.6 Organizational set-up

As mentioned earlier, PID is a government organization with a formal bureaucratic set-up. In performing the activities mentioned in the previously, Principal Information Officer (PIO) and his officials are directly accountable to the Government of Bangladesh generally, and to the Ministry of Information specifically. They also need to show their responsibility toward the President's and the Prime Minister's office, and to keep liaison with all the news agencies, print and electronic media. All the officers and employees fall under all the rules and regulations related to government service.

Inside the organization, PIO, as the head of the department, is the controlling authority for all the cadre officials, and controlling as well as appointing authority for all the staff. PID has the formal Charter of Duties and Job Description for its officers. Its current organizational set-up was revised in line with the recommendations of Enam Commission in 1982. The organizational chart of PID (next page) resembles the formal bureaucratic top-down hierarchy of decision making and control. Each official up the hierarchy is the 'supervising authority' or 'reporting authority' of the official below, though he/she is not the 'controlling authority' (controlling authority is the head of the department; in this case it is the PIO as mentioned earlier). It is relevant to mention that in civil service of Bangladesh, distinctions are made among 'appointing', 'controlling' and 'supervising'/'reporting' authority. Appointing authority is one who has the power of dismissing/firing and taking 'major' punitive measures against the incumbent. Controlling authority is usually the head of the organization, can take 'minor' punitive measures, can make standing orders, and can grant bills/vouchers. Supervising/reporting authority makes the Annual Confidential Report (ACR) of his/her immediate below/subordinate incumbent; and though he/she has no independent power of punishing or granting, his/her formal acceptance or refusal is needed. All the administrative measures for or against any particular incumbent must go upward the hierarchy through the supervising authority. As the name indicates, supervising authority directly supervises the activities of his/her subordinate officers/employees. Orders from controlling authority also pass through supervising/reporting authority. For example, if a case of a Senior Information Officer working in the Press section/Newsroom is taken, Secretary of Ministry of Information is his/her Appointing Authority, PIO is Controlling Authority, and Sr. DPIO (Press) is Reporting/Supervising Authority.

Figure 3.1

PID Organization Chart



3.7 Charter of duties of key officials

The charter of duties or the official job descriptions of key officials of PID are presented in the Appendix-III at the end of this thesis. They are collected from organization website (www.bdpressinform.org) and official records maintained in the organization.

4 INTERNAL ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS OF PID

PID has been set-up as a bureaucratic organization under Ministry of Information. First class gazette officers appointed here represent career civil servants who are members of Bangladesh Civil Service Information (General) cadre. Administrative management and practices are therefore bureaucratic in nature and accountability issues are directly related to rules/instructions and top-down hierarchical management. PID also must be responsible to its stakeholders since it is dependent on them for disseminating news. This chapter focuses on the first dimension—internal administrative accountability of PID. Analyses on the findings of thesis work, therefore, begin from this chapter. The topic of this chapter is also the first independent variable of the analytical framework and has been analyzed using some indicators that can be found in section 1.6 and in table 1.1. In order to make analyses comprehensible and comparable, reference from secondary literatures, relevant theories, documents and the findings of past research works are presented throughout the chapter. Research findings from questionnaire are arranged in tables to help grasp the matter quickly. Comments and opinions from interviews are mentioned where they seem applicable and relevant to the discussions and analyses of questionnaire data. In some cases they are highlighted and presented in boxes when the findings are more significant in nature. Some case studies are also presented in boxes.

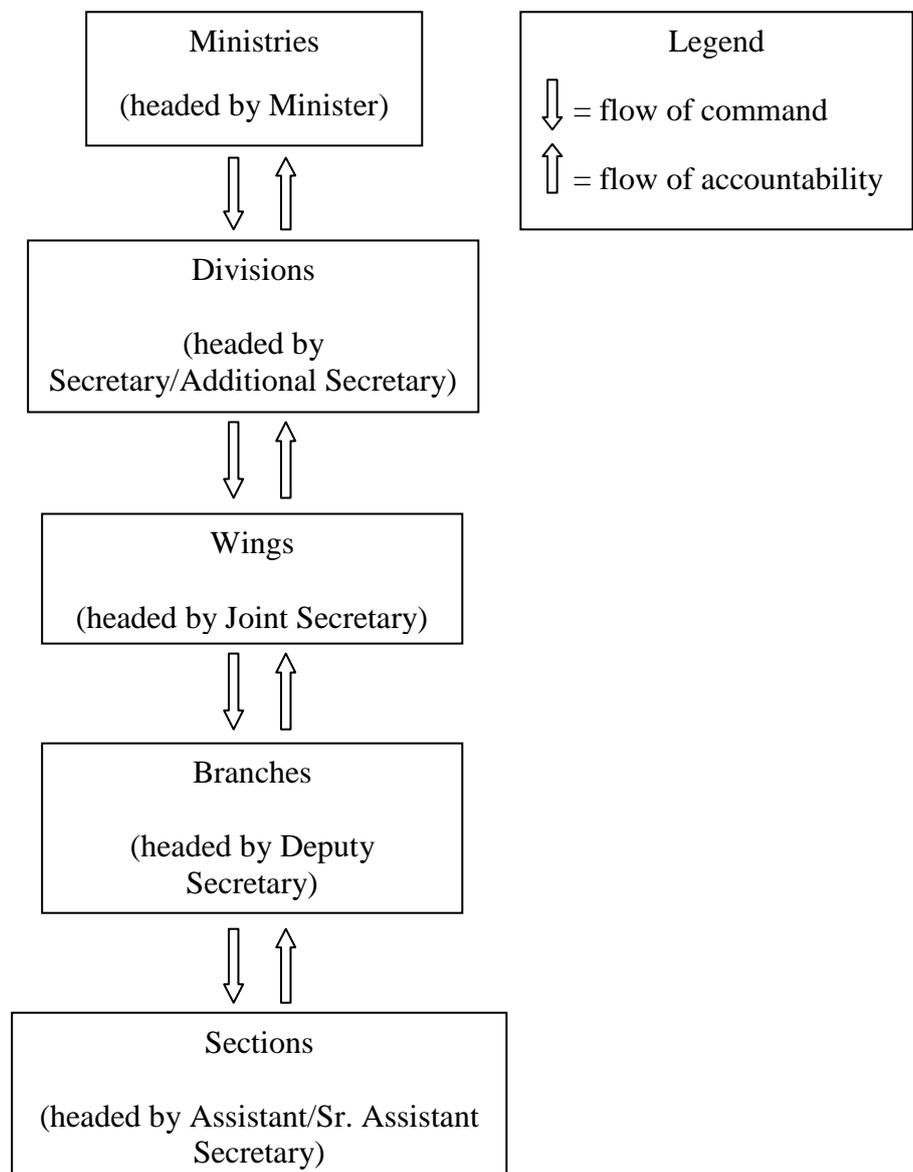
4.1 A brief discussion on administrative hierarchy in Bangladesh

The administration of Bangladesh is organized hierarchically with the secretariat at top. Everyone is accountable to his/her administrative superior for his/her activities. Accordingly, flow of command should pass downwards from a Minister or a Secretary, and accountability should progress upwards from an Assistant Secretary/Sr. Assistant Secretary of a section to a Secretary of a ministry/division who in turn is responsible and accountable to the Minister in charge. The system functions by means of the secretariats of all the Ministries/Division of the government of Bangladesh (Talib & Iqbal 2000).

A *Ministry* is a unit of government to which a specific task or tasks are assigned according to Schedule 1 of the Rules of Business. It is headed by a Minister or State Minister who is responsible for the policy of his/her ministry and for its implementation, being accountable to Parliament. Each Ministry consists of one or more *Division* headed by a Secretary or Additional Secretary in Charge. A Secretary is accountable to the Minister for the working of

the Ministry. He/she is responsible for its administration and discipline and proper conduct of business according to the Rules of Business and the Secretariat Instructions. A Division is divided into sections. A group of sections constitutes a *Branch* and a number of branches form a *Wing*. A wing is headed by an Additional or a Joint Secretary accountable to the Secretary. He/she assumes full responsibility within his/her sphere and submits cases to the Minister for orders through the Secretary. A branch is headed by a Deputy Secretary accountable to the Joint Secretary. A Senior Assistant Secretary or an Assistant Secretary accountable to Deputy Secretary is in charge of a Section which is the lowest administrative unit in a Ministry. Administrative hierarchies and the flow of orders and accountabilities that are practices inside a ministry can be depicted as follows:

Figure 4.1: Administrative hierarchies in a ministry



Under a ministry there can be several executive organizations/agencies namely departments/directorates and autonomous agencies. The responsibility for the execution of government policies in a Ministry/Division lies with those organizations. A department is a unit of government usually headed by a Director General equivalent to Additional/Joint Secretary and accountable to the Secretary of his/her particular Ministry/Division. The head has specific administrative and financial responsibilities. A directorate is also a unit of government but smaller in size than a department. It is headed by a Director or Director General accountable to the Secretary. Below the central government are local governments and field units. Officials working in local government and field units are responsible and accountable to the central government, i.e., their home Ministries/Divisions.

In democratic societies, administrative accountability is evaluated by looking at the system in which authority emanates from the elected Chief Executive and is passed down through the hierarchy; responsibility passes upwards, to rest ultimately with the Chief Executive. In Bangladesh, under the existing Rules of Business (as amended in 1996), the Minister is the executive head of a ministry. Secretary is designated as the administrative head, acting as the principal accounting officer and informing minister-in-charge of the administrative working of his or her ministry.

4.2 Hierarchy and compliance mechanisms inside PID

From the above discussion it is now clear that according to Rules of Business PID functions under Ministry of Information, its head (PIO) being accountable and responsible to the Secretary of the said ministry. At the same time as a government department it has its own set-up of administrative hierarchy inside the organization. As stated earlier, though PID is a unique organization which performs as the spokes organization of the government and engages in public relations activities on behalf of government, it is a formal bureaucratic organization and therefore has same type of internal administrative managements like other government organizations. For its organization chart please refer to page 40. The chart shows top-down hierarchical control and exercise of authority in line with superior-subordinate relationship. According to the Bangladesh Service Rules (BSR) Part-I (1983), three types of authority can be exercised in this process. They are:

a) Appointing authority: As the name suggests, appointing authority gives appointment order to a new incumbent and therefore has the power of dismissing/firing and taking 'major' punitive measures against the incumbent. PIO is the appointing authority of all class-III and

class-IV employees of PID. The appointing authority of first class cadre officials (up to grade-VI of National Pay Scale) and second class officials is the Secretary of the ministry.

b) Controlling authority: Controlling authority is usually the head of the organization. He/she can take 'minor' punitive measures, can make standing orders, and can grant bills/vouchers of the incumbent. In the case of PID, PIO is the controlling authority of all class-II, class-III and class-IV officials/staff, and up to grade-VI of first class cadre officials.

c) Supervising/Reporting authority: Supervising/reporting authority directly supervises the activities of his/her subordinate officers/employees. Supervising/reporting authority makes the Annual Confidential Report (ACR) of his/her immediate below/subordinate incumbent; and though he/she has no independent power of punishing or granting, his/her formal acceptance or refusal is needed. All the administrative measures for or against any particular incumbent must go upward the hierarchy through the supervising authority. Orders from controlling authority also pass through supervising/reporting authority. In the organization chart of PID, each official up the hierarchy is the supervising/reporting authority of the official below.

As for example, if a case of a Senior Information Officer working in the Press section is taken, Secretary of Ministry of Information is his/her appointing authority, PIO is the controlling authority, and Sr. DPIO (Press) is the reporting/supervising authority.

Who is the boss?

If normal hierarchical control mechanisms are in force, then it is expected that the orders come down from above passing through each steps in the process so that the official/staff below gets orders from his/her immediate supervisor; in similar manner accountability goes up from below to the immediate upper level, just as depicted in figure 4.2. This process is also dubbed as 'chain of command' and is indispensable for the smooth and trouble free functioning of a bureaucratic organization. When the command line or chain breaks, it ushers in confusion and ambiguity and therefore affects malfunctioning of organizational and individual activities and causes drops in overall performance.

This researcher has tried to get a clear picture of the exercise of authority and compliance mechanisms of PID by asking the PID respondents the question: from whom they receive

most of their service/activities related orders/instructions/guidance. Here the respondent size is 20 (please refer to page 11). The findings are presented in the table below.

Table 4.1 Administrative hierarchy and compliance of orders (N=20)

| Order received from | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|------------------|-------------------|
| Reporting/supervising authority | 3 | 15% |
| Controlling authority | 0 | |
| Appointing authority | 0 | |
| Both reporting and controlling authority | 14 | 70% |
| Other (Minister) | 3 | 15% |

The findings express some ambiguities in the exercising of authority and control mechanisms. As stated earlier, a sound practice should ensure that orders pass through only the reporting or supervising authority. But here surprisingly large numbers of respondents (70%) indicate they receive simultaneous orders from both of their reporting and controlling authority. It can be assumed that sometimes they are being ordered by higher authority who bypasses or does not involve their immediate authority, and sometimes there are overlapping orders/instructions. In administrative point of view, this situation is clearly problematic.

It is interesting to note that three respondents, who work as Public Relations Officers in their respective ministries, indicate that they receive orders/instructions from their respective ministers (PROs are mostly of the rank of either Information Officer or Sr. Information Officer). One of them told the researcher, “We, the PROs, are attached to the ministry and work as a staff (unofficial) of the minister. For all of our public relations activities and discharging other duties we have to heed for the instructions of the minister. We cannot get access regularly to our formal supervisor (Sr. DPIO of Press) and controlling authority (PIO) due to time and other constraints and therefore cannot get their guidance. Also, our ministers like to establish direct contact with us without any intermediary or intervention of others”. This condition, though might be expedient in practical sense in some cases, reflects the lack of proper exercise of authority and may give rise to conflicts in many cases as is evident in the next case study.

Conflicts in compliance of orders

By observing the responses in the previous section, one can assume that there may be some conflicts in compliance mechanisms due to the presence of simultaneous orders or instructions coming from different authorities. Indeed, the researcher found the prevalence of conflicts in the public relations activities among PROs. The PID respondents (of whom 15 were PROs) were asked whether they felt any conflict in complying the orders of their respective authorities. Their responses are presented in the following table:

Table 4.2 Conflicts in compliance of orders (N=20)

| Conflicts | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 12 | 60% |
| No | 8 | 40% |

Conflicts have been an expected outcome as ambiguities have been found earlier. Here 11 out of 15 PROs (73.33%) gave the 'yes' answer. This finding means they are victims of more conflicts than those who work in administrative and other sections.

Nature of conflicts

Why PROs fall in prey of conflicts more than other officials of PID? In seeking the answer, the respondents who gave 'yes' answer to the above question were asked the supplementary question to mention the nature of the conflicts that they had experienced. This question called for more than one answers. Therefore though the numbers of respondents were 12, total frequencies (F) of responses were greater. Their responses constitute the following table:

Table 4.3 Nature of conflicts (N=12, F=18) (Multiple answers possible)

| Nature of conflicts | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Between rules/codes & oral order/guidance | 2 | 11% |
| Between oral & written order | 2 | 11% |
| Between different oral orders | 5 | 27.78% |
| Between different guidance | 8 | 44.44% |
| Other (personal conflict) | 1 | 5.5% |

Various types of conflicts were identified by the respondents, but the most prominent was the conflict between different guidance. Second spot was taken by the conflict between different oral orders which was in some attributes similar to the previous nature of conflict. These two types of conflicts constituted 72.22% of conflicts found by the respondents.

The above phenomena can be explained if we take into consideration the environment in which PROs perform, and the nature and manner of discharging their duties. We have already observed that the PROs work under multiple authorities. They are the officials of PID and *should* work under the supervision of Sr. DPIO (Press) and the guidance of PIO. But they are attached to ministries and are considered the representatives of that. They need to work closely with the minister in charge of their respective ministry and also collaborate with the secretary for various press and public relations matters. It is of no surprise then that they need to converge all of the instructions and guidance given separately by minister, secretary, their head of department and immediate supervisor; which most of the cases are not coherent to each other and create possibilities for potential conflicts. Another very important point (later we will analyze this point more extensively) is that there is no set procedure or official instruction for rendering government public relations activities. The responsibilities and jurisdictions of PROs are not clearly laid out in official rules/instructions, neither are the manners and codes of conducts to be followed in this respect. These are resulted in the drastic contrast between a PRO and an official working in administrative section of the same organization where the latter is assisted by laid-out rules, administrative instructions and procedures. PROs need to rely on their own sense of judgment about what should be more appropriate course of action in a given situation.

Though problems in exercise of authority and compliance mechanisms are not uncommon to other government organization in Bangladesh, the following case clearly demonstrates the uniqueness of PID in this respect where clear policy guidance is absent or ambiguous.

Box 4.1

Case study

What should go to media and what should not – a case of conflicts

One unclear and conflicting thing to be confronted regularly by the PROs and officials working in the Press section (especially in News Room) of PID is in deciding what should go for media coverage and in which format. Official Press Releases or Handouts are most common format to cover day-to-day government activities. Though they are official, they do not necessarily carry the view of the government. Press Notes—a somewhat uncommon and less released format have much greater value in this respect. The contents of a press note are considered as authorized by the government. Press notes are signed by not below the rank of a Joint Secretary of the government, and all the higher-up officials including the Minister and Secretary of a ministry (sometimes Ministers/Secretaries of more than one ministry) are involved in drafting, editing, and finalizing them. They are only released when needs are felt to clarify government's stand on certain matters, to give explanation to a recent happenings (mostly unhappy or related to law and order), or to disseminate the view of the government on some urgent matters. According to Rules of Business they are released by PID although the draft can be done by concerned officials of any ministry. PID holds the right to further edit and modify the contents so that they become most right and useful to the media and government's interest can be preserved to the most.

The policy of PID is to release press notes as rarely as possible so that they cannot lose their 'proper weight'. On the other hand a PRO of a ministry cannot but release (via PID) the press note issued by his/her ministry as it is made with the involvement of the highest members of that ministry. In 2007, during the regime of Care-taker government, a PRO of a ministry came to the PID News Room in the evening with the final draft of a press note explaining government's position on the recent crisis related to that ministry, and conveyed the desire of the concerned Adviser to the Duty Officer to take all proper arrangements so that wide circulation of the press note is ensured. In the news room environment Duty Officer usually need to take independent and instant decisions without consulting his/her superior. On that day Duty officer was in a hurry and according to his judgment he found enough merit in the press note to release that without delay and without placing to his authority, as a press note of that kind had never been withheld before.

The next morning just after waking up from sleep he got the phone call from one of his authorities along with severe disapproval of and rebuke for his action of releasing such an 'unimportant' press note.

4.3 Charter of duties of PID officials

Job description or charter of duties as known in government organizations in Bangladesh outlines the role, in terms of both the day to day tasks and responsibilities¹⁴. A job description is a list that an incumbent might use for general tasks, or functions, and responsibilities of a position. It may often include to whom the position reports, specifications such as the qualifications or skills needed by the person in the job, or a salary range (Wikipedia). Job descriptions are usually narrative, but some may instead comprise a simple list of competencies; for instance, strategic human resource planning methodologies may be used to develop a competency architecture for an organization, from which job descriptions are built as a shortlist of competencies (ibid). According to the UNDP study “in the normal use of the term, a job or position description informs the incumbent of his/her duties and responsibilities as well as to whom the incumbent reports and who the incumbent supervises (if supervision is a responsibility of the incumbent)” (UNDP 1993, cited in Talib & Iqbal 2000).

Availability of job description

All government organizations *should* have charter of duties of their officials/staff. PID also has job descriptions for its various posts/positions. The researcher has been able to collect job descriptions of some key positions in PID, and they are presented in the Appendix III.

It is noticeable that PID does not have job descriptions for all of its positions currently available. Particularly lacking are the job descriptions of attached PROs and officers who work in News Room. All of the PROs are treated as either Information Officer or Senior Information Officer without assigning specific tasks, roles and responsibilities that are required for public relations activities (it is worth mentioning that Public Relations Officer or PRO is not a official designation and it does not indicate any post in government sector; rather it suggests specific types of duties and responsibilities like Officer-in-Charge or O.C. or Duty Officer). Similar treatment is given to news room officials/staff as there is no mention of ‘news room’ and ‘duty officer’ and the corresponding roles and responsibilities.

In this regard, the PID respondents were asked whether they had official job description/charter of duties available to them. The findings are:

¹⁴ <http://www.bis.gov.uk/policies/higher-education/access-to-professions/prg/recruitment-step-by-step/defining-the-job/job-description>, accessed on 18/04/2011

Table 4.4 Availability of job description/charter of duties (N=20)

| Availability | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Yes | 15 | 75% |
| No | 5 | 25% |

All negative answers come from PROs. We will soon see, they are mostly unhappy with unavailability of public relations policy/rules on the part of the government. One PRO told the researcher, “I have heard that we have charter of duties, but in practice I have not seen such so far”. One senior officer working in the news room was more certain and vocal: “We do our duties assuming various risks. Our job nature is like journalists or reporters working in media houses. But we lack guidelines of that nature. There is not even charter of duties and specific jurisdictions for me”.

Clarity and specificity of charter of duties

Next, the respondents who gave positive answer in the previous question were asked how clear and specified the charter of duties was. Here respondent size was 15 (N=15). All of the respondents (100%) agreed that their available job description/charter of duties was not clear and specified. It was only partially helpful in rendering their duties.

Indeed, the responses are not over-stated. One can easily verify going through the charters of duties (please refer to Appendix III) that they suffer from the same symptoms prevalent in government sector organizations, particularly in Bangladesh: job descriptions are unclear and ambiguous, lack the mention of specific tasks and performance targets to be achieved, the domain of the jurisdictions, whom a officer supervises and to whom he is accountable, and needed qualifications and skills. They are mostly of only general guidelines rather than being specific. Issues of accountability and performance measurement therefore become subjective in nature in most of the cases. It is very difficult to make officials accountable if they are not well informed of their duties and responsibilities.

Other studies have also found similar scenario in the public sector of the country. According to the study conducted by UNDP, there are no clear, comprehensive job descriptions for any positions in most government units (UNDP 1993, cited in Talib & Iqbal 2000). In the absence of such job descriptions, it cannot be incumbent on officials to carry out instructions. Even where job descriptions exist, they do not clearly describe who the officials reports to and whom the officials supervises (Talib & Iqbal 2000). According to management science, such

non-specific job descriptions run the risk of losing motivation on the part of officials/staff and may cause 'burnout' to them¹⁵. Burnout can be described as "the extinction of motivation or incentive, especially where one's devotion to a cause or relationship fails to produce the desired results," and is a stress-related state¹⁶. One method of evaluating an individual civil servant's accountability is by undertaking regular reviews of how that person's performance meets the requirements of the job description. When it is not clear to officials/staff *how* to succeed, it is harder for them to be confident, enjoy their work, and feel they are doing a good job. If the job description is not explained clearly, if the requirements are constantly changing and hard to understand, or if expectations are otherwise unclear, they are at higher risk of burnout. It is needless to say that the above analysis holds entirely true to the officials/staff working in Bangladesh public sector, manifests in below-average and declining trend of performance as found in other studies.

4.4 Rules/regulations/instructions for guidance

Officials/staff of PID as well as any other government organization is subject to compliance of various service rules and regulations. Functions of various ministries are defined in accordance with the Rules of Business and Secretariat Instructions framed by the government of Bangladesh in 1975 (amended and updated in 1996) and 1976 respectively while individual civil servants have to comply with Bangladesh Service Rules Part-I and II (published by Ministry of Establishment (Ministry of Public Administration as renamed now) in 1983). Some of the most practiced rules/regulations/ordinances applied to public sector organizations and individual officials are briefly described in the Appendix IV.

Rules, regulations, and Instructions indicate the allocation of functional responsibilities as well as the delegation of power at each level in the hierarchy (Talib & Iqbal 2000). The Public Administration Efficiency Study (PAES) observed:

Rules and regulations are the primary means by which an administrative system designates responsibility and authority to its various organs and lays down the procedures for an efficient conduct of official business. Rules and regulations define who does what and how in a government and therefore are necessary to delimit the functional jurisdictions, delineate the duties and spell out a rather stable and

¹⁵ http://stress.about.com/od/burnout/a/job_burnout.htm, accessed on 24/05/2011

¹⁶ Ibid

predictable procedure for carrying out these duties (Government of Bangladesh 1989: vol.2, cited in Talib & Iqbal 2000).

Accountability is about the observance of these rules, regulations and procedures in the sense that by applying those, cases of administrative excesses, negligence, and abuse of power can be checked. But unfortunately in Bangladesh, the existing rules and regulations, which have not been modified nor simplified for years, do not clearly indicate who is responsible for what; they are ambiguous (Talib & Iqbal 2000). Officers, except for some senior government officials, are not sufficiently familiar with the rules and have limited knowledge and interpretation of them. Consequently, desperate sets of rules emerge, confusion of regarding accountability is developed, and inaction in government occurs (ibid). The Public Administration Efficiency Study (PAES) team found that “at present, virtually every decision in the Secretariat is governed by desperate sets of rules and regulations which tend to create procedural bottlenecks” (Government of Bangladesh 1989b, cited in Talib & Iqbal 2000).

Talib & Iqbal (2000) mention that the existing Rules of Business creates uncertainties between ministers and civil servants which can easily cause problems of accountability to both. In their field research they found a minority of the Ministers and Permanent Secretaries interviewed believed that existing rules were responsible for the uncertainties between ministers and civil servants. In their words: “One Secretary was of the view (widely shared by colleagues) that Uncertainties develop only when government is directed according to the existing Rules of Business. Ministers think that if a Secretary is given responsibility and authority, government policy might not be implemented by him if he is not loyal to the party in power, thus causing difficulties. But in a real sense, a Secretary gives some options, he makes the position clear. He faithfully implements policies for the sake of the law which benefits the public.” (Talib & Iqbal 2000). In western societies, rules are established to meet changing needs and demands of the electorate and of society in general. In Bangladesh, the majority of the provisions of the rules and instructions are now out of date, which causes difficulties in appropriately designating responsibility and authority within the system of public management and administration (Ibid).

Rules as guidance for PID officials

The observations, analyses and findings described above are validated again when we take the case of PID officials into consideration. They were asked whether the rules, regulations,

instructions etc. guided them properly in performing their duties. Their responses are presented below:

Table 4.5 Rule as proper guidance (N=20)

| Proper guidance | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Yes | 2 | 10% |
| No | 14 | 70% |
| Not sure | 4 | 20% |

It is evident from the table that the overwhelming majorities (90%) of the respondents either think that the existing rules do not guide them properly or they are uncertain about the role and applicability of the existing rules to their tasks and activities.

When there is so much unanimity on the failure of existing rules/instructions, then questions can be raised regarding corresponding mechanisms of accountability. Duties are performed in accordance with personal judgment and caliber and in some cases following the precedence or common practices; and procedures are non-systematic. Officials then do not know how to handle sensitive, difficult, and unique situations. Therefore, decisions and actions which are not consistent with existing rules and procedures are made but no one is held accountable for them!

Why rules/instructions do not guide?

The respondents who gave negative answer in the previous question were subsequently asked what they thought the reason(s) behind non-guidance of rules. Respondents' numbers were 14 in this case, but the resulting frequencies of responses were 25 as it was possible to state multiple reasons. The findings are presented next:

Table 4.6 Reasons for non-guidance of rules (N=14, F=25) (Multiple answers possible)

| Reason | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|------------------|-------------------|
| Rules not clear & specific | 3 | 12% |
| Not up to date | 7 | 28% |
| Not much related to job (PR policy/rule unavailable) | 8 | 32% |
| Lack clear goals/objectives | 6 | 24% |

| | | |
|--|---|----|
| Other (hinders smooth running of duties) | 1 | 4% |
|--|---|----|

As stated earlier, most PROs are unhappy with the lack of public relations policy/rule and media policy. Their responses of rules not related to their job constitute the highest percentage here. Other two responses namely rules not up to date and rules lack clear goals/objectives get reasonable number of frequencies. One PRO opined that the existing rules hinders smooth running of duties instead of providing any guidance or assisting in decision making.

It would be appropriate here to give reference to the discussions on public relations model (figure 2.2) in section 2.4. We have observed there that the public relations organizations need to adjust their policies and programs in accordance with the changes in the environment in which they function. When environmental inputs change, structure and processes of the organization should be changed accordingly. Now the failing impacts of rigid and outdated rules/regulation on PID will be clear to us if we consider the model in light with present scenario in Bangladesh. The traditional bureaucratic rules cannot be fruitfully applied to a public relations organization. In box 4.3 this issue has been analyzed further.

Box 4.2

Case study

Ambiguous and outdated provisions in rules

A lot of provisions in existing rules/instructions are unclear and ambiguous. A case of the Government Servant (Discipline and Appeal) Rule, 1985 can be taken as an example. In this rule the definition of misconduct is stated as “conduct prejudicial to good order or service discipline or contrary to any provision of the Government Servant (Conduct) Rule, 1979, or *unbecoming* of an officer or gentleman...” (2(f) of part-I of the rule). What might be an unbecoming behavior/attitude/action of an officer or gentleman? One official joked, “If I am in good book of or have good terms with my superior authority, my smile will be welcome as a showing of noble behavior. But if I am in bad terms with, the same action would be regarded as unbecoming”.

Another example can be cited in order to understand how the rules are lagging behind the demand of the time. News Room of PID as well as whole office is dependent on *computer operators* for typewriting the news/documents. Interestingly there is no such post as computer operator, nor is the provision or related instruction on using computers. More importantly, there is no option of computers in the official “Table of Organization and Equipment” (TO&E). Computers are purchased through projects.

The rules that make one unhappy

In relation to the previous question, the researcher tried to get a picture of the rules/regulations that were hated upon or unwanted by the PID officials/staff. The aim was to identify the problem areas where the issues of accountability were related. In fulfilling this, the respondents were asked which rules/instructions/policies they were mostly unhappy with. They pinpointed the following:

Table 4.7 Rules/policies that are not proper (N=20, F=30) (Multiple answers possible)

| Policy/rule | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|------------------|-------------------|
| Conduct rule | 3 | 10% |
| Performance evaluation/ACR related rule | 7 | 23.33% |
| Promotion/seniority policy/rule | 8 | 26.66% |
| Lack of PR policy/rule | 8 | 26.66% |
| Lack of ICT rule | 3 | 10% |
| Recruitment rule | 1 | 3.33% |

Lack of public relations policy/rule again takes one of the top spots as found previously. PROs are mostly unhappy with the lack of proper media and public relations policy/rule (please refer to the opinion in the following box). Four of them underlined the problem and inconvenience they are suffering from having run their offices in ministries on attachment basis. Though it might seem odd, in the ministries there are no set-ups for Public Relations Officers and his/her manpower/logistics, and they are not included in TO&E. They draw their salary from PID and get their ACR from their respective PID supervising authority. This has put them in a very precarious position as they need to carry out day to day instructions from Ministers and Secretaries of concerned ministry, but they cannot ask for any facility/logistics thereof.

Equal number of responses came for the policy/rule on promotion or seniority. The respondents meant the less scope for the Information cadre officials of being promoted to senior service pool as Deputy Secretary. 75 percent of posts at the deputy secretary level are preserved for Administration cadre officials, and the rest 25 percent are for the officials of all other cadres. Consequently, few numbers of officials are promoted from Information cadre. Performance evaluation/ACR related policies/rules got the next disapproval. This will be analyzed in a separate section later. Conduct rule and lack of ICT rule (please refer to box

4.2) got some due responses. One of the respondents mentioned that was is unhappy with the conduct rule as dual job was not permissible under it. These findings call for similar implications on the framework of accountability that have been identified and discussed in previous sections.

Box 4.3

Opinion

“Government must make press and public relations policies/rules to make PID a worthy organization”

PID is a unique organization in the sense that it is a full government organization subject to all government rules and regulations but has to practice journalistic types of tasks. Senior officials of PID as well as media specialists feel that there is no guidance for such specific nature of job in the existing rules. “PID is created to make the bridge between the government and media houses. The tasks that it needs to perform are in reality related to quasi-journalism. The PROs and the officials in the press section are just like reporters and editors in print and electronic media. But the problem is that they have no guidance and instructions as to how to perform their duties, how much are their domains of jurisdictions, what and how far they can write in preparing handouts, what are their responsibilities and accompanied accountabilities. PROs and press officials just follow instances”, said one senior official of PID. “We are compelled to follow all formal government rules but those fall short of providing any help for our nature of job. On the contrary the current rules hinder our true performance as they encourage bureaucratic procedures involving wastage of time that are totally unacceptable in press related job. And the lack of relevant policy direction makes us be always in fear of crossing the limit of current practices (that are very much traditional) of making news/reports on government activities. For example, a news editor in any print and electronic media enjoys a certain degree of freedom for which he/she will not be caught afterwards. But we lack such degree of freedom—which is a must in an environment where decisions should be made instantly and without bureaucratic procedures. Therefore we always follow past instances, and feel conflicts and uncertainties in balancing the common traditional practices which are being applied in our organization (PID) and the modern format of report/news writing which are being followed in all other media houses”, said another senior official of the press section of PID. He continued with citing a case: “Not only PID, but both BTV and Betar are also suffering from the same problem—the lack of policy direction. We can take one example from BTV to realize it. During the regime of Care-taker government a tentative women’s policy was drafted. On one Friday, after the Jumah prayer some fundamentalist Islamic activists arranged demonstration program in protest of it in front of the mosque of Baitul Mukarram, and ransacked some running vehicles in the process. The incident was not covered by any reporter/cameraman crew of BTV, so it failed to broadcast the news and accompanying video clips in news at 8 p.m. and 10 p.m. A popular newspaper made reports on BTV’s role in this matter, and after a few days, news editor of BTV was suspended due to ‘negligence of duty’. The point to ponder here is that on many of such occasions BTV failed to make

such news, and sometimes with the ‘unofficial’ political directions; this time that person was simply an unfortunate scapegoat. What would be the policy to be followed then?”

Lack of policy direction is not only affecting the PID alone, but the overall public relations of the government are being affected too, involving all public sector organizations, and resulting in very low public trust on government. For example, when a query on any matter comes from any of the media houses, PID cannot provide satisfactory solution as in most of the cases it is unable to collect relevant information from other government organizations under current authority. The case could have been drastically different had PID been given enough authority to extract required information from any public organization, and to play the role of coordinating public relations of all such organizations. What is now going on is with the lack of government statement the reporters of private media houses sometimes simply resort to speculation and figment for preparing their news item which is a sort of ‘data cooking’. Silence from the government also encourages ‘yellow journalism’ as the public are deprived of information. “Though PID can be regarded as the ventilation of passing information from the government, PID cannot play such role due to the lack of proper policy. Even the enactment of Right to Information (RTI) Act has not benefitted it since PID has not been recognized as an information collecting and preserving organization and Information Officers defined in RTI Act are not coordinated by PID. The result is that PID has no authority over collecting information”, observed one media specialist. “Virtually in every cases of public interest government and PID fail to disseminate government’s statement or clarify their position. Recent BDR (currently named as BGB) carnage and ongoing debates on RAB’s action on Limon are two examples among many similar events. Government should realize that in the changed circumstances they cannot really hide the fact. Therefore they should make necessary policy adjustments as soon as possible to empower and equip PID so that it can really play the role of spokes organization of the government; as it is the responsibility of the government to make people well-informed about government’s affairs if they want to remain accountable to the people”—he added.

PID officials have long been complaining that they have been suffering from ‘role ambiguity’ and have to perform their duties ‘on the edge of a knife’ as they are looked down upon (for lacking clear authority) and mistrusted by both the ministries/departments where they are attached and the media houses to which they are obligated to serve. They have the feelings that they are also facing disregards from the government. They all agree on that in the changing scenario government need to pay proper attention on the problems PID has been facing, and make relevant policies/rules to make PID a worthy organization.

The above discussions may look surprising in the sense that accountability and corresponding responsibility might turn into total vagueness when the main tool of enforcing those— rules, regulations, and instructions—are either absent or ambiguous. Sadly the researcher has just found that.

Compliance of code of conduct

A code of conduct is a set of rules outlining the responsibilities of or proper practices for an individual or organization (Wikipedia). The conduct and behavior of a government employee, during the performance of his/her duties and in his/her private life are regulated by ‘The Government Servants (Conduct) Rules 1979’. The officials/staff of the government (with the exception of some departments/agencies who have their own establishment rule) are to abide by these rules either working inside or outside of Bangladesh, whilst on leave or on deputation to any other institution, authority or agency. The violation of any of the provisions of these rules is considered as misconduct. For such violation, an employee is accused of breach of discipline and is subject to punishment under ‘The Government Servants (Discipline and Appeal) Rules 1985’.

The respondents were asked in this regard to rate the compliance condition of codes of conduct in their institution (PID). They answered as follows:

Table 4.8 compliance condition of code of conduct (N=20)

| Condition | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Very good | 0 | |
| Good | 3 | 15% |
| Average | 13 | 65% |
| Below-average | 2 | 10% |

The responses are in line with the condition found in any public office in Bangladesh. Average compliance condition is a commonplace; nothing unusual is found here.

Sanction cases

Accountability cannot readily be secured, due to a lack of penalties for disobeying rules (which has become a common practice) and of reward for obeying them. It has been found that officials/staff frequently deviate from correct and expected courses of action, but are not penalized for abuse of power nor for ignoring the need for neutrality. As a result, accountability is breaking down (Talib & Iqbal 2000).

PID respondents were first asked how was the scenario in taking action against any violation of rules/instructions in their organization. Their responses constitute the following table:

Table 4.9 Sanction cases (N=20)

| Sanction cases | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Majority of cases | 2 | 10% |
| A few cases | 8 | 40% |
| No sanction | 3 | 15% |
| Do not know/No answer | 7 | 35% |

According to the table sanction for non-compliance is irregular and practiced in a few cases. Here a significant numbers of respondents (35%) either did not answer or expressed that they had no information on sanction cases. This is quite normal as not all of the officials/staff are exposed to the administrative decision and activities in an organization. Others gave answer only based upon their ideas, not verifying facts/records. The researcher cross-checked their notions by consulting the official record of sanction cases of previous three years. Nobody were inflicted any such penalty that can be regarded as official sanction as defined in rules, but a few officials/staff were transferred to different posts/places that are implied as “informal punishment” now-a-days. This reveals another ‘malpractice’ on the part of the authority which can even be traced to the case of OSD (Officer on Special Duty) as a measure of punishment practiced in accordance with the instruction of highest government authority.

The previous findings got further evidence from the next question of individual sanction cases of the respondents, as none of them (0 out of 20) has ever been a subject of disciplinary action.

4.5 Right to Information Act and PID services

The Government of Bangladesh adopted the Right to Information Act in the first session of the 9th Parliament on May 29, 2009, marking a significant step forward in fulfilling the constitutional pledge of the state of Bangladesh. The Act was notified in the Bangladesh Gazette on Monday, 6 April, 2009. It received the President’s assent on 5 April 2009. But beforehand the Caretaker Government promulgated the Right to Information Ordinance 2008, on October 20, 2008, following long-standing demands from the media and human rights organizations.

According to the provision of the Act, the government has already established Information Commission in July 2009 for overseeing the complaints regarding getting information and laying down guidelines to be followed by the information providing authorities (“information providing units” as stated in the Act) for publication and publicity of information and obtaining information. The Act also provided for appointing one Information Officer/Responsible Officer in each public and NGO office (“information providing units”).

The Act is not directly related to PID services and is not something to guide press and PR jobs. The role of PID is quite different from merely giving some office related information to the public that have been ensured in the Act. Also the services that the reporters/journalists and media houses have been getting from PID since long ago remain unaffected after the promulgation of the Act since the Act does not facilitate journalists in terms of obtaining information instantly from any office. According to the Act, ordinary people as well as journalists will have to apply for information either in writing or through electronic media or through email and will have to pay fees for applying and for the information where applicable. The responsible officer of information providing unit upon receiving a request will provide the information within 20 working days. However, if more than one unit or authority is involved, the information will be provided within 30 working days. Obviously such information has no bearing with day to day events and happenings.

Some things related to PID services that could have been considered in the Act have been ignored. One of them could be recognizing PID as a government organization to be authorized to elicit necessary information required for its press/PR functions from any public organization. In absence of such authority, even PROs in their respective ministry cannot obtain information from various sections/wings to incorporate into their press releases. They are not assisted by the bureaucrats/staff with traditional mind-set. PROs are generally informed of something like ‘banal’ or ‘cliché’ type of news/information lacking any real ‘news value’, and those information are generally not asked for by private print and electronic media (the reader may refer to the findings that are presented in table 5.7 and corresponding analysis). Another one could be the merging of the office of Information Officer or Responsible Officer as defined in the Act with the office of public relations in the same “information providing unit” so that both could function together. PID could have been given the authority of coordinating those offices. In this way people and media houses could have been benefitted better than the existing set-up with the increased relationship with

public offices, and government could have built better transparency and corresponding accountability towards people at large.

4.6 Performance evaluation and ACR

Performance evaluation is a method by which the job performance of an employee is evaluated (generally in terms of quality, quantity, cost, and time) typically by the corresponding supervisor (Wikipedia). It is a part of guiding and managing career development. It is the process of obtaining, analyzing, and recording information about the relative worth of an official/staff to the organization. Performance evaluation is an analysis of an employee's recent successes and failures, personal strengths and weaknesses, and suitability for promotion or further training. It is also the judgment of an employee's performance in a job based on considerations other than productivity alone (ibid).

Performance evaluation can be judged in terms of both organizational and individual civil servant performance. A symbiotic relationship between accountability and performance has been identified through academic writings and government reports on public management and administration. It can be seen that there are predetermined standards of performance on which an overall assessment is made. Therefore, accountability is dependent on the assessment. The UNDP investigation of public management in Bangladesh found that “the shortcomings in the performance of government are seen to be related to the system of accountability” (UNDP 1993, quoted in Talib & Iqbal 2000).

Ideally, requirements for individual performance and accountability should be contained within job or position descriptions. One method of evaluating an individual civil servant's accountability then would be by undertaking regular reviews of how that person's performance meets the requirements of the job description (Talib & Iqbal 2000). But in the case of our country we have already observed in section 4.4 that skill and performance targets are not contained in job descriptions. Here the Annual Confidential Report (ACR) is virtually the only means by which individual performance and accountability can be secured.

The Annual Confidential Report (ACR) is a part of the dossier of an Officer under the administrative control of the Ministry/Division/Department. The ACR Form No.1, which is divided into 8 parts, is used for writing the ACR of Class 1 Gazetted officers and maintained in the Ministry. The ACR for Class III & IV staff are maintained on a separate form and kept in the department offices. Generally, the ACR is written once in a calendar year in the month of January.

The objectives of ACR are – to ensure accountability in the service; to prepare cumulative performance records of officers; to take action in order to improve their capability/performance; to take decisions for promotion, transfer, training and matters related to the staff.

The ACR form has eight parts. Part 1 is for annual medical report of the concerned officer and to be filled and signed by an Authorized Medical Officer (AMO) during the first half of January after health examination. For this purpose the Report Initiating Officer (RIO) who is normally the immediate higher officer, will send the names of the officers under him to the AMO by 31 December (official but not practiced well) of the previous year. Part 2 is like a bio-data form to be filled up by the officer himself/herself (Officer Reported Upon—ORU) in January each year. Third to sixth parts are to be filled up by supervising authority (Report Initiating Officer—RIO) who evaluates and gives marks to ORU. In the third part general personal characteristics are evaluated which are thirteen in number. They are: sense of discipline, judgment and sense of proportion, intelligence, effort and exertion/enthusiasm, personality, assistance or helping attitude, punctuality, dependability, responsibility, interest in doing work, activeness in taking initiatives and carrying out orders, consciousness in safety and security, and behavior with people. In the fourth part job/service related skills and performances are evaluated which are twelve in number. They are: professional knowledge, quality of work, amount of accomplished work, ability in directing and supervising, relationship with colleagues/ co-workers, competence in taking decisions, ability in implementing decisions, interest and skill in giving training to subordinates, writing ability, spoken ability, promptness in writing and countersigning of ACR, and dutifulness/devotion to work. That total twenty five numbers of criteria are evaluated on the scale of 4 to 1 where 4 represents the highest mark for the specific criterion. The RIO will evaluate performance and will put his initial in the appropriate boxes and sign where necessary Then after evaluating all the criteria total marks are given which are categorized as follows: 95-100: Excellent; 85-94: Very good; 61-84: Good; 41-60: Average; 40 and less: Below-average. Fifth part constitutes the graphical representation of the evaluation. In the sixth part recommendation for reward/promotion is given by the RIO with comments on special aptitude, fame and honesty etc. of the ORU. The form is then sent to the Counter Signing Officer (CSO). In the seventh part comments and total marks are given by CSO. Eighth part is filled up by Ministry/Department by 30 April (again not in wide practice).

The following points should be noted by all concerned: the ACR form cannot be folded, the word 'Confidential' should be written on the top of the envelope, the ACR should always be accompanied by a health report even if it is submitted in arrears, officers and other staff on training, on deputation in foreign countries or on suspension do not need an ACR, an officer should serve a minimum of three months under a RIO to be eligible for submission of an ACR form by him.

But it is a matter of great regret that the ACR system has now virtually become farcical. According to many practitioners as well as academics, the composition of ACR itself is a faulty one as nearly all the evaluation criteria are based on subjective judgment. No specific performance goals are set in the charter of duties/key responsibilities. Such weaknesses in appraisal system has bred the culture of nepotism, favoritism, "tadbir", persuasion, building personal connection, corruption and many other ill practices throughout the hierarchy. Accountability thus became "personal" to the superior rather than "professional". In many cases it can be found that marks given in ACR are completely in disaccord with real performance of the incumbent. It is well known that those who can cajole or coax and persuade his/her superior can get better points in ACR.

The above picture has been noticed in several studies. For example, The PAES team and the UNDP consultants found the current ACR form inadequate to assess individual performance objectively (GoB 1989b, UNDP 1993; cited in Talib & Iqbal 2000). Regionalism (belonging to the same district as the monitor) and favoritism influence the ACR; it is on this that promotion is crucially dependent. Officials try to get more points not by delivering enhance performance, but by forging extra-bureaucratic connections to higher-up officials. The UNDP investigation also noted that "individuals are not held accountable for performance through ACR".

Likewise, the ineffectiveness of the office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) is causing problems of performance evaluation and, therefore, accountability. The CAG himself said:

This organization is not an independent organization. It is still under the finance division and acts as a subordinate office. It seems to be subject to the direction or control of the government. The present emphasis is not on value for money and performance audit. The capacity to perform these functions has not been developed since government does not implement the recommendations of the CAG. The CAG reports are not implemented. In consequence, financial accountability of the government and its agencies is never achieved. (Talib & Iqbal 2000).

With the above backgrounds, it would now be easier for us to investigate into the matters in PID.

Satisfaction of PID officials in ACR

Like other government organizations, performance appraisal in PID is based upon Annual Confidential Report (ACR). PID respondents were asked how much they were satisfied with the current format and practice of ACR. The objective was to find out their subjective feeling and judgment with regard to performance evaluation currently in practice. The researcher found the following:

Table 4.10 Satisfaction in ACR (N=20)

| Satisfaction | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Satisfied | 2 | 10% |
| Neutral | 6 | 30% |
| Dissatisfied/ Highly dissatisfied | 12 | 60% |

This finding validates the findings of other studies as mentioned earlier and is in line with the discussions and observations contained therein. Here the frequencies regarding satisfaction are only 10%, and 60% respondents reject the current format of ACR and the corresponding practice.

Some respondents also made some comments expressing the reasons behind their dissatisfaction. Four of the respondents mention there is lack of true reflection of performance as evaluation is subjective in nature. Other comments are: ACR format is not suitable for judging true performance; format is not complete and only capable of judging personal qualities; evaluation is one way and confidential as the evaluated is not consulted and the report is not communicated to him/her; current evaluation practice only encourages lobbying and building up personal relationship with the supervising authority; judgment varies too much among different RIO; RIOs lack proper accountability in initiating the process of ACR. One respondent highlight the pain that an ORU has to suffer every year: “First, it should the duty of an RIO/immediate supervisor to initiate the process of ACR. Unfortunately it is the ORU who needs to give frequent visits to the doors of supervisor and knock again and again to obtain the ACR and complete the first process. Then it is sent to countersigning officer causing further visits and delays. Sometimes ACR is lost between the ways”.

Kamal Siddiqui (1996) also observed similar things:

At least three problems are associated with it (ACR). Whatever be its quality, there is inordinate delay in sending it, and the consequence of this has to be borne by the officer being reported on, since his/her promotion is likely to be held back in its absence.Inertia on the part of the reporting officer is the major cause, but there are also officers who feel embarrassed to write unpleasant reports against subordinates, and hence prefer to sleep over ACRs. On the other hand, since there is delay, subordinates find an opportunity to indulge in “tadbir” not only to expedite the writing of ACR but also to extract praise in superlative terms. This activity is intensified particularly on the eve of promotions.....Confidentiality is also totally gone. The rule on confidentiality of ACR is quite ambiguous, and in any case, even if officials are not supposed to know what has been written about them in ACRs (unless there are clear, adverse remarks), these are found out in no time.....the system of countersignature by a higher officer should be discontinued since it has done very little over the years to improve the situation. On the contrary, it has caused delay, leakage of confidentiality and “misplacement” of ACRs. (Siddiqui 1996, pp 99-100).

Satisfaction in evaluation of individual

Next, the researcher tried to find out the satisfaction level in the evaluation of performance in individual cases. In this regard PID respondents were asked to express their satisfaction with the overall evaluation of their performances. The findings are:

Table 4.11 Satisfaction in evaluation (N=20)

| Satisfaction | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Satisfied | 3 | 15% |
| Neutral | 8 | 40% |
| Dissatisfied | 9 | 45% |

Here frequencies of dissatisfaction are less than what have been found in earlier case. Perhaps some respondents somehow came to know the marks given in their respective ACRs as observed by Siddiqui; and the usual practice involved giving excellent marks (more than 90). As for the reasons of dissatisfaction, one mentions that the bureaucrats of Bangladesh are not very much broad minded to say thanks or to give credit to anyone. Another mentions one does not get credits if he/she is successful in any given duty, but gets severe disapprovals from authority if there is any unintentional error. Four of the respondents mention there is lack of true reflection of performance as evaluation is subjective in nature. One is dissatisfied because the authority wants better public relations but proper logistics are unavailable.

Another one indicates the problem in monitoring and evaluation as he is not under direct supervision of the person from whom he gets his ACR. It is true for all PROs as indicated earlier. Other comments are similar to the comments given on ACR.

Box 4.4

Case study

Supervisor does not supervise – a case of mismatch between office and ACR

It has been discussed earlier that PROs work in ministries on attachment basis. They do their duties managing and collaborating with the officials/staff there, while ministers and secretaries give them necessary instructions and supervise their activities. But their RIO is none of them. They need to take ACR from Sr. DPIO (Press) who sits in PID, therefore cannot supervise them and seldom knows their real performance. One PRO expressed his concern in this respect and asked how ACR would be in line with performance.

Reward and punishment

It is alleged that public sector does not offer any incentive for better performance. In this way merit, qualification and performance are undermined and mediocrity is nurtured. The wrong doers also find this sector as a safe haven where they are caught by none. We have already observed that sanction cases are rare in PID. The researcher also tested cases of rewards or incentives on PID official to check the notions with the realities. PID respondents were asked whether they had been offered any incentive, monetary or non-monetary, for better performance. Respondents' size was 20 as before. The findings confirmed the common notions. All of them agreed that there had been no incentive mechanisms for better performance and none of the respondents had ever got any monetary/non-monetary rewards or benefits.

Supervision and feedback

In an earlier study the PAES team found that supervision of subordinate officials and staff was very deficient in the secretariat system (GoB 1989a, cited in Talib & Iqbal 2000). This is not to say that the necessary arrangements for supervision are not made available; rather, supervisors neglect them. Consequently, subordinate officers neither perform their duties in the right manner nor accept responsibility. Motivation towards efficiency and accountability is accordingly lost (Talib & Iqbal 2000).

It was also observed before that monitoring officers do not visit the field on a regular basis to check progress against targets and it is difficult for them to take corrective measures when performance falls short of targets. Subordinates do not receive regular feedbacks of their activities and performance. Motivation and need for improvements are therefore never felt (ibid). Present researcher found similar result when supervision and feedback mechanisms are measured. 16 out of twenty respondents (75%) expressed that they rarely or not at all received feedback (oral or in any other manner) from their authorities.

In Secretariat Instructions 1976, there is provision for monthly coordination meetings in offices where the overall activities in the previous month are discussed, performance targets are analyzed, success and failure cases are shared, and strategies for the upcoming month are devised. Records revealed that the practice of arranging coordination meetings in PID was very irregular. It was held nearly regularly 2-3 years ago, but afterwards it ceased to be held. Officials were of opinions that they strongly felt the need of regular coordination meetings which had been their only opportunity to get some feedbacks of their activities.

Inspection

The Secretariat Instructions provide for half-yearly inspection of the subordinates' workplaces by Deputy Secretaries and monthly inspection by Assistant Secretaries (Secretariat Instructions 1976). It can be applied to other offices.

The researcher found weak application of inspection in PID. 75% of respondents told that their respective authorities did not visit their workplaces. The findings are presented below:

Table 4.12 Inspection cases (N=20)

| Inspection | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Yes | 5 | 25% |
| No | 15 | 75% |

The case was further verified by asking the respondents who gave 'yes' answer in previous question to mention the frequency of visits. Even those who responded positively earlier here admitted that the visits were only irregular in 60% of cases, as presented in the following table:

Table 4.13 Frequency of visits (N=5)

| Visits | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Once in a month | 1 | 20% |
| Once in 2-3 month | 1 | 20% |
| Irregular | 3 | 60% |

The lack of inspection of government offices results in non-observance of important rules and procedures, in ineffective use of public money, and in improper filing and record keeping. As a result, subordinate officers are not warned about the consequences of any irresponsible or improper action or behavior.

4.7 Newsroom environment¹⁷

The environment in the press section and newsroom of PID is quite different from and dissimilar to the environment of all other public offices. Entering in the newsroom anybody might wonder whether it is a formal government office or the inside of a newspaper office. Duty Officer, who is in charge of newsroom, sits along with all the subordinate officials/staff in a single large room without any partition between themselves. Virtually everybody cooperates and contributes in preparing, editing, and finalizing handouts. Formal bureaucratic manners like standing up when superior comes in, addressing ‘sir’ or ‘madam’ frequently, seeking permission for sitting etc. are not strictly followed here. Officials/staff of whole newsroom work as a ‘team’ and need to follow techniques of team management for successful rendering of services rather than following bureaucratic procedures. If any error is found in a news item during editing, anybody has the right to draw the attention of the concerned or the Duty Officer so that necessary correction can be made. Lower ranked official/staff can find fault of his/her higher ranked colleagues in this regard. This is truly unique practice that is only the characteristics of the newsroom and cannot be found easily elsewhere in public sector organizations.

PID newsroom is open from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. Sometimes duration is extended beyond midnight on special occasions. It is open all the days in a year, even in Eid-days.

¹⁷ The analysis of this section is based on personal observation and interview.

Officials/staff perform shifting duties with different weekly holidays. The newsroom environment in the evening shift is quite different from the day shift. At that time a lot of news items are to be collected, edited, and disseminated. PROs who remain busy for various program coverage, mostly start sending news stories of those programs after noon. The peak time of newsroom is in between 4 p.m. - 9 p.m. This also resembles newspaper offices that are full of life through evening to midnight.

It is evident from the above description that PID's press and newsroom services are not conducted following bureaucratic practices. It is not even possible to work and make any handout if bureaucratic procedures like opening up a file for each news item, writing notes on justifying the release, getting written approval from supervisor etc. are followed. On the contrary newsroom environment of printed newspapers and electronic channels has a close resemble with the job nature of the officials/staff of PID newsroom. News is an 'instant' thing and needs to be released 'immediately'. Similarly decisions must be made instantly beyond the control chain of bureaucratic hierarchy. In performing his/her duty in newsroom, a duty officer most of the times needs to take quick decisions on certain matters relying on his/her own judgment and discretion without consulting his/her superior. He/she is entrusted with conducting the affairs of newsroom on his/her own at night when all other senior officials leave the office. He/she also must be always ready to provide supplementary information/explanation to the queries of media houses.

Relevant policies/rules/guidance?

The nature of job in PID newsroom seems sound enough in comparison with the practices of similar kind of job in newspapers. This, however, must be compared and analyzed considering the all-important 'context'. Reporters and employees of newspapers follow the theories, practices, and ethics of journalism; and are guided by the policies, missions, and values of their respective organizations. What identity will be attributed to PID officials? Obviously they are public servants, and not the journalists. How will they perform the journalistic nature of job then? Which will guide them? Are there relevant policies/rules/instructions?

Those are really the big questions that need to be answered at the highest policy making level of the government. For the time being the officials of PID have the feeling that they fell in between the vacuum of government and media houses, with no relation of and help from anybody. Neither current government rules can guide them, nor is journalism applicable to

them. “We do not know what to follow for performing duty here (newsroom), and what are there for us in black and white. We just follow traditions and instances”—remarked one official of newsroom. The readers may revisit and refer to section 4.5 and box 4.3 for additional comments, descriptions, and analyses for unavailability of policies/rules. This criterion is making the internal accountability mechanisms blurred and ill-defined, and the following criterion is responsible for marring external informal accountability by not counting stakeholders’ interests.

Delay in releasing handouts

The ideal condition of newsroom is something that has been described in the beginning of this section. In practice things are generally much different from that. There are sometimes severe delays in releasing news items or handouts from newsroom (please refer to section 5.7). The researcher has identified two reasons for this by interviewing officials and observing in person.

First, it is none but the practice of bureaucratic procedures in press related matters! Several steps are involved, starting from PROs in the concerned ministries, in preparing and releasing handouts. Though PROs are entrusted with conducting PR services and preparing first draft of press release on their own, many times they are required to show their draft to the ministers, and sometimes to the secretaries. Some valuable time is wasted there as both are too busy to have the draft approved shortly. Then the draft is sent to PID newsroom where second level of screening is applied. There the concerned officials feel unsure about applying any direct approach to the handout due to the lack of policy and guidance analyzed earlier. He/she needs some time for making up mind for the issues of editing and releasing. He/she has to minds to balance: one is maintaining the interest of government, another is still hoping for media coverage. Sometimes third level of screening and editing process is initiated involving senior officials of press section and PIO himself depending on the nature of news item. In every level a lot of time is consumed due to the manner the job is done (also see below). Finally when the handout is released, it lost the ‘immediacy’ condition of news and its due coverage.

Second, PID handouts are edited and released in primitive manner. First draft of PRO is again typed by typewriters and edited manually by concerned officials. Typewritten draft is corrected several times, and typed again and again. Since at least 3 persons are involved in manual editing, typing, and proofreading process, time cost is added for monitoring and

supervising. Handouts are not edited using electronic networked software that Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS) uses. When the process completes, it is uploaded to organization website, faxed, and sent physically to media houses by Dispatch Riders. But as it is analyzed in box 5.4 in the next chapter, PID website is not accessible and therefore it is not possible for media houses to use the handout immediately. On the other hand faxed items are found missing in many cases, and Dispatch Riders carry handouts only twice in a day. Taking the above two cases together, it is not surprising that media houses experience the delay of about 6-7 hours on the average between occurring an event and getting PID handout of that event.

Box 4.5

Opinion

“Bureaucracy is a hindrance to press and PR job”

We have previously observed the lack of press and public relations (PR) policies/rules for PID and examined some opinions of officials and media analysts on this matter. It is relevant here to present another observation of similar kind by a media analyst. In his view, press and PR jobs are not suitable in the milieu of bureaucracy. He explained the reason behind: “Bureaucracy is dependent on static and rigid rules/regulation with extreme focus and dependency on hierarchical control which is too much time consuming. Creativity, flexibility, and instant judgment neither can be exercised in this environment, nor are they wanted and appreciated. Bureaucratic organizations cannot even response to their outer environment and initiate necessary changes in tune with the changes in environments. On the contrary, PR job is dynamic and sensitive to internal and external environments and factors. It requires instant judgment and action. It ushers necessary changes and adjustments when situation demands, otherwise it will fail to continue two-way communication process. Bureaucracy is therefore a hindrance to it in most of the cases”.

When asked how government press and PR job can be conducted and what will be the proper accountability mechanisms, he answered, “For PR personnel the load of administrative rules should be made much lighter and flexible. Under existing recruitment policy this might not be possible. In fact government should consider creating a specialized service outside of its bureaucratic structure like Central Office of Information (COI) in the United Kingdom, and make press and PR related policies tailored to the nature of service. Accountability will be defined in light of the policies that must be useful in present scenario and helpful for upholding journalistic ethics and freedom of information. Or government can reshape the role of PID for making it a monitoring authority of both print and electronic media and coordinating Information Officers (or Responsible Officer for providing information to the public) under the provision of Right to Information (RTI) Act, retaining its bureaucratic structure. Surely government must announce media policy beforehand, which is also absent now”.

This chapter has analyzed one dimension of PID's accountability. As an endnote it can be said that the internal mechanisms have embraced problems in each of the aspects. The overall findings present pessimistic notes to the reader and the scenario call for urgent policy intervention from the part of the government. Now we are interested in observing how the other mechanisms play their role in the activities of PID. In the next chapter the accountability dimensions are examined when the stakeholders are taken care of. For a service rendering organization stakeholders can be regarded as customers who are the 'king' in ultimate sense. PID is no exception to this.

5 ACCOUNTABILITY TOWARDS STAKEHOLDERS

This chapter focuses on the second dimension of PID's accountability mechanisms—external informal accountability towards its stakeholders. PID, as a government organization, must be sensitive to its 'input' as well as 'output' environment as described in the model of public relations (please refer to section 2.4 and figure 2.2). It is important to note that stakeholders provide inputs to PID and are affected by PID's outputs. Therefore this dimension of accountability mechanisms, though informal, play significant role in measuring success or failure of an organization like PID. There are many issues that have to be confronted in dealing with these mechanisms. Newspapers and TV/Radio channels are the primary stakeholders who are supposed to receive all the handouts and other news items/articles from PID. But it is alleged that now-a-days, with the proliferation of so many news agencies and private media houses, attitude of the newspapers and channels towards getting government handouts has reached all-time low. Stakeholders and service recipients of PID can actually "*exit*" from PID handouts. PID as well as BTV, Betar is also losing its credibility of delivering unbiased, factual news/report service. They are portrayed as 'low trust' organizations in people's minds. In the view of media houses, PID handouts contain scanty information and are full of only 'what Ministers say' in which they have very little interest. Media want 'background' information and 'investigative' stories which the PROs are incapable of providing under present service conditions and practices. Playing a suitable role as a government organization in this environment is truly difficult. Accountability towards government and stakeholders are therefore at odds which aggravates the problems in the service delivery of PID. All of those issues are extensively explored and analyzed in this chapter with the relevant backgrounds of theories and changing media environments. Findings are presented in tables and charts simultaneously as they are analyzed separately for public and private media houses. Case studies and important opinions/observations are presented in boxes. Unfortunately, due to the lack of secondary literatures of similar kinds in Bangladesh, comparisons with previous research works could not be made possible.

5.1 Who are the stakeholders of PID?

All news agencies, print and electronic media, operating in either public or private sector, are the stakeholders of PID. PID has no publication of its own, neither can it broadcast anything. It is therefore inherently dependent on media houses for disseminating anything to the public.

According to the official records of the Department of Films and Publications, there are 292 media listed daily newspapers in Bangladesh as on November 21, 2010. As many as 97 of them are being published in Dhaka district.¹⁸ Weekly and fortnightly magazines totaled to 125 and 18 respectively throughout the country, share of Dhaka being 70 and 15 respectively. In total, 467 media listed newspapers and magazines are being published in the country. Since the 1990's, the number of newspapers increased rapidly. There would be approximately another 1200 newspapers and periodicals that are published from Bangladesh in Bengali and English without being media listed. Electronic broadcasting has also experienced recent boom as besides BTV and Bangladesh Betar, 23 electronic channels are given license as on November 15, 2010 to operate in Dhaka city; 12 of them are running currently and others are expected to launch their service shortly.¹⁹ Moreover, four private FM radio channels are also operating in Dhaka city; and operation of 14 community radio channels in different locations of the country has recently been approved by the government. Of the news agencies, only two - one is state-run Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS) and another is privately owned United News of Bangladesh (UNB) - are in the mainstream.

All of the above mentioned media are service recipients of PID. They all are PID's stakeholders and customers. And in Management science 'customers are the king'.

Government stakeholders of PID

Currently Bangladesh Betar and BTV are the two broadcasting media and BSS is the news agency that are running under government control. In the mid-1990s government closed down "Dainik Bangla" group owned by it. Since then it owns no other newspapers. Below brief discussions are made on Betar, BTV and BSS and their relevance with PID's services.

Bangladesh Betar (BB): The Bangladesh Betar (Radio Bangladesh), the longest running radio network, is controlled by the Government. It broadcasts its programs through its 11 stations including three situated in Dhaka, and one each in Chittagong, Rajshahi, Sylhet, Khulna, Rangpur, Rangamati, Comilla and Thakurgaon and 4 relay stations in Bogra, Jessore, Barisal and Cox's Bazar. Presently, Radio Bangladesh broadcasts 92 hours of programs daily. Seven hours out of 92 are covered by external services.²⁰

¹⁸ Organization website: www.dfp.gov.bd

¹⁹ Ministry of Information website: www.moi.gov.bd

²⁰ Organization website: www.betar.gov.bd

Bangladesh Television (BTV): Bangladesh Television (BTV), a state run channel which started broadcasting in 1964, is now the only terrestrial channel in the country. BTV telecasts its programs all over the country through two stations in Dhaka and Chittagong and 14 relay stations located in Sylhet, Khulna, Natore, Mymensingh, Rangpur, Noakhali, Satkhira, Cox's Bazar, Brahmanbaria, Thakurgaon, Rajshahi, Jhenidah, Rangamati, and Ukhia. At present, BTV transmits 17 hours terrestrial programs from 7-00 a.m. to till mid-night including 14 news bulleting in English and Bengali daily. Besides, Chittagong sub-station air one hour & forty five minute local produced programs every day.²¹

Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS): Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS) is a national news agency of Bangladesh established on January 1, 1972. The Dhaka bureau of the Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) was turned into the national news agency of the new country. Beginning with a small strength in the head office in Dhaka and a bureau in Chittagong, BSS now has bureaus in Rajshahi, Rangamati and Sylhet also. The national news agency has its correspondents in all the 64 administrative districts of the country. In 1979, the BSS Ordinance was promulgated to enable it to act as the national news agency for undertaking news agency services in Bangladesh and obtaining international news agency services. The agency functions 24 hours to disseminate national, international, political, economic, industrial, educational, arts & culture, development and other news to more than 50 subscribers across the country. BSS subscribes to international wire services Agence France-Presse (AFP) and exchanges news with Press Trust of India (PTI), Xinhua, the official news agency of China, Bernama of Malaysia and TransData of Australia.²²

BTV and Betar have traditionally been loyal 'customers' of PID. Present thesis confirms that it is only BTV and Betar where PID's handouts are still entertained to some extent. One of the reasons for this may be that they share the same nature and culture of state-owned organizations, and same application of 'unofficial' policies to prefer and use government source. Lack of their 'own reporters' for collecting and preparing news items can be considered as another reason since they must rely either on PID or BSS in most of the cases. Even then PID's share is diminishing day by day in their coverage.

PID and BSS collaborate to each other for giving coverage to government programs and for releasing items. While PROs of PID mostly cover ministers' programs, BSS reporters

²¹ Organization website: www.btv.gov.bd

²² Organization website: www.bssnews.net

concentrate on programs of the President and the Prime Minister with the help of the press wings of the offices of the President and the Prime Minister. They also share information among them in preparing and editing news.

5.2 Media scenario after 1990s

Before 1990's, there were only 5 to 10 regular private dailies which were less professional, and there was only a radio and a television channel owned and heavily controlled by the government. After 1990, in a changed global economic and political situation, the scenario of Bangladeshi media was also changed. Globalization demands market liberalization and the liberalization of media too. For that, though the government always heavily controlled the state owned radio and television channels but, in the early 90s, they gave permission to broadcast commercially the satellite channels. Before that, the government even started relaying the news of BBC and CNN through the state owned channel BTV. As a result Bangladeshi audience, who had only the experience of BTV before 1990s, was afterwards flooded by foreign channels (through satellite broadcasting).

Just after the landmark of 1990, there was a 'boom' of print media also. The post 1990 democratic governments deregulated the media market to some extent. At the beginning of the 1990s, Bangladesh began moving toward the neoliberal free market economy under the influence of the deregulation movement which swung the western world, privatizing state owned enterprises and liberalizing the markets. The Bangladeshi media market got deregulated as a part of the deregulation of the economic sectors. People's demand to have alternatives to the government control electronic media also worked here. The Bangladeshi media market got deregulated either through privatization or liberalization. Amendment of certain clauses of the Printing and Publications Act (PPA) of 1973 by the Caretaker government of Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed made it possible. Following the newfound freedom, newspapers started coming out from every nook and corner of the country. The press experienced privatization which concluded with the closure of government owned newspapers in the mid-1990s by leaving the reins of the press to private capital. Broadcasting went through liberalization as private companies were allowed to own and operate radio stations and television channels alongside the state owned broadcast outlets.

In an environment of globalization, corporate companies came ahead to invest in print media. The Bangladeshi media market has primarily experienced horizontal integration. Companies involved with different types of businesses such as beverage, fast food and real estate have

expanded their businesses to publishing newspapers and owning radio and television channels.²³ The trend is still going on. At present the newspapers in Bangladesh are, in fact, pluralistic and most of them are owned by either big business firms or by political parties.

The shape and size of print media, practice of journalism, and style of report writing have also been changed significantly since 1990s. Multicolor layouts have taken over blacks and whites, and the pages have been stretched from 8 to nearly 30 with accompanying 'extra' material pages. The role of the newspapers is no more to feed 'hard news' only, but to analyze events and investigate into what are behind the scenes. In view of journalistic theory, newspapers in Bangladesh have generally achieved such degree of maturity to act as 'fourth estate', notwithstanding some ill practices from some quarters,—to check and balance government policies and activities, and open up wrongdoings before the eyes of public. Till now, print media is the most powerful media in Bangladesh. Bangladeshi newspapers now enjoy high level of press freedom as per the government control is concerned. But the electronic media is deprived of enjoying that freedom. A number of private television channels have been shut down recently on political grounds—according to media analysts.²⁴

5.3 Control over media: the role of PID

Freedom of the press is a fundamental right of all citizens as guaranteed in the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Article 39 of the Constitution is the most important Article for this study as it provides provision for press freedoms. Article 39 says:

- (1) Freedom of thought and conscience is guaranteed.
- (2) Subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interest of the society of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency or morality, or in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence-
 - (a) The right of every citizen to freedom of speech and expression; and
 - (b) Freedom of the press is guaranteed.

Article 39 clearly states that freedom of thought and conscience is unlimited, but other freedoms such as speech and expression and freedom of the press are not without restrictions. The restrictions referred to in Article 39 assume action only by law. Without legislative authority, the executive cannot place any restriction or limitations on these freedoms. To impose a restriction, the legislature must make a law only for that purpose. While a citizen

²³ <http://www.thedailystar.net/forum/2011/May/press.htm>, accessed on 12/03/2011

²⁴ <http://fahmidulhaq.blogspot.com/2007/12/media-scenario-of-bangladesh-brief.html>, accessed on 22/03/2011

may exercise such rights in normal situations, extenuating circumstances may create compelling reasons to depart from the normal functions of the state. Part IXA of the Constitution deals with abnormal or emergency situations. If the President believes that a grave situation threatens the security or economic life of the country, be it war, external aggression or internal disturbances, he may proclaim an emergency. When an emergency is issued, the rights granted in articles 36-40 and 42 are suspended so that the State has no restrictions on its ability to make any new laws or take any executive actions. Besides the proclamation of emergency, other restrictions relating to the security of the state can be found in Article 39(2). It states the right of every citizen to freedom of speech and expression and freedom of the press, but renders such freedoms subject to the security of the state, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, decency or morality, contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence. The Penal Code, Special Powers Act and the Contempt of Courts Act prescribe the punishment for violations that offend these press limits.

It has already been discussed that media houses, especially print media, are enjoying considerable freedom currently. Even sometimes they are so 'free' that some newspapers became unbridled in breaching journalism ethics and indulging in yellow journalism. But this has not always been the case. During the military rules and state of emergency, press censorship was imposed using Martial Law and constitutional provision for emergency. Free publications of newspapers were constricted, and declarations were withdrawn using some provisions of PPA.

After the independence of Bangladesh, BAKSAL government shut down all the newspapers by keeping four state-owned newspapers, including two Bengali and two English language newspapers, in circulation. Later opposition politicians and media analysts have identified this act as a pernicious blow to freedom of expression. The government of Bangobondhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman receives a lot of criticism for this.²⁵ The assassination of Bangobondhu by a group of disgruntled military personnel in August 1975 initiated military rule in the country. Military rulers used different strategies to curb press freedom. For example, the governments of Justice Sayem and General Zia revoked the restriction on the private ownership of the press but suppressed the medium through martial law. The martial law declared by Justice Sayem in 1976 stipulated provisions ensuring penalties for people including journalists who would criticize or challenge martial law and martial law

²⁵ <http://www.thedailystar.net/forum/2011/May/press.htm>, accessed on 12/03/2011

administrators. Subsequent military governments used these martial law provisions to curb press freedom.²⁶

During military rules, military and other spy agencies would monitor the press and other media to stifle any efforts of publishing oppositional news. In some cases, military regimes did not hesitate to ban publication of newspapers. After the end of military rule in 1990 following a mass movement, press gradually started to enjoy freedom; though occasionally marred by government intervention on political grounds by shutting down some newspapers and channels. The media industry has again experienced military type control and censorship recently during the regime of Caretaker government in 2007-2008.

PID has been extensively used to control and guide media during all military regimes and the periods of emergencies. Retired or senior officials of PID, who have the experience of working in press section and in news room during 1980s, told the researcher how authority was exercised in that time. The technique that had been applied to control the media was famous as “*press advice*”. It had been determined through press advice what would go for printing and what would be discarded. “At that time, news editors would wait till midnight for the last advice to come from PID. Sometimes authorization from PID was needed for the contents and language of certain news items”—told one official. Only a few numbers of newspapers were in existence then and they would publish, sometimes verbatim, all the handouts released by PID.

The practice of giving frequent press advices to media was applied again during the regime of Caretaker government in 2007-2008. Electronic media especially came under severe scrutiny from a quarter of the government and PID was used to pass their ‘orders’ to media houses. Every now and then instructions would come from above to the Duty Officer of news room to communicate certain things (advices) to media over telephone, as described by one PID official.

It is nevertheless true that if we exclude those two years, media houses (especially print media) have been enjoying good freedom since restoring of the democracy after 1990. Many new newspapers came into being with new vision and new styles of reporting just in congruence with the changes that occurred to global media industries. Since then investigative journalism has taken over traditional style and manner of reporting. More and more print and electronic media has been launching, more and more manpower are recruited as the ‘own reporters’ of a media house, and consequently media houses becoming more and

²⁶ Ibid

more independent and less dependent on PID and other government sources. PID now has no authority over media, and its handouts are seldom entertained by media houses that we will soon see in the coming discussions. One news editor of a widely circulated national newspaper told the researcher in this connection, “Every media house has its own vision and identity to follow. It is therefore a norm to prefer its own source over other sources as long as they are not at odds with one another. Investigative journalism has opened up a new era for us and we now prefer to stay away from government handouts since they are one sided, banal, and contain insignificant information lacking what people really want to know”. The above quote can be served as a gist of current media practice, and a proof of ‘imbecility’ of PID to cope with the changed condition.

5.4 Identification of the stakeholders

The idea of recognizing the stakeholders or service recipients should be central to any service giving organization. According to Samuel Paul (1992), public accountability involves group of stakeholders—the public and the customers of the service (often a subset of the public at large), who are interested in service providers being accountable to them for attributes that benefit them most. Public accountability refers to the spectrum of approaches, mechanisms and practices used by the stakeholders concerned with public services to ensure a desired level and type of performance. Its effectiveness will depend on whether influence of the concerned stakeholders is reflected in the monitoring and incentive systems of service providers. But recent years have witnessed a growing dissatisfaction with the performance of services with public good characteristics in many developing countries (Paul 1992). While several factors have contributed to this phenomenon, one that has attracted much attention in the literature is the relative lack of public accountability in some of these countries. Developed countries too have faced similar difficulties, but seem to have had greater success in finding innovative ways to improve public service accountability (OECD 1987, cited in Paul 1992). There is a growing realization that the approach to accountability in developing countries must be improved significantly to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of their public services and “governance” in general.

Unfortunately public service rules/regulations do not formally recognize the stakeholders or service recipients, and there are no regulatory frameworks for holding someone accountable before stakeholders. After much toil, Citizen Charters for all public sector organizations were introduced in 2007, but the application has been quite dissatisfactory. Capture of public services government monopoly of many public services, the limited capacity of the public to

demand and monitor good performance, and the problems in measuring and quantifying the benefits of services, make the improvement of public service accountability an especially complex and difficult undertaking.

According to Paul (1992), the traditional public accountability mechanisms such as expenditure audits and legislative reviews seem unequal to the task of ensuring accountability for public services at the micro level. To be effective, government-wide accountability systems need to be reinforced by new accountability devices for specific services. He suggested applying the mechanisms of 'exit' and 'voice', first proposed by Albert O. Hirschman in 1970, in public sector organizations, to public sector organizations. He argued that the positive impact of public accountability on public service performance and governance in general can be augmented by moving away from an exclusive reliance on control mechanisms such as hierarchical monitoring and use of organizational incentives to a system that uses "exit" or "voice" mechanisms in conjunction with control.

Viewed from the standpoint of the public, there are two basic factors that influence accountability according to the model presented by Paul. One is the extent to which the public has access to alternative suppliers of a given public service. The question here is whether there is potential or scope for the public to *exit* when dissatisfied with a public service. The second is the degree to which they can influence the final outcome of a service through some form of participation or articulation of protest/feedback irrespective of whether the exit option exists. His model suggests that the public's use of "exit" (competing sources of supply) or "voice" (participation/protest to induce service providers to perform) will enhance public accountability in a given situation when it is consistent with the characteristics of the services and of the public involved. An understanding of these characteristics can be used to predict the potential for the use of exit and voice in specific service contexts. It is further argued that public service accountability will be sustained only when the "hierarchical control" (HC) over service providers is reinforced by the public's willingness and ability to exit or to use voice. This is because the only way the behavior of service providers can be made more responsive to the public is through the signals from the HC function (e.g., monitoring and incentives) of the agency. *When the incentives facing public service providers are wrong, the latter may continue their "quiet life" despite the exit or voice actions of the public.* These propositions challenge the conventional wisdom that competition on the supply side (facilitating exit) or public participation (use of voice) at the micro level alone are adequate to ensure the accountability of public agencies (Paul 1992).

The researcher of this thesis has taken Paul’s model as the framework for analyzing external informal accountability of PID towards its stakeholders. PID’s accountability will be measured with ‘exit’ and ‘voice’ mechanisms to determine how PID is affected, if at all, by its stakeholders. Before analyzing exit and voice, officials/staff of PID will be tested of their orientation and mental readiness to accept their service recipients as their stakeholders. This issue is important since public officials/staff generally lack the sense of taking service recipients’ concern into account. The researcher in this case has followed the informal communication model described by Kraut et al (2002).

Recognition of accountability beyond administrative hierarchy

It has been discussed earlier that in the formal bureaucratic set-up and in service rules/instructions there is actually no room or provision for showing accountability to other than authority in “hierarchical control” mechanisms. The researcher tested this to PID officials to determine whether as cadre civil servants they felt accountability to the stakeholder organization. They were asked whether they felt accountability/responsibility to other than their own organization.

Table 5.1 External accountability (N=20)

| Accountability | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Yes | 7 | 35% |
| No | 11 | 55% |
| Not sure | 2 | 10% |

The findings reveal the fact of low mental makeup for concern of anything outside of hierarchical control (HC) and it is therefore not surprising that even informal type of accountability/responsibility was recognized by only 35% of respondents. The respondents who gave ‘yes’ response were subsequently asked the complementary question of determining organizations/institutions of their external accountability.

Table 5.2 Places of accountability (N=7, F=14) (Multiple answers possible)

| Accountability | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Other govt. organizations | 4 | 28.57% |
| Stakeholders | 5 | 35.71% |
| Civil society | 1 | 7% |

| | | |
|--------------------------|---|--------|
| People's representatives | 1 | 7% |
| People | 3 | 21.43% |

Here the findings further reveal the communication gap between the service renderers (PROs and Press section of PID) and service receivers (media houses) and the problems in government service organizations. Though the press service is directly associated with media stakeholders, only 5 respondents (25% or 5 out of 20 respondents) could recognize that fact.

News for the media?

It has been discussed earlier that a lot of changes has taken place in the environment of print and electronic media and corresponding journalism practices after 1990s. The restoration of pluralistic democracy together with economic liberalization has caused a significance shift of culture and ethics in media industry. Only description of the events that had been considered as 'hard news', lost its value in the face of 'investigative journalism'. The focus has been shifted from 'person' or 'news heroes' to analyzing and investigating into the matters of state, society and public life concerns. On the contrary, PID as well as state-owned news agencies (BSS) and broadcasting houses (BTV, Betar) continued with delivering news/reports in traditional manners unsuitable for being published and aired in print and other electronic media. Media houses now have sufficient numbers of their own reporters. As a result they are no more dependent on local news agencies for collecting news/information. Gone are those days when they were only relied upon government news agencies for obtaining information on state and international affairs. Now-a-days attitude of the newspapers and channels towards getting government handouts has reached all-time low.

Now, if we consider the above situation we will readily understand that PID (and BSS, BTV, BB) cannot deny the changes of time and cannot evade or ignore the demands that come from people and media houses. How it can adjust itself to the new situation? This raises the problems and the conflicts between its two mechanisms—internal formal and external informal that are the subject matter of the present thesis. PID is a government organization in first place and therefore is obligated to serve the government. At the same time taking the issue of stakeholders into consideration is indispensable for PID since issuing a news item is meaningless if it is not published or aired. Therefore being sensitive to the needs and demands of the stakeholders, or showing accountability to them, is intertwined with following formal administrative accountability.

The conflicts in the two dimension of accountability are evident in preparing/editing news items for media coverage. What would be the content and the style of writing? Would the handouts be written following the traditions and instances? Or something ‘innovative’ that are preferred by media houses would be adopted? What if the handouts fail to get media coverage? What is the use of issuing handouts then? How government publicity would be ensured?

Those are some of the questions and the potential conflicts that need to be answered by PID. This was of paramount interest of the researcher to know whether the PROs are facing the kind of conflicts described above. Here a hypothesis can be made on the possibility of feeling such conflicts. Theoretically, possibility of conflict should be higher if stakeholders are taken into consideration. We have already noticed that recognition of media stakeholders is low among PROs. Consequently, less conflict can be expected. To measure this, PID respondents were asked whether items they encounter conflict between fulfilling Government’s interests and the interests of media houses in preparing news. Here the numbers of respondents were 15 (PROs only).

Table 5.3 Conflict in preparing news (N=15)

| Conflict | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Most often | 1 | 6.67% |
| Often | 5 | 33.33% |
| Seldom | 7 | 46.67% |
| Never | 2 | 13.33% |

The findings support our hypothesis that we propounded in the previous paragraph. Majority of the respondents (9 or 60%) do not generally face conflict, or in other words, do not so much concerned about how their handouts will be treated by media houses. Lack of proper orientation of the respondents for meeting stakeholders needs/demands was evident in the responses. Next they were asked how they would resolve the conflict, if any.

Table 5.4 Resolving conflict (N=13)

| Resolving conflict | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Priority to government’s interests | 5 | 38.46% |
| Priority to media houses’ interests | 0 | |
| Balancing priority | 7 | 53.85% |
| Ignoring the issue | 1 | 7.7% |

The findings are very interesting and reconfirm our hypothesis. When the respondents somehow feel any sort of conflicts, they never give priority to media houses' interests. Nearly all of them either give priority to government's interests, or try to balance some, with one respondent completely ignoring the issue. That is perhaps in line with formal bureaucratic mind-set and practice, vesting all of the accountability to internal administrative mechanisms and not considering service recipients' issues.

Satisfaction of stakeholders in PID news service

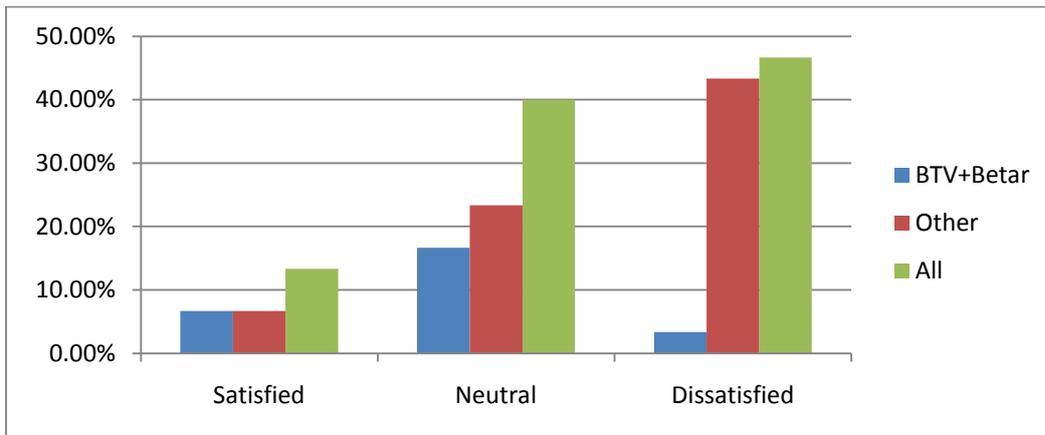
The findings in the previous section were cross-checked by asking the respondents of media houses how much they were satisfied with the press release/news services of PID. The assumption behind this cross-check was that as PROs of PID lacked proper orientation and mind-set to fulfill the needs of stakeholders, there might be enough possibility that their handouts fell short of the expectations of media houses, and consequently less satisfaction on the part of the stakeholders. Here the respondent's size was 30 comprising 4 from BTV, 4 from Betar, 4 from other electronic channels, and 18 from news agencies and print media. In the following tables and figures responses will be segregated for state-owned media houses (BTV and Betar) and other media houses in order to get the clear picture of the situation and to get the better understanding of the responses that fall into similar categories. This segregation is needed since the environment is not the same in public and private media houses.

Table 5.5 Satisfaction in PID news service (N=30)

| Satisfaction in PID news service | Frequency | | | Percentage | | |
|---|------------------|-------|-----|-------------------|--------|--------|
| | BTV+Betar | Other | All | BTV+Betar | Other | All |
| Satisfied | 2 | 2 | 4 | 6.66% | 6.66% | 13.33% |
| Neutral | 5 | 7 | 12 | 16.66% | 23.33% | 40% |
| Dissatisfied | 1 | 13 | 14 | 3.33% | 43.33% | 46.66% |

The following chart is a clearer representation of the above table:

Chart 5.1 Satisfaction in PID news service



We find that dissatisfied members are nearly quadruple than the satisfied members (47% and 13% respectively) with a large numbers of respondents are not sure about their judgment and hence are in between or neutral (40%). This is again in line with our assumption that the satisfaction levels are expected to be low. This finding calls for more charts where the percentages of responses are analyzed separately for public and private sector media houses. That is done below.

When BTV and Betar are taken separately, dissatisfied member are only 12.5% (1 out of 8), which is quite low. In comparison, nearly 60% (13 of 22) of the respondents of private print and electronic media expressed their dissatisfaction in press related services of PID. Following two charts present this finding:

Chart 5.2 Satisfaction level in BTV and Betar

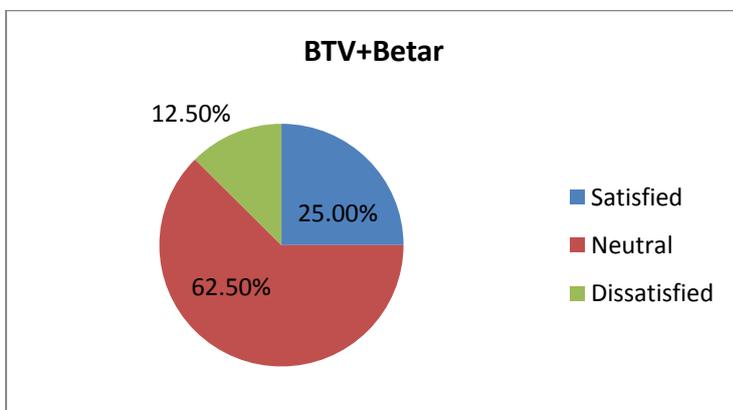
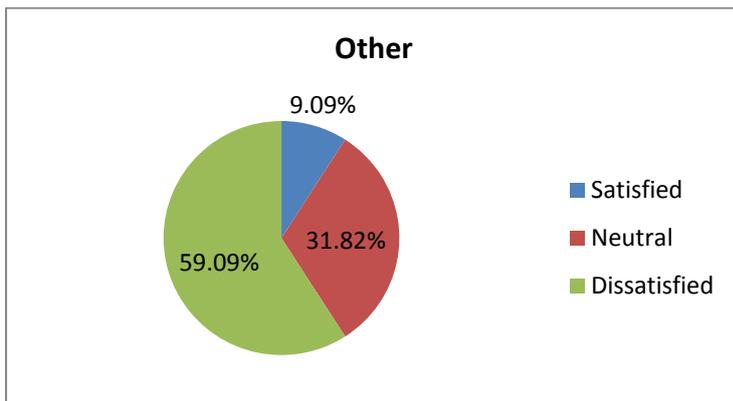


Chart 5.3 Satisfaction level in private media houses



The explanation of the apparent anomaly is actually quite straightforward. BTV and Betar are government broadcasting organizations and depend mainly on government/official sources in preparing their news items. It has already been discussed that BTV and Betar have traditionally been loyal ‘customers’ of PID. They share the same nature and culture of state-owned organizations, and same application of ‘unofficial’ policies to prefer and use government source. Another very significant reason was revealed while interviewing News Editor of BTV and Director of News of Betar that both of the organizations lacked the post of reporters of their own (except some field reporters)! The necessity of that post was not felt when the official organograms were created for BTV and Betar. Consequently they have to rely on news agencies in most of the cases. On the other hand, private media houses mostly rely on their in-house reporters and other news agencies, can compare among the various sources, and therefore depend less on the source that they deem as not up to mark.

5.5 Informal communication

The success of public relations activities is explicitly dependent on effective coordination with the stakeholders’ organizations. Kraut et al (2002) argues that informal communication, generally mediated by physical proximity, is crucial for coordination to occur. Informal communication is frequent in public relations (PR) and research and development (R&D) organizations, it aids organizational members in learning about each other and their work, it supports both production work and the social relations that underlie it, and it provides a critical facility that collaborators rely on to start joint work, maintain it, and drive it to conclusion (Kraut et al 2002).²⁷ Without informal communication, fruitful collaborations would undoubtedly not occur and others would break up before becoming successful (ibid).

²⁷ Available at <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.59.9721&rep=rep1&type=pdf>, accessed on 6/2/2011

Press officials and PROs of PID are professionally obligated and bound to collaborate with reporters/journalists and news personnel of all media houses. Many types of informal communications may take place among them. Both sides are dependent to each other and therefore try to build better rapport that is also part of informal accountability (ibid). Such types of communications and rapport build up behaviors that can be taken place in PID are: providing news/information informally to media houses, and formal or informal meeting/dialogue or exchange of opinions with editors, news editors, and reporters of media houses.

Providing news/information/explanation/clarification informally

In the environment of PID’s public relations, PROs and reporters of media houses need to mix closely every day. Besides formal issuing of handouts, they share various information among themselves which is a part of their professional dealings. The reporters ask for information that are supplement to previously released handouts, or clarification or explanation of something, or when some background information is needed for writing reports. PROs are generally entrusted with providing such informal information to the reporters as long as state security, government sovereignty and image are not violated. Therefore informal dissemination of news/information can be regarded as an indicator of informal accountability.

The above indicator was tested and counter checked by asking the respondents of PID and media houses separately. PROs of PID were asked what they would *most often* do when reporters/journalists informally would ask for news/information etc. from them. 100% of them answered they would provide either with permission or without permission unless something harmful for the state or government.

Table 5.6 Provision of informal news/information (N=15)

| Providing informal news/information | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|------------------|-------------------|
| Yes, with/without permission | 15 | 100% |
| No | 0 | |

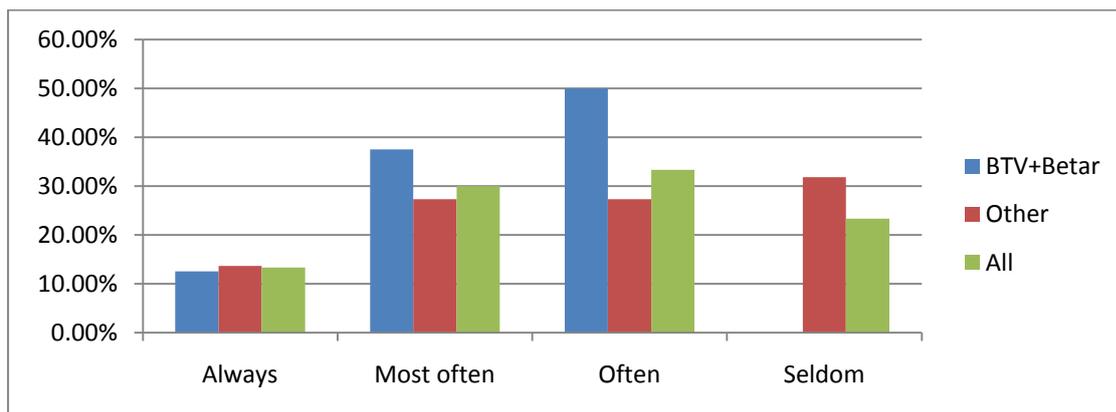
To cross-check, respondents of media houses were asked whether they would get news/information from PROs if they would ask for informally. The findings are presented in the table below:

Table 5.7 Getting informal news/information (N=30)

| Getting informal news/information | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|-------|-------|--------|-----|--------|
| | BTV+Betar | | Other | | All | |
| | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| Always | 1 | 12.5% | 3 | 13.63% | 4 | 13.33% |
| Most often | 3 | 37.5% | 6 | 27.27% | 9 | 30% |
| Often | 4 | 50% | 6 | 27.27% | 10 | 33.33% |
| Seldom | 0 | | 7 | 31.82% | 7 | 23.33% |

The table is represented in the following chart:

Chart 5.4 Getting informal news/information



Here, highest number (4) of respondents from BTV and Betar replied they at least ‘often’ did get informal information. In contrast ‘seldom’ got highest frequency (7) among other print and electronic media. The reason of this was revealed during interview with two senior executives of print media. They admitted they were able to get many informal news/information from PROs but most of the cases not that one which was needed or considered important to them! This is the indication that PROs are mostly informed of something like ‘banal’ or ‘cliché’ type of news/information lacking any real ‘news value’, and those information are generally not asked for by private print and electronic media. PROs also face some difficulties in collecting desired information, the case of which has been analyzed earlier in box 4.3. In the present case, overall, we find informal communications between PROs and reporters of media houses are not quite unsatisfactory.

Meeting/dialogue with media representatives

Another important element of informal communication is the frequent meeting/dialogue or exchange of opinions between service providers and service seekers. Dialogue keeps the possibility of resolving any issue always open. It is also a good tool to share the mutual concerns and therefore can be regarded one indicator of informal accountability to the service recipients.

To get the information of occurrence of formal/informal meeting/dialogue between PID officials and editors/news-editor/reporters of the media houses, the researcher took the representatives of media houses as respondents. To them, the inquiry was whether PID did offer formal/informal dialogue/meeting/exchange of opinions with the reporters/editors/officials of their respective organization.

Table 5.8 Meeting/dialogue with media representatives (N=30)

| Meeting/dialogue | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Yes | 0 | |
| No | 22 | 73.33% |
| Do not know | 8 | 26.67% |

Interestingly, there is no 'yes' response. Therefore, it can be safely said that the communication between PID and its stakeholder organization is extremely low—the scenario that does not comply with previous scenario. If we combine the findings of these two indicators, it could be inferred that informal communication or rapport build up mechanism is practiced at individual level and individual PROs are taking the initiative on their own, without being guided or influenced, culturally or administratively, by their organization. The proof of above statement is evident when we pick the organization to measure its initiative to carry out one of the means of informal communication with stakeholder organizations. PID, as an organization, is ignoring the need for sitting with its sister and counterpart organizations; therefore is not concerned with stakeholders' issues since no communication is taking place between them. Overall findings indicate informal communication and the corresponding accountability dimension of PID is not up to the mark.

5.6 Exit mechanisms

As described earlier, effective accountability for public administration is two-folded and has an external as well as an internal component. Albert Hirschman's pioneering work (Hirschman 1970, cited in Paul 1992) identified two basic determinants of external

accountability. One is the scope for the public to *exit*, i.e., the extent to which the public has access to alternative suppliers, public or private, of a given public service (or access to good substitutes for the service). The other is *voice*, the opportunity for the public to seek better performance from public service providers, without opting for alternative sources of supply. Exit and voice can work separately, or can sometimes be complementary to each other. It is found in studies that when customers or stakeholders have the option to exit from a given public service, their voice option or demand for that particular service becomes weak as they begin taking service from elsewhere. In other words, when exit is strong, voice is weak, and vice versa.²⁸

Exit is the extent to which the public has access to alternative suppliers, public or private, of a given public service. When the quality of public services deteriorates beyond a certain point, people exercise their exit options by refusing to pay taxes and service charges, or organizing locally to have private suppliers deliver the service (e.g., private trash collection or water supply). Where exit takes the literal form of out-migration of skilled professionals and private firms, it has a lasting impact on the economic and revenue base of the local or national government concerned. With globalization most governments have become more concerned with this risk, and accordingly pay more attention to the quality of public services.²⁹ Though exit is generally more of an economic response mechanism, prevalent in the competitive market, but it is also found in media and broadcasting industry in democratic countries worldwide where press and media are not strictly under government monopoly.

We have already analyzed media industry in Bangladesh and found that the industry is experiencing all sorts of 'boom' in it with a lot of printed newspapers and periodicals, and electronic channels mushrooming after 1990s. A number of big and widely circulated newspapers have also created a good job market for youth in the field of reporting and journalism. Consequently they all have their own manpower to cover and report for any happening at least in the capital city, and are less dependent on news agencies for news-feed. Presumably PID, and its other government sister news agency BSS, are facing really hard times to get proper media attention to their releases. As there are too many alternative sources available, exit mechanisms must have a strong role to play in this industry, according to the hypothesis of exit theory.

²⁸ Asian Development Bank publication: http://www.adb.org/documents/manuals/serve_and_preserve/Chapter13.PDF, accessed on 22/05/2011

²⁹ Ibid

For measuring ‘exit’ variable for PID, the researcher originally intended for consulting the records of PID handouts that had been published in first category national newspapers. The idea was to compare the proportion between published and unpublished handouts that could be the indication of how much media houses had been dependent on PID services. If the coverage of PID handouts were low then it could have been assumed that ‘exit’ mechanism were playing strong role on PID. Unfortunately, PID does not keep records of such. Therefore the researchers turned to questionnaire method and tried to measure this mechanism using two indicators: use of PID’s press related services, and dependency on PID handouts.

Use of PID’s press related services

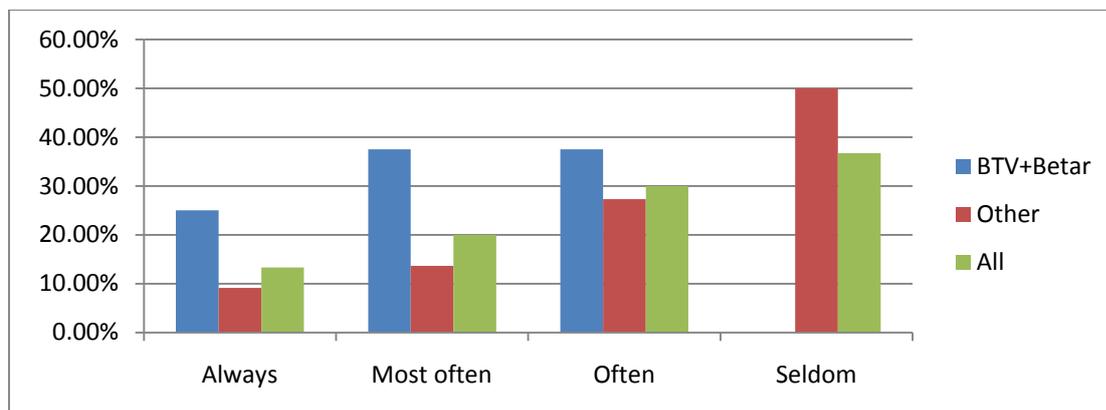
The respondents of media houses were asked in this regard whether they did use press related services of PID in preparing or publishing their news items. The responses are again segregated into public (BTV and Betar) and private media houses.

Table 5.9 Use of PID’s press related services (N=30)

| PID’s press related services | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------|-------|-------|--------|-----|--------|
| | BTV+Betar | | Other | | All | |
| | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| Always | 2 | 25% | 2 | 9.09% | 4 | 13.33% |
| Most often | 3 | 37.5% | 3 | 13.63% | 6 | 20% |
| Often | 3 | 37.5% | 6 | 27.27% | 9 | 30% |
| Seldom | 0 | | 11 | 50% | 11 | 36.67% |
| Never | 0 | | 0 | | 0 | |

The above table is again represented in the following chart:

Chart 5.5 Use of PID’s press related services



It is seen that there are no responses for ‘seldom’ or ‘never’ from the respondents of BTV and Betar, while ‘most often’ and ‘often’ get highest responses equally. On the contrary, ‘seldom’ response is the highest (50%) among the responses of other media houses (print or electronic). The finding is a proof that PID’s press related service is only holding its ground in its sister state-owned organizations namely BTV and Bangladesh Betar, though the following case exhibits it is on declining trend. ‘Exit’ mechanism is very strong among private media houses.

Box 5.1

Case study

BTV now using handouts less than before

BTV has been traditionally very ‘loyal’ to PID handouts. Newspersons at BTV perhaps feel it convenient and safe to copy the contents of handouts into their news items. They are sometimes also alleged of producing handouts word for word without any necessary editing. The researcher was interested in getting the picture of BTV’s current practice.

The researcher visited BTV’s news section, accessed official news-scripts and records and talked to several officials including News Editor in charge of that evening. PID handouts were available there but were less incorporated in final news scripts. All producers gave unanimous feedback to the researcher that they were gradually moving away from PID handouts. The researcher watched two ‘live’ newscasts there and found confirmation of their claim.

Next, the researcher sat with the news editor to know the reason. There were several reasons, as it was found during conversation, for less inclusion of handouts. First, other sources namely BSS and UNB provided news in both Bangla and English languages and therefore were more convenient to use and edit. PID used to release only in Bangla. Second, PID handouts arrived later than other sources. Third, many information was available online to collect. Fourth, BTV started recruiting its own reporter for covering events in Dhaka city. The reporters are assigned to go to the spot, to consult PROs and then write the report incorporating other sources.

Dependency on PID handouts

Another indicator to measure exit mechanisms for PID is to find out how much print and electronic media hoses are dependent on PID’s handouts for their press related services. In this regard the respondents of media houses were asked to express their dependency on PID handouts by giving a score on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 represents for the lowest dependency

on PID’s handouts and 10 represents for the highest. The average scores are presented in the following table.

Table 5.10 Dependency on PID handouts (N=30)

| Dependency | Average |
|-------------------|----------------|
| BTV+Betar | 4.625 |
| Other | 2.182 |
| All | 2.83 |

The picture is more severe here and tells against the usefulness of PID handouts. In a similar way that has been found earlier, average score is greater among the respondents of BTV and Betar, though it is still unsatisfactory and below the half-way mark. Private media houses’ average dependency, as it is represented with numbers, is as low as nearly 2! But this finding cannot be deemed as surprising since we already have observed in earlier cases that PID press related services, especially handouts, are less valued in private media houses. The finding implies that the private media houses have virtually withdrew themselves from the press services of PID. A score as low as around 2 indicates that the strong ‘exit’ mechanisms are working in this case.

Some of the reasons behind low dependency on PID handouts as identified by the respondents are: handouts are inferior to other sources; handouts lack news value and are of low quality; lack adequate background information; handouts are always banal with full of minister’s speech only, they are one-sided and are used for government propaganda; they lack what the people want to know; they are not timely; do not cover majority of important events other than minister’s insignificant programs; and English handouts are nearly unavailable.

Box 5.2

Opinion

“PID handouts lack what people want to know”

Interviews with news-editors of print and electronic media have revealed how much gap is there between PID’s services and media houses’ preferences. They were vocal against the applicability of handouts in their houses. In their views, the usual format and contents of handouts have already lost their grounds both in print and electronic media in the face of changed circumstances. While the role of print media has changed from giving information to analyze and investigate matters, electronic channels are too dependent on ‘visual’ contents and ‘live’ programs. In both of the cases PID has no solution to provide them anything.

News editor of an electronic channel was particularly critical of government’s role in this regard: “Government needs to realize it has to go with the time and has to overhaul some of

its organizations to deliver proper services. PID can be restructured to act as an autonomous government news agency rather than a chained bureaucratic organization. It is time to be flexible on part of government because government cannot hide anything now-a-days even if it wants to. Better to be transparent before public eyes”. He also pointed the lack of PID’s visual service “PROs of each ministry can make video clips of 2-3 minutes of duration about regular or development activities of the ministries. That would help us a lot as their handouts are not tailored to visual media”.

In answer to the question why PID handouts appear so irregularly in newspapers, news editor of a national daily explained “We normally do not consult handouts except for some special cases. The reason is simple—PID handouts lack what people want to know. Their focus is on public personalities and corresponding events, though insignificant. Their handouts mostly contain ‘what Ministers say’. We do not regard them as objective and informative; rather consider them as valueless government propaganda. Such kinds of news will not be entertained anywhere in the world now. On the other hand, we are committed to publishing real news and analysis”. He commented that the initiative to make PID’s services meaningful to them was on the hand of government since PID as a bureaucratic organization had little to do in this regard. He also suggested that government could make PID as an information hub for archiving necessary facts, figures and events in addition to its PR duties.

What is important here to note that even with strong exit mechanisms, the policies, practices, day-to-day activities, and press related services of PID remain unaffected and unchanged. It is relevant to mention the public relations model presented in figure 2.2 again. Public organizations, in most of the cases, cannot change their policies, programs, and external actions and communications directed to publics—the ‘output’, in accordance with the changes in ‘input’ environment. That has been proved true for PID, which is a state-owned organization and does not depend on its ‘customers’ for its survival. A private organization is solely dependent on its customers and it must fulfill their interests for its own survival. On the contrary a public organization gets its fund automatically from the government and the officials/staff lack the motivation to demonstrate 'competitive' performance by satisfying the demands of customers more effectively than other organizations as they are never under the threat of losing their job.

5.7 Voice mechanisms

‘Voice’ is the degree to which the citizens and customers, who are the recipients of public services and hence the stakeholders of public service providers, can protest or express their

views in order to influence access to or quality of public services.³⁰ In a broad environment of a state, voice is more of a political response, through political parties, voluntary agencies, and citizen groups. Population pressures and demands for improved services are obliging governments in most countries to explore a range of institutional alternatives to direct service delivery. In these cases, there are no realistic exit options, and improved service provision can result only through voice mechanisms, and incentives and penalties for the officials responsible. The voice of the public can cut through hierarchical control in centralized administrations, and counter weak internal accountability and motivation. The influence of voice will be enhanced when the organizational structure and incentives in public administration motivate civil servants to be more responsive to the public. Beyond accountability for services, effective voice also entails that governments *consult* the citizens in formulating development plans, and in major project decisions, in order to secure the broadest consensus and lay the basis for effective program implementation. In developing countries, effective use of voice calls for programs of education, social mobilization, and even social marketing, in order to increase the use of socially desirable services such as immunization, family planning, literacy, nutrition, etc.³¹

When measured in organizational level, voice mechanisms entail nearly similar characteristics that have been described above. Organizations that work together and dependent to one another form a cohesive group where any organization is a stakeholder of others. When they exchange services among themselves, voice mechanisms prevail. When organizations cannot get services from other service providers then they must exert pressure on original service providers for improving the quality of their services.

In the prevailing media environment in Bangladesh, we have already noticed that print and electronic media are no longer dependent on press related services of PID. They have various alternative service providers and their own news-crew. Exit mechanisms have been found very strong in the analysis presented in previous section. As a consequence, according to the theory, voice mechanisms or stakeholders' demand for PID's press related services are expected to be weak. That is what the researcher has found. For measuring voice mechanisms, the researcher has adopted two indicators which are stakeholders' demand for press/news service, and complaint and feedback mechanism. Following findings bear the testimony of the lack of voice from media houses.

³⁰ Asian Development Bank publication: http://www.adb.org/documents/manuals/serve_and_preserve/Chapter13.PDF, accessed on 22/05/2011

³¹ Ibid

Demand for press/news service

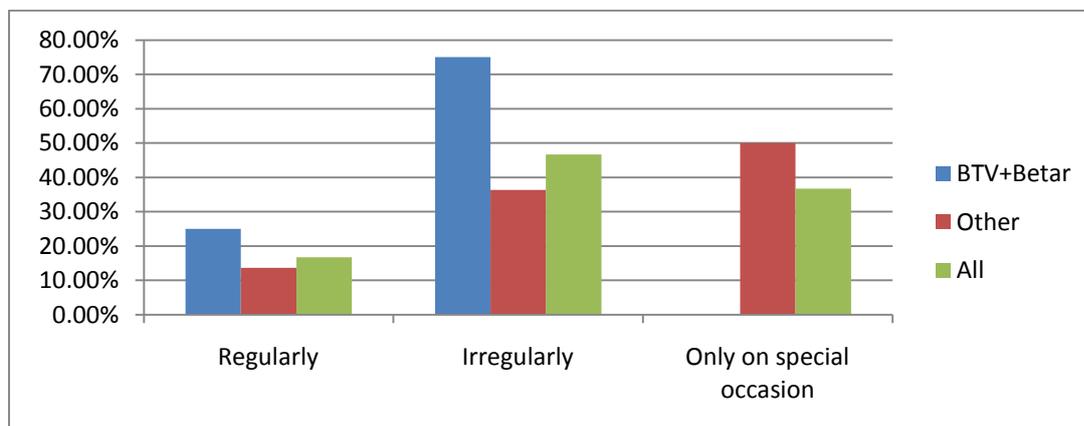
If voice mechanism works, there would be sufficient stakeholders' demands for PID's press/news service/handouts. To test this, the respondents of media houses were inquired about how frequently they ask for PID handouts.

Table 5.11 Stakeholders' demands (N=30)

| Demand for press/news service | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-----|-------|--------|-----|--------|
| | BTV+Betar | | Other | | All | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Regularly | 2 | 25% | 3 | 13.64% | 5 | 16.67% |
| Irregularly | 6 | 75% | 8 | 36.36% | 14 | 46.67% |
| Only on special occasions | 0 | | 11 | 50% | 11 | 36.67% |
| Never | 0 | | 0 | | 0 | |

As usually, the table is represented in the following chart:

Chart 5.6 Demand for press/news service



The table and chart show there is very low demand for regular PID's handouts among private media houses (13.64%). It is also low among state-owned media houses (25%). While BTV and Betar demand irregularly in rest of the cases (75%), private media houses most of the cases (50%) knock PID only on special circumstances. Interview with the news editors of print and electronic media revealed that their houses generally do not ask for PID's handouts except for some special circumstances like when government's version is needed to verify or validate something, or during emergency or military regime when media are under strict

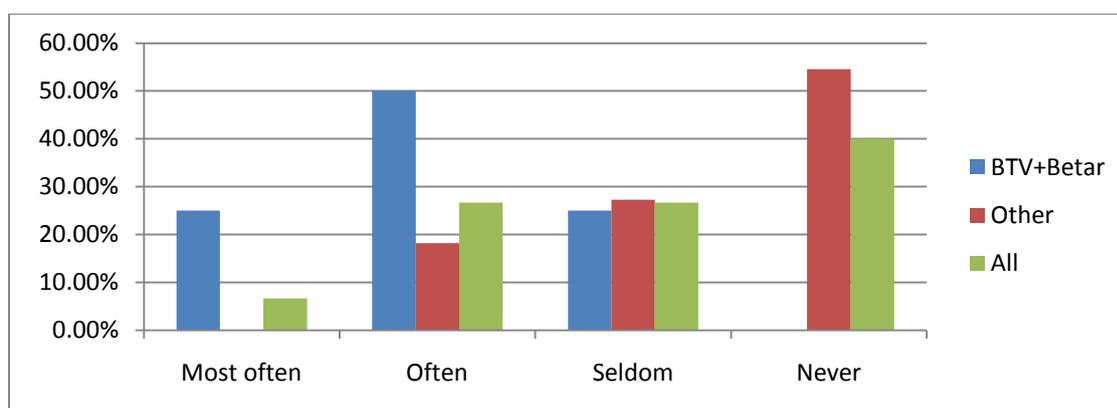
scrutiny and are forced to publish/air government versions etc. The case below further describes such occasions when PID is knocked at.

As stated earlier, weak demand from media houses was expected here because of the prevalent ‘exit’ mechanisms that had been found earlier. This case has been tested further by asking them whether the PID handouts were in line with their need/preferred format. The idea was to test the impact of voice mechanisms on the service of PID, or to find out whether PID services were made to tune the demands of media houses. Data are presented in table and chart.

Table 5.12 Reflection of voice (N=30)

| PID handouts in line with media-demand | | | | | | |
|--|-----------|-----|-------|--------|-----|--------|
| | BTV+Betar | | Other | | All | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Most often | 2 | 25% | 0 | | 2 | 6.66% |
| Often | 4 | 50% | 4 | 18.18% | 8 | 26.66% |
| Seldom | 2 | 25% | 6 | 27.27% | 8 | 26.66% |
| Never | 0 | | 12 | 54.54% | 12 | 40% |

Chart 5.7 Reflection of voice



It is again observed that there are differences in the expectations of state-run channels and the private media houses. More than 54% of respondents from private print and electronic media are of opinion that PID’s handouts never meet their demands/needs/expectations, while there are none in this category from BTV and Betar! Nevertheless the overall findings disclose the fact that PID’s response to the ‘voice’ (though very weak) is very inadequate, since it does not incorporate its stakeholders’ demands in their handouts.

Box 5.3

Case study

When PID is knocked at

There are times when PID becomes valuable or only source of getting authentic news or information about something. Our questionnaire survey tells us that print and electronic media prefer to stay away from PID handouts except for when there are pressing needs. At such moments PID becomes the only resort to them. Following two cases testify this.

One of the largest and violent natural disasters that Bangladesh has been a victim of recently is the cyclone ‘Sidr’ that struck south-eastern coastal region of the country on November 15, 2007. The damage was extensive. According to some sources deaths were estimated at from 5000 to 10000 (Wikipedia); other damages include tin shacks flattened, houses and schools blown away and enormous number of trees rooted out. A total of 2 million people in Bangladesh were evacuated to emergency shelters and an emergency cabinet meeting decided to withdraw weekly leave for the government officials to join the evacuation process.

In view of imminent danger, Bangladesh government promptly set two temporary control centers to forecast the storm surge and communicate cautionary signals to the public. PID was given the charge of disseminating that information to media on a 24-hour basis. Officials/staff of PID newsroom performed shifting duties. The night when Sidr struck, and the following three days and nights they were virtually on their toes! Phones were ringing continuously. Queries from media were flooded. Duty officer of newsroom had a hard time answering them all. The situation was breathless for him.

Similar things happened on historic ‘one eleven’, January 11, 2007. Night-time curfew was declared for an indefinite period. Bangladesh's private television stations had to suspend their own news reporting after the information ministry asked them to only relay news bulletins from state-run Bangladesh Television. Temporary ban on media was imposed regarding publishing/airing comments, analyses, arranging talk shows etc. For a few days, there were endless stream of queries on the prevailing condition that PID officials had to meet. PID also suddenly became all-powerful to dictate the media.

Immediate delivery of news

In theory, one of the properties of news is its ‘immediacy’. News must be made available without any delay’ otherwise it will lose its value to be regarded as ‘news’. The demand for immediate delivery of news items can be considered as an element of voice mechanisms for media houses. Electronic channels are broadcasting news bulletin in every hour, while most of the national dailies now have online editions which are being updated several times in a day. They need, therefore, immediate delivery of news from news agencies.

We have previously seen the comments and complaints about delay of PID handouts. The researcher also measured this phenomenon using the questionnaire. Respondents of media houses were first asked to mention the average time between occurring an event and getting PID handouts of that event. The average of their responses was found to be between 6 to 7 hours. They were afterwards asked about how quickly they would want to get handouts. The average of their responses now was within 2 hours.

The findings revealed the large time gap between demand and supply of handouts. Obviously it is one of the reasons behind lack of handout coverage in print and electronic media. This is another important weak spot in PID's accountability to its service recipients. Some of the reasons of delay have been discussed in chapter 4 while analyzing newsroom environment of PID.

Complaint and feedback

Complaint and feedback mechanisms are regarded as components of voice mechanisms. They are essential for getting the clients' responses on services that are provided to them. Feedback mechanisms may seek to obtain information from the clients of a particular public service about the service itself, such as its price, quality, timeliness, access, suitability, or safety; about the helpfulness of staff; or about the effectiveness of the complaint redress mechanism.³² Absence of these mechanisms indicates non-responsiveness of service providers to service recipients.

This indicator is employed to test the existence of formal/informal complaint and feedback from media to PID authority. The respondents of media houses were asked about whether they or their organization would complain PID authority about PID services and give their feedback to them (PID authority).

Table 5.13 Complaint/feedback (N=30)

| Complaint/feedback | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Yes (formal/informal) | 20 | 66.66% |
| No | 0 | |
| Do not know/No experience | 10 | 33.33% |

³² Asian Development Bank publication: http://www.adb.org/documents/manuals/serve_and_preserve/Chapter13.PDF, accessed on 22/05/2011

We get that it is possible to lodge formal/informal complaint/feedback to PID authority on their services, although 33.33% of respondents either do not know whether they can or they have never complained (no experience).

Response to complaint

The respondents were subsequently asked whether PID authority did response to their complaints/feedbacks.

Table 5.14 Response cases (N=30)

| Response | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Most often | 3 | 15% |
| Often | 12 | 60% |
| Seldom | 5 | 25% |

The findings, though not too bad for PID, is not so good for media houses. They need responses that fall in either ‘always’ or ‘most often’ category. Here only 15% in ‘most often’ category indicates they are deprived of many timely responses, and 25% in seldom category clearly demonstrates their sufferings in getting solutions to problems.

Box 5.4

Observation

Website static and not accessible, no complaint register

Over the years, many government organizations have developed their own websites. Currently all of the ministries have their websites, and so is true for all of the organizations under Ministry of Information. PID developed its website (www.bdpressinform.org) much ago, in 2002, when only few organizations had their own. Unfortunately the website has not been upgraded from its initial format and design since then. It remains static as there is no feedback or interaction option, with baroque design style that looks clumsy. It also lacks downloading option. But most importantly, and interestingly, it is severely virus infected! If anybody has anti-virus installed on his/her computer, he/she will get the warnings of viruses while trying to access the site. Some anti-virus engines automatically block the access. This turns the website completely unusable. Press releases and photos are uploaded but they cannot be downloaded! The researcher has collected necessary information that are uploaded to website through accessing the source materials stored on local FTP server.

The practice of keeping complaint or feedback register is also uncommon to government service organizations. PID has not been an exception. It has no such register.

Overall, voice mechanisms are found as weak on the part of media houses. This is in line with the prediction of theory that when exits are strong, voices are expected to be weak. PID, on the other hand, seems to be unaffected or unchanged by the voices or demands. In this case the findings are same to what we have observed in exit mechanisms. We can also attribute the same reasons behind this unaffectedness that have been put at the end of the exit mechanisms.

6 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In the previous two chapters we have studied various dimensions of PID's accountability mechanisms in terms of its administrative control and external relationship environment with its stakeholders, and come across the findings in each dimension. Now it is time to summarize overall findings. The researcher believe it would not be an exaggeration to say that the thesis work has been endowed with some very important and crucial findings in connection with PID's accountability conditions as well as PID as a whole. Some of the findings call for immediate policy interventions from the part of the government. Others are equally significant in revealing and representing the true scenario of public sector organizations in Bangladesh.

Since PID is a government public relations organization and acts as a spokes organization of the government, its success or failure as an organization in fulfilling its roles that encompass both of its accountability mechanisms would be fitting to measure first. We would refer to the public relations model that has been discussed in section 2.4 for this purpose. The model predicts dynamic relationship between such organization and its surrounding 'input' and 'output' environments where at one side there are other government organizations in vertical and horizontal ladders, and at another side there are all media houses—the service recipients or stakeholders. We have also learned that the determinant of democratic accountability--effective two-way communications process between government and citizens takes place with the proper functioning of such organization. The organization is successful when it can communicate successfully to both environments and can revise or change its policy and course of actions in tune with the environmental changes. The above factors taken into account, it is obvious from our findings that PID failed to fulfill its requirements and questions can be raised regarding its role that it is playing right now. Its role in internal environment is undefined and hazy, whereas it fails to establish its importance as a spokes organization among media houses. Its response to the changing media environment is therefore not noticeable and seems not possible in near future, as PID has basically been set as a bureaucratic organization where rigid and static rules and procedures are followed. Its specialized role as a public relations organization which needs to interact with media houses and disseminates information to the media on behalf of government has not been identified by the government. Neither government nor media houses can get any real benefit if it has to continue its course in this way. The reasons for this seemingly ineffective situation were

gradually being manifested in its two accountability mechanisms that we observed in previous chapters. Government cannot escape responsibility since the organization and its unique functions are not properly addressed by it.

The two most important components of internal accountability mechanisms—hierarchical management and rules/instruction—are found faulty in the case of PID. There are ambiguities in the exercising of authority and control mechanisms as conflicts have been identified in order/guidance and compliance of orders. This case is not common for other government organization in its class. This is, as found, due to the fact that PROs work in ministries on attachment basis without any approved office and supporting staff according to TO&E, and have to work under multiple authorities. The responsibilities and jurisdictions of PROs are not clearly laid out in official rules/instructions, neither are the manners and codes of conducts to be followed in this respect. The lack of policy, rules or guidance for the job of press or public relations can be considered as one of the most significant findings of the thesis. Many of other problems are actually manifestations of this problem. The rules that are followed are only administrative and bureaucratic in nature and also found as not up-to-date, not specific, and sometimes ambiguous. Consequently, desperate sets of rules emerge, confusion of regarding accountability is developed, and inaction in government occurs. Questions can also be raised regarding corresponding mechanisms of accountability. Duties are performed in accordance with personal judgment and caliber and in some cases following the precedence or common practices, and non-systematic procedures. Many respondents of PID and media analyst have pointed out that bureaucratic rules and practices are not fitting for this kind of job and in many cases are hindrance to it. According to the model presented in section 2.4, when environmental inputs change, structure and processes of the organization should be changed accordingly. The failing impacts of rigid and outdated rules/regulation on PID are evident if we consider the model in light with present scenario. The respondents and media analyst call for immediate formulation of policies and rules that would guide government press and PR personnel. The researcher studied some cases and found their opinions useful and relevant. For example, due to unavailability of policy, PID has no authority to collect necessary information from any government organization. Even PROs cannot get accessed to official documents and information in their respective ministries that are needed for PR functions. Accountability and corresponding responsibility might turn into total vagueness when the main tool of enforcing those— rules, regulations, and instructions— are either absent or ambiguous. Sadly the researcher has just found that.

It is also noticeable that PID does not have job descriptions for all of its positions currently available. Particularly lacking are the job descriptions of attached PROs and officers who work in News Room. All of the PROs are treated as either Information Officer or Senior Information Officer without assigning specific tasks, roles and responsibilities that are required for public relations activities. Additionally, the job descriptions suffer from the same symptoms prevalent in government sector organizations: they are unclear and ambiguous, lack the mention of specific tasks and performance targets to be achieved, the domain of the jurisdictions, whom a officer supervises and to whom he is accountable, and needed qualifications and skills. They are mostly of only general guidelines rather than being specific. Issues of accountability and performance measurement therefore become subjective in nature in most of the cases. It is very difficult to make officials accountable if they are not well informed of their duties and responsibilities.

Performance evaluation and the practice of ACR are the next things to be worried about. It is generally alleged that ACR system has now virtually become farcical. According to PID respondents as well as other practitioners and academics, the composition of ACR itself is a faulty one as the evaluation criteria are based on subjective judgment. Such weaknesses in appraisal system has bred the culture of nepotism, favoritism, “tadbir”, persuasion, building personal connection, corruption and many other ill practices throughout the hierarchy. In many cases it can be found that marks given in ACR are completely in disaccord with real performance of the incumbent. Other studies also confirmed that those who can cajole or coax and persuade his/her superior can get better points in ACR. Accountability thus became “personal” to the superior rather than “professional”. All of the above observations are confirmed again in case of PID respondents. They expressed their dissatisfaction in ACR system and also pointed out the harassment in getting it in time.

Inadequacy of relevant policies and guidance and inapplicability of bureaucratic rules/regulations are again observed while studying the specialized job nature in Newsroom which has close resemblance to newspaper offices rather than government offices. Officials performed there feel unsure about how and in which manner to treat a particular handout due to lack of clear policy. To be in safe side they have to resort to time consuming bureaucratic procedures which are nevertheless barriers to sound practice in news related matters. These are coupled with lack of modern tools and logistic support for quick delivery of news. The inevitable result is the severe delay in releasing handouts to the suffering of the government, media houses, and the people simultaneously.

It has also been found that like other public organizations in Bangladesh, there is no incentive for better performance and sanctions cases are also rare. It breeds the culture of mediocrity and corruption. Other indicators in internal accountability mechanisms namely compliance of code of conduct, feedback mechanisms, inspection and supervision etc. are also found weak.

Similar pessimistic scenario has been observed in studying the second dimension of accountability mechanisms—external informal accountability towards the stakeholders of PID. Though this type of accountability has been incorporated in the study of public organizations thanks to the contributions of Albert O. Hirschman (1970), Samuel Paul (1992), Kraut et al (2002), Glen Broom (1986) and others, stakeholders are still scarcely recognized in the functions of public offices even though they are service organizations. The researcher faces the similar findings in PID's case which reveal the communication gap between the service renderers (PROs and Press section of PID) and service receivers (media houses). PID has a large number of stakeholder organizations in both public and private sector namely state-run Bangladesh Television, Bangladesh Betar, and all other private print and electronic agencies and media; and it must show accountability to them since its services are entirely focused to them. But unfortunately it is found that though the press service is directly associated with media stakeholders, only 25% respondents recognize that they have any responsibility towards the demands of stakeholders. It bears the proof of their traditional bureaucratic mind-set and the lack of service orientation.

On the other hand, it has been consistently found that the stakeholders or the media houses have taken the option of 'exit' mechanisms. They are no longer dependent on government news agencies and they use PID handouts only on special occasions. There have been a lot of changes in media environment after 1990s. Media got deregulated in tune with the free market economy and consequently there has been 'boom' in this industry with too many dailies, although most of them are published in Dhaka city. A lot of investment has taken place causing a large number of recruitment of journalists. As a result media houses employ their own news-crew to get information. There has also been a trend of investigative journalism across the globe. As a result government handouts that only contain hard facts and speeches are not entertained in the industry now. Some of the reasons behind low dependency on PID handouts as identified by the respondents are: handouts are inferior to other sources; handouts lack news value and are of low quality; lack adequate background information; handouts are always banal with full of minister's speech only, they are one-sided and are used for government propaganda; they lack what people want to know; they are not timely; do not

cover majority of important events other than minister's insignificant programs etc. When the respondents of media houses were asked to convert their dependency level on PID handouts into numerical scores, they gave around 2 out of 10 on the average. This ought to be taken as a strong cautionary signal for PID since its rendered services are virtually turned into meaningless affairs. What is more important to notice here is that PID's services are virtually unaffected even by such strong exit mechanisms. This phenomenon gives support to the question that has been raised in light with the PR model presented in section 2.4 that a state-owned bureaucratic organization fails to interact with its environment. The reason behind this is that PID, which is a state-owned organization and does not depend on its 'customers' for its survival. A private organization is solely dependent on its customers and it must fulfill their interests for its own survival. On the contrary a public organization gets its fund automatically from the government and the officials/staff lack the motivation to demonstrate 'competitive' performance by satisfying the demands of customers more effectively than other organizations as they are never under the threat of losing their job.

In presence of strong exit mechanisms, 'voice' mechanisms or stakeholders' demand for PID's press related services are found to be weak which is consistent with the theories. PID is knocked at by them only on special occasions. Reflections of voice mechanisms are also not found in services of PID.

The thesis has also been able to discover the wide contrast between state-owned broadcasting houses namely BTV and Betar and all other private media houses. The use of and dependency on PID handouts are found much greater in these two organizations than that of other houses. Historically they have been good customers of PID since all of them are part of state machinery. But it is again another concern for PID is that BTV is now-a-days gradually moving away from PID handouts.

Finally, PID's preparedness for the changing media environment is found as non-existent. Perhaps PID ought not to be blamed for this since as a formal bureaucratic organization it works in a very limited framework and devoid of enough jurisdictions that are required to be an agent of change. Attention of the policy makers at the highest echelon of the government should be involved in this task.

7 CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Throughout the previous pages the picture of PID's accountability mechanisms and corresponding public relations looked quite bleak. It seems that the very objective of establishing PID and setting its roles and responsibilities has not been set clear by the government at the initial stage when practices of democratic governance were not thought of. PID has subsequently been used to control the media by the authoritarian rulers; press releases are issued following traditional manners that are dubbed as 'government propaganda' by critics. Later, with the passage of democratic times and in the midst of free and proliferating media environment the proper role of PID has not been recognized and chalked out by the governments. Everything has just gotten further exacerbated. Bureaucratic static rules could find no relationship with dynamic PR jobs, whereas the lack of relevant policies is an indication of lack of sincerity and willingness for considering the importance of such organization and its functions on the part of the government. Therefore, PID finds itself in nowhere between bureaucratic allies and media organizations, its PR becomes crippled, and press releases are not fit for feeding today's conscious minds. Exit and voice mechanisms are also not reflected since PID is not dependent on stakeholders or 'customers' for its survival. In short, its current state of accountability mechanisms cannot fulfill successful two-way communication between government and people which is indispensable for functional democracy.

The significant problems in the mechanisms of PID's accountability framework that are identified in this thesis paper solicit for urgent policy interventions from the government. News editors of print and electronic media, media analyst, and senior officials of PID have also pointed out some things of concern and suggested possible solutions that have been presented in the main body of the thesis. In line with their opinions, and the observations and analyses of this thesis work, the researcher has chalked out some policy recommendations for improving the accountability conditions of PID. In the researcher's point of view, first two of them are crucial as the related problems are found as the breeding grounds of the remaining problems, and these recommendations can only be acted upon by the government.

The first recommendation is made taking into consideration of PID as a press and public relations organizations as a whole. Under current set-up, PID is a fully bureaucratic organization under Ministry of Information, and working place of BCS Information Cadre officials. But its role is to perform public relations functions for the government and act as

official spokes organization of the government. Our previous analysis with the public relations model and the findings of the thesis conclude that the milieu of bureaucracy is not suitable for playing such specialized role in the field surrounded by deregulated media houses with modern journalistic ethics and vision. Formality, rigidity and inflexibility in bureaucratic rules, norms and behaviors cause stagnancy and prevent two-way dynamic communications between ‘input’ and ‘output’ environments. As a result, both internal/formal and external/informal accountability mechanisms suffer and dysfunction. To get rid of this outcome, PID could be brought out of the bureaucracy with the new set-up of an independent and autonomous agency similar to the Central Office of Information (COI) of the government of the United Kingdom. COI is regarded as the communication, public relations and marketing agency of the UK government. It is a non-ministerial (non-bureaucratic) department, an executive agency and a trading fund, and recovers its costs from the other departments, executive agencies and publicly funded bodies which use its services (Wikipedia). In the UK, there is not even Ministry of Information now which was established twice during two world war times for propaganda purpose. COI has taken over the ministry since 1946. Bangladesh government can follow its structure and can combine the functions of both press and public relations in the new set-up of PID. New provisions in the Rules of Business, new charter of duties and organogram are to be made and specialized manpower to be recruited and trained instead of recruiting through civil service examinations. The agency should be given enough authority to function independently of political interference and to collect all necessary information from any public organization. The setting up of such organization may seem unrealistic and non-implementable in the context of Bangladesh, but the researcher believes that under changing political and media circumstances and with the proliferation of online information access the government has no other options but to be open, liberal, and transparent in its views and dealings since the tendency of hiding or manipulating information and exercising control over it will no longer be possible in future (that is another issue of public accountability). Going with the current trend would render the hard earned government revenue that is collected from common people into virtual ashes as neither government nor media houses are benefitted with that sort of service.

Second recommendation is concerned with the current lack of policies or rules related to press and public relations functions. PROs and press officials of PID as well as media analysts gave their opinion of immediate formulation of policies pointing out the difficulties they are facing in absence of that. PID is getting clear guidance in neither its internal accountability nor the outward relationship with media houses. Existing administrative rules

possess no relevance to the specialized nature of job that PID officials perform. On the contrary they are found as barriers since bureaucratic procedures are ineffective in quick delivery of news services. Policy makers of the government should recognize the uniqueness of PR activities and set useful policies and rules possible for PID and other state-owned broadcasting houses as soon as possible. Government could also give PID the authority to collect necessary information from any public organization to help bolster its press and public relations functions. One additional provision may be added to existing Right to Information Act for this to happen.

PROs in the respective ministries are deprived of own offices, supporting staff and logistics. They work there on attachment basis and face the problem of multiple authorities and corresponding conflicts in compliance of orders. Government could therefore consider setting up separate public relations units in each ministry by updating TO&E so that the unit performs all of press, public relations, and information related functions on behalf of the ministry. Library, ICT unit, and the office of the Responsible Officer as per the provision of RTI Act could also be amalgamated and merged into that unit. PROs would accordingly be given the responsibility to conduct and coordinate all of the above mentioned functions. All of these units could be interconnected with telephone and Local Area Network (LAN) with the controlling and monitoring center established in PID. PROs then could send news in electronic format to the newsroom of PID to facilitate quick editing and releasing of handouts.

‘Exit’ and ‘voice’ mechanisms are exercised by service recipients and depend on quality of services rendered by service providers. When PID is met with clear policy guidance, necessary authority, and other logistics then it can be hoped that the quality of handouts would meet the preferences of stakeholders. They are also the customer in this case and should be treated properly in policy formulation so that accountability towards them is recognized officially. Then this informal accountability would be incorporated into formal Hierarchy of Control (HC) and would be turned into formal one, as analyzed by Samuel Paul.

Other problems that are identified in the mechanisms of internal administrative accountability namely outdated rules/regulations, lack of clear and specified job descriptions, subjective treatment in performance evaluations, lack of feedback mechanisms and inspection etc. are more or less common to all public sector organizations in Bangladesh. Various committees set-up by government have worked on them and various recommendations have been made that can again be used in case of PID.

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APPENDIX I

Indicators, type of data, and corresponding methods

| Indicators | Type of data | Methods |
|--|------------------------------------|--|
| Job description; Charter of duties; exercise of authority & compliance of orders | Primary/Secondary (qualitative) | Questionnaire/Interview/Content analysis/Office records/Case study |
| Role of rules as guidance; Compliance condition; Sanction for violation | Primary (quantitative/qualitative) | Office records/Questionnaire/Interview |
| Annual Confidential Report | Primary/Secondary (qualitative) | Interview/Case study/Reports, articles |
| Monthly coordination meeting; Visit to workplaces; Cases of reward and punishment | Primary (quantitative) | Questionnaire/Office documents |
| Decision making & approval process in newsroom | Primary (qualitative) | Interview/Case study/Observation |
| Demand for press/news service | Primary (qualitative) | Questionnaire/Interview |
| Immediate delivery of news | Primary (qualitative) | Interview/Case study/Questionnaire |
| Organization website; Comment & complaint register; Feedback mechanisms; Dialogue & meeting with editors/news-editors; Dependency on PID for news. | Primary (quantitative/qualitative) | Questionnaire/Office documents/Interview |

APPENDIX II

Composition of respondents

PID respondents

| PID | |
|------|-------|
| PROs | Other |
| 15 | 5 |

| Years in service | |
|------------------|---|
| 1-5 | 2 |
| 6-10 | 8 |
| 11-15 | 5 |
| 16-20 | 5 |
| 21-25 | 0 |

Average years in service: 11.25.

Respondents from media houses

| News Agency | Print Media | Electronic Media |
|-------------|-------------|------------------------------------|
| 2 | 16 | 12 (BTV-4, Betar-4, Other-4) |

| Years in service | |
|------------------|---|
| 1-5 | 3 |
| 6-10 | 7 |
| 11-15 | 8 |
| 16-20 | 9 |
| 21-25 | 3 |

Average years in service: 13.33.

Interviewee

| Interviewee | |
|------------------|---|
| PID | 2 |
| Print Media | 2 |
| Electronic Media | 2 |
| Media Analyst | 1 |

APPENDIX III

Charter of duties of key officials of PID

Principal Information Officer (PIO)

- To act as administrative head and be responsible for overall administration of the department.
- To act as the publicity adviser to the Government and advise the Government on formulation of publicity policy and coordination of overall publicity efforts of the Government.
- To act as an adviser to the administrative ministry on technical matters and on formulation of policies concerning the department.
- To maintain liaison with the local press and foreign media representatives based in Dhaka including diplomatic representatives.
- To supervise publicity coverage of the President, Prime Minister and activities of different ministries.
- To give publicity coverage of the tours and visits to Bangladesh by the foreign State Heads, Heads of Governments, VVIPs etc.
- To supervise conducting of tours and visits of foreign delegates and media representatives and arrange spot coverage of development activities across the country by local and foreign journalists.
- To act as the Principal Accounting Officer and the Controlling Officer in respect of the annual sanctioned budget grant for the department.
- To be responsible for the administration and execution of function of the department as per Acts, Ordinance, Rules and Regulations, and directives issued by the Government from time to time.
- To be responsible for day to day efficient and proper functioning of discipline of the department.
- To provide executive and operational guidance to the field staff and exercise control and supervision over them.
- To be responsible for appointment of Class II, III and IV employees of the department as per existing procedure and recruitment rules.
- To grant pension and gratuity to the Class II, III and IV employees of the department.
- To control, supervise and coordinate the work of different sections of the department.
- To represent the department in meetings, conference etc. as the occasion demands and where personal representation is not possible to select representative on his behalf.
- To grant earned leave to all Class II officers and staff under him.
- To meet all officers monthly under him located in the same station to review cases pending for disposal over a month.
- To inspect his office at least once in a month and field offices at least once in a quarter in addition to annual inspection.
- To allocate duties among officers as and when required.

- To be responsible for maintaining proper security measures of the department.
- To follow any other duty assigned by the Government.

Additional Principal Information Officer (APIO)

- To compile the basic facts of Bangladesh in the field of history, geography, culture, agriculture, education, health, population, industry, and communication.
- To prepare comprehensive list of personalities of Bangladesh.
- To prepare comprehensive and evaluation reports on national issues and development activities on the basis of field survey and public opinion.
- To prepare feedback reports from reference material.
- To ensure proper maintenance of microfilm unit and copier machine.
- To preserve press analytical reports, research papers and other important documents.
- To ensure proper maintenance of library and look after regular indexing and cataloguing of books and research materials.
- To classify clippings and place them in subject wise files.
- To arrange publication of the special articles on important national issues/occasions.
- To monitor foreign press report and preparation of foreign press digest.
- To supervise the supply of daily clippings service to the President, Prime Minister, and Ministers.
- To supervise the preparation of weekly chronology of events.
- To supervise the preparation of monthly reports of activities of the department.
- To perform such other duties as assigned by PIO.

Senior Deputy Principal Information Officer (Admin)

- To assist the Head of the Department in discharging his duties in administrative matters.
- To represent the Head of the Department as and when necessary.
- To look after the work of the Head of the Department in his absence.
- To deal with the cases relating to appointment, promotion, and transfer of officers and staff.
- To process and scrutinize Travelling Allowance (TA) bills of the officers and staff.
- To maintain service books of the non-gazetted employees of the department.
- To make arrangement for supplying liveries to the Class IV employees of the department.
- To grant annual increment to the non-gazetted employees of the department.
- To make and review recruitment rules of various posts of the department.
- To maintain Annual Confidential Report (ACR) of officers and staff.
- To maintain records of transports running for the department.
- To make arrangement for purchasing and maintaining office equipments and furniture for the department and its regional offices.
- To make arrangement for hiring office accommodation for the regional offices.
- To look after the welfare of the staffs.
- To sanction leave of the Class III and Class IV staffs as delegated by the PIO.

- To act as Drawing and Disbursing Officer.
- To issue expenditure sanction letter on behalf of the PIO.
- To follow such other functions assigned by the PIO.

Senior Deputy Principal Information Officer (Press)

- To arrange publicity of the activities of the government through press/photographic coverage in print and electronic media.
- To arrange press/media coverage of the President, Prime Minister, and Ministers.
- To supervise the activities of newsroom.
- To supervise the activities of the darkroom of photographic section.
- To arrange press coverage of cabinet meetings.
- To arrange press conference of the President, Prime Minister, Ministers, and visiting foreign dignitaries.
- To attach Duty Officer to the newsroom and Information officer/Public Relations Officer to the ministries.
- To arrange outside news coverage and maintain liaison with the Regional Information Offices for having news coverage.
- To maintain liaison with the journalists.
- To arrange news coverage of special occasions.
- To plan publicity of development projects.
- To perform such other functions assigned by PIO from time to time.

Senior Deputy Principal Information Officer (Protocol)

- To arrange conducting of national and foreign media men.
- To arrange proper coverage of international and national conferences, seminars and workshops.
- To maintain liaison with foreign journalists based in or visiting Bangladesh.
- To ensure regular supply of publicity materials and photographs to the Bangladesh foreign embassies abroad.
- To supply publicity materials and photographs to the foreign missions based in Dhaka on request.
- To arrange the issue of accreditation to local and foreign journalists.
- To prepare photographic albums for presentation to the visiting VIPs and VVIPs.
- To arrange printing and distribution of telephone guide for news media and such other publications.
- To maintain liaison with the regional offices for conducting journalists.
- To prepare and maintain dossier of the visiting foreign journalists.
- To follow such other functions assigned by PIO from time to time.

Deputy Principal Information Officer (Facts, Personalities, and Reference)

- To collect basic facts on history, geography, culture, agriculture, population, industry, and communication.

- To prepare, maintain and distribute life sketches of the President, Prime Minister, and Ministers.
- To prepare monthly and annual report on the activities of the department.
- To prepare feedback report from reference materials.
- To maintain and supply reference materials.
- To preserve important press clippings along with all research based information.
- To supervise the library work along with buying necessary books for it.
- To divide paper clippings and help having subject-wise filing.
- To supervise the reference work of the reference library.
- To perform such other duties assigned by PIO.

Deputy Principal Information Officer (Research and Reference)

- To supply daily clippings to the President, Prime Minister, Ministers of all ministries.
- To monitor foreign press reports.
- To prepare foreign press digest.
- To prepare weekly chronology of events.
- To prepare daily and weekly press trend.
- To prepare the implementation reports and monthly reports of activities of the department on field based research and public opinion on national issues and development activities.
- To arrange translation and republication/reprinting of news matters.
- To perform such other duties as assigned by PIO.

Deputy Principal Information Officer (In charge of Regional Information Offices)

- To act as head of regional office and be responsible for efficient and proper functioning of the office concerned and for the maintenance of office discipline.
- To act as Drawing and Disbursing Officer in respect of annual sanctioned budget grant of the regional information offices.
- To grant annual increment, earned leave etc. of non-gazetted staffs of the office concerned and maintain their service records.
- To prepare annual budgetary estimates and maintain accounts in respect of expenditure against annual sanctioned grant.
- To maintain liaison with the local media representatives and administration.
- To arrange coverage of development activities at divisions, districts and thana level.

Chief Feature Writer (Feature Cell)

- To arrange preparation and publication of special articles on important national occasions.
- To prepare attractive feature articles and cartoons on policies and development activities of Government, and publish them in different dailies and periodicals.
- To assist government in carrying out different campaigns at different times.
- To perform such other duties assigned by PIO.

Senior Information Officer and Information Officers

- To prepare handouts, press notes, unofficial releases for having media coverage.
- To arrange press coverage of tours of Ministers.
- To write articles on various government activities for having press coverage.
- To arrange proper publicity of the ministries, divisions under the supervision of Sr. DPIO (Press).
- To scan daily newspaper reports.
- To conduct local and foreign journalists.
- To arrange press conference.
- To prepare press clippings.
- To prepare life sketch, foreign press digest etc.
- To perform such other duties assigned by Sr. DPIO (Press).

Chief Photographer

- To act as head of the photographic section and is responsible for overall professional work of that section.
- To assign photographers for giving coverage of various government functions.
- To maintain attendance register of the staffs under him and submit absentee statement to his higher authorities.
- To maintain register for the use of photographic stores.
- To assess and prepare annual requirements of photographic equipment and stores and submit it to the higher authorities if necessary.
- To prepare roster duties of the darkroom staffs under him on holidays, closed holidays and also on daily shifts.
- To be responsible for proper maintenance of photographic equipment and stores issued for darkroom to him.
- To follow other related functions assigned to him from time to time by the concerned authority.

APPENDIX IV

Administrative Rules and Regulations

PID officials/staff are subject to compliance of various service rules and regulations. Below we present the brief descriptions of some of the most practiced rules/regulations/ordinances that are common to all public sector organizations as well as PID.

Bangladesh Service Rules (BSR Part I & II)

The Bangladesh Service Rules are effectively the terms & conditions of service to be followed by a person on being appointed as an employee of the Government.

Persons holding constitutional posts are not covered under these rules e.g. the Attorney General. The Bangladesh Service Rules contain various rules, but not necessarily all, issued at different times by the Government with addendum, omission and amendments as required.

The Government Servants (Conduct) Rule, 1979

The conduct and behavior of a Government employee, during the performance of his duties and in his private life are regulated by these rules. The staff and the officers of the Government (with the exception of some departments/agencies mentioned in Rule 2, who have their own establishment rule) are to abide by these rules either working inside or outside of Bangladesh, whilst on leave or on deputation to any other institution, authority or agency.

The violation of any of the provisions of Government Servants (Conduct) Rules is considered as misconduct. For such violation, an employee is accused of breach of discipline and is subject to punishment under “The Government Servants (Discipline and Appeal) Rules 1985”.

The Government Servants (Discipline & Appeal) Rule, 1985

These rules shall apply to all Government servants, with the exception of some departments/agencies (for example the Railways and BDR) who have their own establishment code. A Government servant is subjected to this rule when, in the opinion of the authority he is:

1. Inefficient
2. Guilty of misconduct
3. Guilty of desertion
4. Corrupt or may reasonably be considered corrupt
5. Engaged or is reasonably suspected to be engaged in subversive activities

A Government servant under this rule, may appeal against any order:

1. Imposing upon him any penalty.
2. Altering, varying or denying to his disadvantages his pay, allowances, pension or other condition.
3. Interpreting to his advantage, the provision of any rule or contract of service whereby his pay, allowance, pensions etc. are regulated.

The incumbent may apply to the President for review of the order.

The Government Servants (Special Provisions) Ordinance, 1979

The ordinance makes special provisions for maintaining discipline among Government servants. The ordinance will take precedence over any other rules and regulations in this respect. Any action taken or penalty imposed under provisions of this ordinance cannot be put up or challenged in any Court of Law. However, one can appeal to the appropriate authority or to an appellate authority within a certain time limit. The rules under this ordinance are applied when a Government employee is accused of the following offences:

1. To indulge in activities for which office discipline is broken or causing a situation not congenial for work.
2. To refrain from attending duties without taking permission either individually or collectively and failure to perform the works assigned.
3. To incite or obstruct any Government employee so that they remain absent from the office and do not perform their duties.

The Public Employees Discipline (Punctual Attendance) Ordinance, 1982

The ordinance was promulgated by the Chief Marshal Law Administrator to ensure punctual attendance in offices and to eradicate incidences of unauthorized absence and late attendance by the officers and staff.

Under this ordinance the authority (appointing authority or designated person) has been given the power to impose penalty (deduction in pay) on any employee coming to the office late or remaining absent from the office without authorization or leaving the office without permission.

No consultation with the Public Service Commission will be necessary in imposing a penalty and no proceeding or order under this ordinance shall be called into question in any Court of Law. However, the employee concerned may appeal within 48 hours to the authority for revision of the order.

The Public Servants (Dismissal on Conviction) Ordinance, 1985

Under the provisions of this ordinance, actions are taken by the administrative authority when a public servant commits a serious criminal offence and a sentence is awarded by the Court of Law for example:

1. Capital punishment
2. Imprisonment for life
3. Imprisonment for more than six months and/or a fine of more than Taka 1000(one thousand)

The Secretariat Instructions 1976

In the absence of proper co-ordination, procedures and allocation of work in the offices of the Secretariat during the early years of Independence, the Ministry of Establishment published the Secretariat Instructions as per the provisions in the Rules of Business.

The main objective was to overcome the shortfall in the availability of procedures, systems, instructions etc. required to perform the work effectively and to accomplish good governance over the Government business at various levels in the Secretariat.

The existing Secretariat Instructions consists of five chapters, these cover:

1. Title and definition
2. Organization of the Secretariat and distribution of work
3. Office procedure
4. Disposal of business
5. Special topics of common interest.

In addition, there are thirty five annexes.

Bangladesh Civil Service (Examination for Promotion) Rules 1986

The Public Service Commission conducts examinations for promotion for the members of the Cadre Service twice in a calendar year. The examination for promotion is guided by these rules with some exemptions as mentioned in Rule 8. An officer shall not be promoted unless he has satisfactory records of service and recommendation from the Superior Selection Board, Divisional Promotion Committee etc. for his promotion.

The Commission announces the date, time, place and other information at least 60 days before the examination through daily newspapers and the broadcasting media.

BCS Seniority Rules, 1983

Certain general principles for determination of seniority were formerly communicated by the Establishment Division. These general principles were formalized in this rule. Subsequent

amendments were made after consultation with the Public Service Commission.

The fixation of seniority in individual cases is the responsibility of the Ministries and Divisions concerned. However, all doubtful cases where seniority cannot be determined under general or specific principles are referred to the Establishment Division. The provisions of article 140(2) (c) of the Constitution and schedule to the Rules of Business are to be kept in mind when the question of fixation of seniority of officers is involved.

The Government Servants (Seniority of Freedom Fighters) Rules 1976

The Freedom Fighter employees are those persons who were employees on or before 25 March 1971, of the erstwhile Government of Pakistan or the Government of East / West Pakistan and participated in the war of liberation of Bangladesh.

By this rule a Freedom Fighter employee of the Government is entitled to two years ante-dated seniority. This entitlement is generally reflected at the time of promotion with all attendant benefits in terms of pay, pay- scale etc.

The Prescribed Leave Rule, 1959

The granting of leave to a Government servant is generally controlled by “Prescribed Leave Rules ‘59, Fundamental Rules (FR) and Bangladesh Service Rules (BSR). There are different kinds of leave for example Earned Leave, Recreation Leave, Leave Preparatory to Retirement (LPR), Maternity Leave, Casual Leave, Public Holiday etc.

Before availing leave, a Government servant should obtain approval for the same, but it cannot be claimed as a matter of right. In the case of public exigencies, the leave granting authority may cancel or reduce any leave previously granted.

An employee cannot take a job during leave of absence, except on LPR with the permission from the appropriate authority. The leave for a Gazetted officer cannot be entertained, without an admissibility report for leave from the concerned audit office where leave records are kept. The records are kept in a prescribed form as per the provisions of the Fundamental Rules. For Class III and IV employees the records of leave are kept in the last part of the Service Book.

The Public Servants (Retirement) Act. 1974 & Rules 1975

The Act consolidates and amends the law relating to the retirement of public servants. The Government has been given power to make rules under Section 11 of this Act.

Under this rule a Government servant must retire from service on attainment of 57 years of age. In fact, leave preparatory to retirement (LPR) for a period of one year is allowed to an employee, from the date of superannuation, provided that such leave is earned/accumulated to his credit and he finally retires at the attainment of 58 years of age. An Employee may opt for

only a part of LPR and may even forego the whole of the period of LPR.

Re-appointment or extension of service under this rule is completely prohibited. However, the President, in the interests of public service has special powers to appoint any suitable person on a contract basis for which there is no age-bar.

In the public interest, the Government may also ask an employee to retire from service without showing any reason when he has completed 25 years of service. Similarly, a Government servant may also opt to retire at this stage of service for which prayer (petition) with 30 days' notice is to be given to the appointing authority.

After retirement, a Government servant receives pension, gratuity, medical allowances, medical facilities, and benefits under the benevolent and group insurance fund.

The General Provident Fund Rules, 1979

A Government servant after two years of service and until the attainment of 52 years of age must contribute to the General Provident Fund (GPF). However, contribution to the GPF is optional up to two years of service and after 52 years of age until the date of retirement.

Employees whilst in service abroad or on deputation, have to continue contributions in the same manner as being in regular service in the parent organization.

The relevant audit office maintains the account of each contributor separately, and the compound rate of interest is calculated on the yearly balance of the deposit of each individual.

A refundable advance can be paid in certain installments, up to a certain limit of his deposit on approval from the relevant authority on grounds such as house building and repair, purchase of land, performing Hajj in the case of a Muslim employee, marriage and other religious functions.

A Government servant can withdraw all of his deposits in the GPF along with the interest at the time of retiring from service or if the incumbent resigns or leaves the service on medical grounds.

Pension & Gratuity Rules

When an employee retires after serving in the Government for a certain period of years, he receives a monthly emolument for his maintenance or that of his family, during the remaining period of his life. A Government servant or his family are entitled to various types of pension depending on the circumstances i.e. Compensation Pension, Invalid Pension, Superannuation Pension, Retiring Pension and Family Pension.

At least ten years of service is required before allowing a pension to a Government servant and the amount of pension varies depending on the pensionable service length. When a pensioner is accused of gross misconduct, the Government will have the right to withdraw his

pension or keep it in abeyance either in part or in full until the appeal, if any, by the incumbent is considered.

A Government officer has to submit his application for pension in a prescribed form to the approving authority along with all related papers/documents as required by the rules. In the case of non-Gazetted staff, the head of the office will examine the Service Book, and ensure that the entire period of service is duly verified before sanctioning the pension. An amount equivalent to one year's basic salary is allowed to an employee, as a lump sum grant provided that one year of earned leave is due to his credit after allowing the desired LPR.

Charge Allowance Rules, 1982

According to this rule a Government employee will get a charge allowance when he is authorized in addition to his own charge, to hold an additional charge of an office equivalent to his office or a higher office. A person holding a lower post and transferring to a higher post on a temporary basis is on current charge. The holding of current/additional charge is discouraged by the Government.

A person has to handover charge of the present post/office when he is authorized to take up current charge of a higher office. The current charge of an incumbent is not a promotion/or a new appointment as such and one cannot claim pay-scale and other privileges/benefits allowable for being in the post but one can claim the charge allowance.

The charge allowance rules are applicable for posts in both revenue and development budgets.

Festival Allowance Rules, 1988

During every Eid Festival, Muslim employees are allowed to draw an allowance amounting to one month's basic salary, which is equivalent to the salary drawn in the previous month.

The members of the other religions employed in the service also receive a festival allowance amounting to two months basic salary in one installment during their main religious festival. A Gazetted officer will not receive a festival allowance if he draws a recreational allowance in a particular fiscal year.

Employees on LPR are also entitled to receive this allowance, but not those who are in full retirement.

Employees who are in work-charged establishments and drawing pay on a regular scale will also get a festival allowance under this rule.

Treasury and Subsidiary Rules

The procedures for deposit and withdrawal of money to and from the Government Exchequer

are controlled by these rules. They have three parts:

Part 1 contains the “The Treasury Rules” commonly known as ‘TR’. The TRs are the principal rules guiding the procedure for deposit and withdrawal

Part 2 contains “The Subsidiary Rules” whose acronym is ‘SR’. The SRs are the rules which describe the detailed procedures for the TRs.

Part 3 contains related executive instructions, executive orders, appendices and forms.

The Treasury Rules are approved by the President due to their importance in the application of the financial management system. The Ministry of Finance issues the Subsidiary Rules.

General Financial Rules

The procedures for spending money from the Public Fund are governed by the General Financial Rules. Unless any specific procedures are mentioned in other codes, the procedures as laid down in the GFR are applicable for the PID.

APPENDIX V

Questionnaire for PROs/Officials of PID

Dear colleagues, this questionnaire has been prepared for collecting data for an academic research work titled “*Accountability Mechanisms of the Press Information Department (PID) of Bangladesh*”, to fulfill the partial requirements of MPPG Program under GCE Department of North South University, Dhaka. Information furnished by you will only be used in academic purpose, and strict confidentiality about your identity will be maintained. Thank you for your cooperation.

Name (optional).....
Designation Year(s) in service.....

(Please fill in the blank spaces and use tick marks (√) in the appropriate boxes)

1. From whom you receive most of your service-related commands/orders?
 Reporting/supervising authority Controlling authority Appointing authority
 Both reporting and controlling authority Other (please specify).....

2. Have you ever experienced any conflict in complying the above mentioned authorities?
 Yes No

3. If yes, what is/are the nature of conflict? [You may tick multiple boxes]
 Between rules/codes & oral order/guidance Between oral & written order
 Between different oral orders Between different guidance
 Other (please specify).....

4. Do you have official job description/charter of duties?
 Yes No

5. If yes, how clear and specified it is?
 Full To some extent/Partial Not at all Not sure

6. Do you think that the rules/regulations/codes etc. guide you properly in performing your duty?
 Yes No Not sure

7. If no, what is/are the reason(s)? [You may tick multiple boxes]
 Rules not clear Not specific Not up to date Not much related to my job nature
 Lack clear goals/objectives Other.....

8. Which rule/regulation/code you are most unhappy with?
.....
.....
.....

9. In your opinion, how is the condition of the compliance of rules/regulations/codes of conduct in your institution?
 Very good Good Average Below-average Poor Not sure

10. How is the case(s) of sanction for violation?
 For every case For majority of cases For a few cases No sanction at all
 I don't know

11. Have you ever been a subject of disciplinary action?
 Yes No

12. Do you receive feedback from your authority for your performance/activities?
 Yes, always Yes, most often Yes, often Yes, but rarely No

13. Are you satisfied with the overall evaluation of your performance?
 Highly satisfied Satisfied Neutral Dissatisfied Highly Dissatisfied
If dissatisfied, what is the reason?
.....
.....
.....

14. Have you been offered any incentive (monetary/non-monetary) for better performance?
 Yes No

15. How satisfied are you with the current practice with and the format of ACR?
 Highly satisfied Satisfied Neutral Dissatisfied Highly Dissatisfied
If dissatisfied, put in the reason
.....
.....
.....
.....

16. Does your authority visit your workplace for inspection purpose?
 Yes No

17. If yes, how frequently?

- Once in a month Once in 2-3 months Once in 6 months Once in a year
 Irregular

18. Do you feel accountability/responsibility to other than your own organization?

- Yes No Not sure

19. If yes, which of the following? [You may tick multiple boxes]

- Other govt. organizations Stakeholders Civil society People's representatives
 People Other (please specify).....

20. In preparing news items, do you encounter conflict between fulfilling Government's interests and the interests of media houses?

- Always Most often Often Seldom Never

21. How do you resolve the conflict?

- I give priority to Government's interest I try to balance I give priority to media houses' interests
 I ignore the issue Other.....

22. What do you *most often* do when reporters/journalists informally ask for news/information from you?

- I provide with permission I provide without permission I don't provide
 Other (please specify).....

23. What is the average time between an event and sending news item of that event to PID newsroom?

- Less than 2 hours 2-3 hours 3-4 hours 4-5 hours More than 5 hours

24. Does your ministry/organization practice formal dialogue/meeting with editors/news editors of media houses?

- Yes, frequently Yes, less frequently Yes, but very rarely No

APPENDIX VI

Questionnaire for editors/reporters/officials/staff of BTV/Betar/private print & electronic media

Dear respondent, this questionnaire has been prepared for collecting data for an academic research work titled “*Accountability Mechanisms of the Press Information Department (PID) of Bangladesh*” to fulfill the partial requirement of MPPG Program under GCE Department of North South University, Dhaka. Information furnished by you will only be used in academic purpose, and strict confidentiality about your identity will be maintained.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Name (optional).....
Organization.....
Designation Year(s) in service.....

(Please use tick marks (√) in the appropriate boxes and fill in the blank spaces)

1. Do you use PID’s press related services as a part of your professional duty?

Always Most often Often Seldom Never

2. How frequently do you get the service(s)?

Regularly Irregularly Rarely Only upon request

3. How much are you satisfied with PID service(s)?

Highly satisfied Satisfied Neutral Dissatisfied Highly dissatisfied

If dissatisfied, please mention the reason

.....
.....
.....
.....

4. Can you/your organization complain PID authority about their services and give your feedback/opinion to them?

Yes, formally Yes, informally Yes, both formally & informally No

5. Do they respond to your/your organization’s feedback/complaint?

Always Most often Often Seldom Never I don’t know

6. How quickly do they respond most often?

Immediately Delayed Only upon follow-up Other.....

7. Does PID offer formal dialogue/meeting /exchange of opinions with the reporters/editors/officials of your organization?

- Yes No I don't know

8. If yes, how frequently does it take place?

- Once in a month Once in 2-3 months Once in 6 months Once in a year
Irregular

9. How much are you dependent on PID handouts in preparing/editing your news? [Give a score between 1 to 10, where 1=lowest & 10=highest]

.....

10. Why are you less dependent? [If score between 1-4] [You may tick multiple boxes]

- Because of low quality Lack news value Not informative Inferior to other sources
Not timely Do not cover majority of events
Other(specify).....

11. How much PID handouts fulfill your need? [Give a score between 1 to 10, where 1=lowest & 10=highest]

.....

12. What is/are the content(s) of majority of news items sent by PID? [You may tick multiple boxes]

- Regular government activities Development activities Special event
Interesting event Decision taken in special meeting Transfer/posting
Orders/circulars Other (please specify).....

13. What types of PID handouts do you prefer most? [You may tick multiple boxes]

- Regular government activities Development activities Special event
Interesting event Decision taken in special meeting Transfer/posting
Orders/circulars Other (please specify).....

14. What format(s) do you prefer most? [You may tick multiple boxes]

- Brief Descriptive Analytical News with background information News with comments
Other (please specify).....

15. Are the handouts in line with your preferred format(s)?

- Always Most often Often Seldom Never

16. Do you get news/information from PROs if you ask for informally?

- Always Most often Often Seldom Never

17. What is the average time between an event and getting PID handouts of that event?

Less than 2 hours 2-4 hours 4-6 hours 6-8 hours More than 8 hours

18. How quickly do you want?

Less than 2 hours 2-4 hours 4-6 hours 6-8 hours 8-9 hours

Other.....