A Case Study on Public Management and E-Governance in Bangladesh: Strategies to Mitigate Institutional Corruptions

Kamalesh Mandal[1]

Deputy Director, Anti Corruption Commission, Bangladesh.

Tanushree Sarkar[2]

Junior Officer, UCB Bank, Eskaton Branch

Dhaka

ABSTRACT

This case study investigates how e-governance strategies in Bangladesh have been used to reduce institutional corruption at the local government level between 2015 and 2025. The study focuses on digital tools such as e-Government Procurement (e-GP), Union Digital Centers (UDCs), and e-service portals to assess their effectiveness in promoting transparency and accountability.

The methodology is qualitative and descriptive. It is based on secondary data from academic studies, government reports and global case comparisons. Thematic analysis was used to organize findings.

The findings show that digital procurement reduced tender manipulation and saved costs. Online service delivery helped reduce petty bribery by cutting face-to-face interactions. Financial tracking tools improved budget monitoring. Citizens gained more access to information through complaint portals and dashboards. However, challenges like digital illiteracy, weak infrastructure, and political interference still limited full impact.

The study recommends stronger enforcement of anti-corruption laws, improved digital training for citizens and officials and better monitoring systems. International examples show that reforms work best when digital tools are combined with legal safeguards and public oversight.

In conclusion, Bangladesh made significant progress using e-governance to reduce corruption. But digital tools alone are not enough. Their success depends on sustained political will, institutional support, and inclusive design. This study highlights the need for integrated reforms to make local governance more transparent and accountable.

Keywords: E-governance**,** Corruption**,** Bangladesh**,** Local government**,** Digital services**,** Transparency**,** Public management

INTRODUCTION

Corruption has long been a problem in public administration in Bangladesh. It affects how people access services and trust the government. In local areas, many people face delays, bribes, and unfair treatment when they try to get things like land documents, licenses, or social benefits. These issues hurt development and weaken public institutions.

To solve these problems, Bangladesh started its *Digital Bangladesh* initiative in 2009. The goal was to bring technology into government processes. This includes online payments, digital service centers, and electronic procurement systems. Many of these tools were introduced in local government bodies like Union Parishads and Upazila Parishads.

The idea behind e-governance is simple. When people can apply for services online, they do not need to meet officials face to face. This helps reduce the chances of bribes. Also, digital systems can track records, show progress, and allow public monitoring. As a result, services become more transparent and efficient.

From 2015 to 2025, the government expanded these tools across rural and urban areas. Projects like the e-Government Procurement (e-GP) system became mandatory. Union Digital Centers (UDCs) were set up to offer over 150 services in one place. Local government websites started to show budgets and plans. These steps aimed to reduce corruption and improve public trust.

However, introducing technology does not automatically remove corruption. Many local governments still face challenges like poor internet access, low digital skills, and weak law enforcement. Corrupt actors also adapt to new systems and find other ways to take advantage.

This study is looking at how well e-governance has worked in reducing corruption in local government. It also compares Bangladesh's case with examples from South Korea, Estonia, and India. The goal is to find what has worked, what has not, and what can be improved for better public management in the future.

Background

Bangladesh's local government:
Bangladesh has a multi-tier local governance system, including Union Parishads (UPs, village councils), Upazila Parishads (sub-district councils), and City Corporations or Municipalities. These bodies handle local development, administration, and service delivery. Historically, **petty corruption** (bribes and delays) has been common in local services such as land administration, licensing and project approvals. A 2012 survey by Transparency International–Bangladesh found 30.9% of citizens experienced corruption in local government dealings

(*Corruption -- Good News in a Depressing Context*, n.d.). However, this survey also noted a decline in local-level corruption over 2010–2012, crediting factors like citizen charters, Right-to-Information awareness and *"e-information service to Union Parishad level"* as contributors to progress (*Corruption -- Good News in a Depressing Context*, n.d.).

Digital Bangladesh and anti-corruption policy: The government's *Digital Bangladesh* vision (since 2009) seeks to digitize public services at all levels. Several policy frameworks (e.g. e-Government Master Plans, the National Anti-Corruption Strategy) emphasize ICT tools to enhance transparency. For example, the Union Digital Centers (UDCs), established under the Access to Information Programme (A2I) since 2009, were meant to bring e-services to grassroots citizens. A TI-Bangladesh study found that after UDCs were set up, people accessed services with "less time, cost and visits," and **"the scope of becoming victims of corruption [was] reduced as digital services have reduced the need for face-to-face interactions"** (*Full_Report_UDC_02122017.Pdf*, n.d.). These centers and other e-portals provided online payment and document submission for many routine services, aiming to remove middlemen.

Simultaneously, Bangladesh's Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and successive governments have pursued reforms (e.g. laws, training, oversight) to tackle corruption. Yet pervasive corruption remains a challenge: Transparency International consistently ranks Bangladesh low on its Corruption Perceptions Index, and citizen surveys report bribe-paying in areas like land and licensing. Against this backdrop, the 2015–2025 period saw intensified e-governance projects at sub-national levels, coupled with measures like citizen charters and social audits.

Problem Statement

Despite major investments under the Digital Bangladesh initiative, institutional corruptio n remains a significant challenge in local pu blic administration. While tools like e-Gover nment Procurement (e-GP), Union Digital C enters (UDCs), and digital service portals ha ve reduced certain forms of petty corruption by cutting human contact, the overall govern ance system in Bangladesh still struggles wit h deep-rooted irregularities. Transparency In ternational's surveys show that around 30.9 % of citizens experienced corruption in local government services as recently as 2012. Th

ough this rate showed a slight decline over ti me, recent studies confirm that bribe-paying and discretionary delays persist, particularly in land administration and licensing. E-gove rnance platforms have improved access, red uced transaction costs, and cut down on face -to-face bribery. However, poor digital litera cy, rural connectivity gaps, and weak enforc ement allow corrupt actors to adapt to digital reforms. In many areas, middlemen have shi fted tactics rather than disappearing. Thus, merely introducing ICT tools is not sufficien t; the success of anti-corruption efforts depe nds on the maturity, integration, and account ability mechanisms surrounding these tools. Without sustained political will, institutional reform, and citizen empowerment, the anti-c orruption potential of e-governance may rem ain underutilized.

Rationale of the Study

The rationale for this study lies in the urgent need to understand how e-governance tools are being used at the local level and whether they are effective in reducing corruption. It a lso explores the factors that limit their succe ss, such as low digital literacy, weak monito ring, and the changing tactics of corrupt acto rs. By focusing on the 2015–2025 period, th e study captures a critical phase when digital tools were expanded in local institutions. Th e study also looks at global examples like So uth Korea's OPEN system, Estonia's digital ID and procurement system, and India's e-P anchayat model to compare best practices.

This research is important for policy-makers , local administrators, and anti-corruption bo dies in Bangladesh. It offers practical lesson s on what works, what doesn't, and what nee ds improvement. The findings can guide fut ure reforms by showing how technology mu st be combined with strong institutions, citiz en engagement, and legal enforcement to ac hieve lasting transparency. By highlighting b oth achievements and gaps, the study suppor ts the design of more inclusive, accountable, and corruption-resistant governance systems in Bangladesh.

Objectives

- To explore the impact of e-governan ce tools on reducing corruption in loc al government institutions in Bangla desh.
- To examine key digital strategies lik e e-GP, UDCs, and e-service portals used from 2015 to 2025.
- To assess the effectiveness of financi al transparency and citizen engageme nt tools in promoting good governan ce.

- To identify the challenges that limit t he success of e-governance in curbin g institutional corruption.
- To compare Bangladesh's approache s with international cases like South Korea, Estonia, and India.
- To recommend policy strategies that combine technology with legal and i nstitutional reforms.
- To contribute to academic and policy discussions on public management a nd anti-corruption in developing cou ntries.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Local Government and Corruption in Ba ngladesh

Local Government Institutions (LGIs) in Ba ngladesh include Union Parishads at the vill age level, Upazila Parishads at the sub-distri ct level, and urban bodies like municipalities and city corporations. The Local Governmen t Ordinances of 1982 and the 2009 amendme nts gave them the power to manage budgets and development tasks. But in reality, many LGIs act more like tools of political influenc e than independent institutions. Research sh ows that corruption is common in LGIs. For example, Chowdhury (2008) found that in o ne Union Parishad, officials, contractors, an d brokers formed a corrupt network. Local p roject bids went to those who paid bribes. El ected members often demanded money in ex change for approvals (Figure 1, n.d.). Simila rly, Mohammad (2013) observed that local o fficials abused their power. Although laws li ke the ACC Act 2004 exist, enforcement is weak because of political patronage (An Em pirical Investigation on the Nature of Corrup t Practices in the Local Government Bodies i n Bangladesh at the Union Level: A Way Fo rward for Promoting Environmental Sustain ability, n.d.). A study by CPD and ODI also found different forms of corruption at the L GI level, such as bribery, favoritism, and pro curement fraud. These problems were more severe in rural LGIs than urban ones (Bhatta charya et al., n.d.). One citizen in the study s aid, "since everyone is doing it and benefitti ng… why should I not do it too?" (Bhattach arya et al., n.d.).

This shows that public service at the local le vel in Bangladesh lacks transparency and ac countability. Officials often act without any proper checks. They demand undocumented payments for transfers, permits, and licenses . Systems for reporting and auditing are wea k. Even though LGI laws require ward meeti ngs, public budgets, and asset disclosures, th ese are rarely followed (Bhattacharya et al., n.d.). Political leaders also interfere. For exa

mple, local MPs influence which projects ge t approved or which school gets a new teach er (Bhattacharya et al., n.d.). The existing re search clearly shows poor governance at the grassroots level. This suggests the urgent ne ed for reform to fight this long-standing corr uption.

E-Governance and Anti-Corruption

Globally, many studies support the idea that e-governance helps reduce corruption. Tools like online public service portals, e-procure ment systems, and digital ID databases redu ce the need for middlemen. These tools also create standard steps and digital records, whi ch limit chances for corruption (Impact of E-Government Initiatives to Combat Corruptio n Mediating by Behavioral Intention: A Qua ntitative Analysis from Emerging Economie s, n.d.). Aftab et al. (2023) show that e-gove rnment can improve transparency and accou ntability, which in turn reduces corruption. Nurunnabi and Ullah (2009) also support e-g overnance. They believe it blocks opportunit ies for corruption and increases good govern ance. They say it "can diminish… corruptio n sources" by making governments more acc ountable (Impact of E-Government Initiative s to Combat Corruption Mediating by Behav ioral Intention: A Quantitative Analysis fro m Emerging Economies, n.d.). Backus (200 1) defines e-governance as using ICT to imp rove government-citizen interaction and inte rnal processes. Rajon & Zaman (2008) add t hat it helps ensure "legitimate mass-access o f… information" (PDF) E-Governance as an Anti-Corruption Tool for Government in Ba ngladesh, n.d.).

In South Asia, studies explore how e-govern ance works at the local level. Das et al. (202 0) discuss the electronic public procurement system in Bangladesh. It aims to improve te ndering by making it more open and efficien t, but the system is not yet fully used. Hoque (2020) reviews Union Digital Centers (UDC s) and finds mixed outcomes. While they bri ng government services to rural areas, many people cannot use them due to low digital sk ills and power cuts. Hossain et al. (2014) stu dy local e-services in three districts. Both pr ofessionals and citizens find these services h elpful ((PDF) Nexus between E-Governance and Local Government in Providing Effectiv e Public Service Delivery in Upazila Parisha d in Bangladesh, n.d.). However, e-readiness is still not strong. They also point out that m ost research focuses on national e-governanc e, not on Upazila or district levels. This supp orts the aim of this study, which looks at loc al government digitization and its effects on corruption.

Public Management and Good Governan

ce Theories

The idea of "good governance" means ensuring accountability, transparency, and public participation (Biswas et al., 2007). Corruption grows when decisions are made in secret and no one watches over them (Buscagila & van Dijk, 2005). Many researchers believe that e-government is a way to improve governance by redesigning how government offices work (Malik & Mina, 2005; Rajon & Zaman, 2008) ((PDF) E-Governance as an Anti-Corruption Tool for Government in Bangladesh, n.d.). Tools like e-procurement and e-services follow the ideas of New Public Management (NPM). These ideas focus on being efficient, accountable, and centered on citizens. In Bangladesh, the old paper-based system limited people's rights and hid wrongdoings. But digital tools now offer a way to make government actions more transparent and accountable ((PDF) E-Governance as an Anti-Corruption Tool for Government in Bangladesh, n.d.). This study uses ideas from Public Administration, especially principal-agent theory, and ICT for Development. These ideas suggest that digital systems can reduce the information gap between citizens and officials. They also help monitor how well the government performs.

Strategy Literature (Mitigation of Corruption)

Several studies also offer clear strategies to fight corruption. Chowdhury (2008) looked at anti-corruption efforts by the caretaker government in Bangladesh. He supported reforms like asset disclosure, digital procurement, and a stronger Anti-Corruption Commission. The CPD report (Bhattacharya et al., 2018) also gave important suggestions. These include enforcing the legal independence of LGIs under articles 59–60 of the Constitution, creating a local finance commission, making asset declaration by officials mandatory, and setting up transparency tools like standing committees, budget hearings, and citizen charters (Full_Report_UDC_02122017.Pdf, n.d.). These ideas match global best practices. Other suggestions include expanding the Right to Information Act to cover LGIs, digitizing land and tax records, and training officials in ethics and digital tools. This study will build on these ideas. It will examine how well e-governance works in practice when combined with such reforms in selected local governments in Bangladesh.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

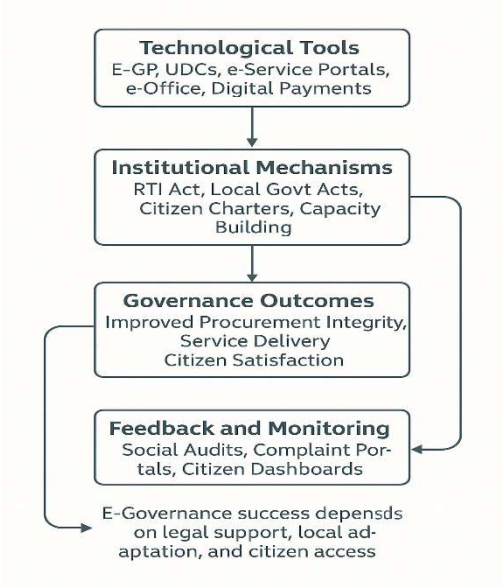

Fig 1: Conceptual Framework

Table 2: Conceptual Framework of E-Governance and Anti-Corruption

Key Component	Description	Indicators of Success
1. Technological Tools	E-GP, UDCs, e-Service Portals, e-Office, Digital Payments	Increased automation, reduced human contact
2. Institutional Mechanisms	RTI Act, Local Govt Acts, Citizen Charters, Capacity Building	Improved compliance, better accountability
3. Governance Outcomes	Improved procurement integrity, service delivery, citizen satisfaction	Lower corruption perception, reduced petty bribery
4. Feedback and Monitoring	Social audits, complaint portals, citizen dashboards	Real-time tracking, responsive governance

METHODOLOGY

Table 1: Methodology Summary

Component	Description
Type	Qualitative, Descriptive Case Study
Time Frame	2015–2025
Data Sources	Secondary
Analysis Technique	Thematic coding, content analysis
Focus Areas	Local governance, digital procurement, on
Comparative Cases	South Korea (OPEN), Estonia (e-Governm
Purpose	To assess effectiveness of local e-governar

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. E-Procurement Increased Transparency and Reduced Costs

One of the most successful strategies has been the e-Government Procurement (e-GP) system. By 2022, about 80% of Bangladesh's public procurement spending was conducted through e-GP, compared to only 2% in 2017 (World Bank Helps Bangladesh Transform Public Procurement into a Sustainable Online System, n.d.). This shift helped reduce corruption by removing human discretion in tender processes. Online bid submission and digital evaluation limited outside influence and improved integrity. As a result, procurement costs dropped by 7%, saving about $1.4 billion in 2023 (World Bank Helps Bangladesh Transform Public Procurement into a Sustainable Online System, n.d.). The system also shortened lead times and gave citizens tools to monitor contract implementation. These changes reduced chances of bribery and infl

ated tenders, especially in local government projects.

2. E-Service Delivery Reduced Petty Corr uption

Digital centers like Union Digital Centers (U DCs) and Upazila ICT centers made it easier for rural people to get documents, pay taxes, and apply for welfare without dealing directl y with officials. A Transparency Internation al Bangladesh study found that digital servic e centers reduced unnecessary visits and min imized the role of middlemen (Full_Report_ UDC_02122017.pdf, n.d.). These centers hel ped reduce bribes because services were mor e predictable and less dependent on personal networks. A 2024 study also showed that dig ital tools improved the monitoring of Upazil a-level development projects and led to faire r resource distribution ((PDF) Nexus betwee n E-Governance and Local Government in P roviding Effective Public Service Delivery i n Upazila Parishad in Bangladesh, n.d.).

3. Financial Transparency Improved thro ugh E-Administration

Bangladesh also used e-administration tools to improve internal processes. Systems like e-Office and PFMS allowed paperless workf lows and electronic tracking of development funds. Linking digital procurement with elec tronic payments and audits helped local gov ernments manage budgets more effectively. These steps created better financial control a nd reduced opportunities for fund diversion (World Bank Helps Bangladesh Transform P ublic Procurement into a Sustainable Online System, n.d.).

4. Citizens Gained Access to Information and Complaint Mechanisms

Local governments published budgets, plans , and service standards on websites and notic e boards. Citizens could file complaints and track spending through dashboards. These p ortals increased transparency and accountabi lity. Pilot projects showed that when citizens could track local projects, it became harder f or corrupt practices to go unnoticed. In line with the Right to Information Act (2009), su ch ICT-backed platforms helped bridge the g ap between government and people ((PDF) Controlling Corruption through e-Governan ce: Case Evidence from Bangladesh (U4 BR IEF), n.d.).

5. Challenges Remain Despite Progress

However, challenges continue to limit full i mpact. Digital literacy is still low in many ru ral areas. Some citizens struggle to access or use online services, especially the elderly or poor (Islam et al., 2023). Corrupt networks a lso found new ways to demand bribes, such as manipulating digital records or charging i

nformal service fees. In land administration, for example, some officials asked for new ty pes of payments despite automation (Islam e t al., 2023). Moreover, many local governme nts lack the resources and capacity to fully i mplement digital systems. Weak monitoring, political interference, and poor infrastructure reduce the effectiveness of these tools ((PDF) Controlling Corruption through e-Governa nce: Case Evidence from Bangladesh (U4 B RIEF), n.d.).

6. International Comparisons Support Ba ngladesh's Approach

South Korea – Seoul's OPEN system

In the late 1990s, Seoul launched the OPEN system (Online Procedures Enhancement for Civil Application). This platform allowed cit izens to follow every step of their permit or l icense application online. It reduced the nee d to meet officials in person. This limited th e chances for bribes or delays. For example, people applying for construction permits cou ld check the approval stages online without calling anyone (Seoulsolution, 2014). The g oal was to stop irregularities and corruption by making the process open. Today, this syst em is seen as a classic model of local e-gove rnance reform.

Estonia – Full digital government

Estonia built a complete digital government system. All citizens use digital ID cards. Go vernment services like tax payment, voting, and procurement are done online. The X-Ro ad system links data across government agen cies. This setup removed paperwork and the role of middlemen. One analyst said, "you c an't bribe a computer," which shows the stre ngth of automation (Alumni, n.d.). Estonia a lso made public procurement fully transpare nt through online registers. These steps impr oved public trust and helped reduce corrupti on. But the success depended on strong legal frameworks and public access to digital tool s.

India – e-Panchayat and e-GramSwaraj

India launched e-GramSwaraj in 2020 for its rural local councils (Gram Panchayats). This system makes it mandatory for all budgets, p lans, and financial transactions to be posted online. Payments are sent directly to vendors through PFMS, reducing chances of fund mi suse. The portal also allows people to file co mplaints and see real-time updates. Govern ment reports say this has improved accounta bility and helped prevent leakages. This sho ws how financial transparency and citizen m onitoring can be built into rural e-governanc e.

Other countries like Georgia, Ukraine, and S

candinavian nations also use e-governance t ools such as online tenders, open budget port als, and citizen apps. These tools help reduc e corruption at the local level. The key lesso n is that how the system is designed matters. Open processes (like Seoul's), digital procur ement (as in Estonia and Bangladesh), and r eal-time financial tracking (as in India) work best when combined with strong oversight a nd citizen access.

7. E-Governance Works Best with Suppor ting Reforms

Experts agree that technology alone cannot s top corruption. Legal frameworks, institutio nal coordination, and public awareness are a ll needed (Alumni, n.d.). For example, Bang ladesh's e-GP worked well because it was b acked by strong policy support and regular monitoring by central agencies like the CPT U and the Anti-Corruption Commission (Wo rld Bank Helps Bangladesh Transform Publi c Procurement into a Sustainable Online Sys tem, n.d.). Also, campaigns to teach citizens about their rights and how to use digital tool s helped increase trust and use of the system. Studies suggest that combining digital platfo rms with broader reforms leads to better and longer-lasting results ((PDF) Controlling Co rruption through e-Governance: Case Eviden ce from Bangladesh (U4 BRIEF), n.d.).

KEY STRATEGIES IN BANGLADESH (2015–2025)

From 2015 to 2025, Bangladesh used severa l digital strategies to improve local governan ce and reduce corruption. These efforts focu sed on automation, transparency, and citizen access.

1. E-Government Procurement (e-GP)

Bangladesh rolled out a national e-procurem ent system called e-GP. This started in 2013 and became fully mandatory by 2020. All go vernment agencies, including local governm ents, must use it for bidding and contract wo rk. The system includes online tender notice s, bid submission, evaluation, and a citizen monitoring portal. By removing manual step s, e-GP reduced the chance of interference a nd limited the role of individual officials (W orld Bank Helps Bangladesh Transform Pub lic Procurement into a Sustainable Online Sy stem, n.d.).

2. Online Service Delivery through Digital Centers

The government expanded Union Digital Ce nters (UDCs), E-Commerce Centers, and IC T Centers at the Union and Upazila levels. T hese centers offer services such as birth certi ficates, land records, tax payments, and soci al allowances. Municipalities and city corpor ations also started collecting taxes and fees o

nline. Pension and social welfare payments moved to digital formats. Smart National ID (NID) cards became the standard for identity checks and helped connect people to online services. These steps reduced face-to-face co ntact and helped stop bribery at service coun ters (Corruption -- Good News in a Depressi ng Context, n.d.).

3. E-Administration and Financial Manag ement Tools

Bangladesh introduced digital systems in go vernment offices to improve internal work. The e-Office project moved paper-based pro cesses to digital files. This made approvals f aster and created electronic audit trails. The government also connected e-banking and p ayment gateways to local projects and staff s alaries. The Ministry of Finance expanded th e Public Financial Management System (PF MS) to local governments. This helped track development funds and stop fund misuse. Th e strong link between e-GP, electronic paym ent, and audits made the system more reliabl e (World Bank Helps Bangladesh Transform Public Procurement into a Sustainable Onlin e System, n.d.).

4. Citizen Engagement and Transparency Portals

Local governments began posting their budg ets, development plans, and service standard s online. The government promoted citizen c harters at Union and Upazila levels. In 2020, a digital dashboard was launched for local g overnment units. This portal lets citizens file complaints, track budget spending, and view the status of projects. In some districts, citiz ens can now monitor how local contracts are being implemented, similar to the national e-GP portal.

5. Legal and Policy Reforms Supported b y ICT

The Right to Information Act (2009) and loc al government laws required public bodies t o share information. The government also cr eated mobile apps and helplines for reportin g corruption. Local government officials rec eived online training on ICT use and anti-co rruption practices. These actions showed tha t ICT is not just a support tool, but a central part of Bangladesh's governance reform.

LESSONS LEARNED

1. Technology helps, but it is not enough

Bangladesh's experience shows that digital t ools like e-GP and UDCs can reduce corrupt ion by cutting face-to-face dealings (Full_Re port_UDC_02122017.pdf, n.d.; Alumni, n.d.). But these tools alone cannot solve the pro blem. One study notes that "just introducing e-governance is not enough" ((PDF) Control ling Corruption through e-Governance: Case

Evidence from Bangladesh (U4 BRIEF), n.d .). To work well, technology needs strong su pport from audits, anti-corruption bodies, le gal reforms, and political commitment. For e xample, e-GP only succeeded because of co nstant oversight by the Central Procurement Technical Unit and the Anti-Corruption Co mmission (World Bank Helps Bangladesh T ransform Public Procurement into a Sustaina ble Online System, n.d.).

2. Transparency and accountability must be part of system design

Successful cases show the value of sharing i nformation publicly. Seoul's OPEN system and Bangladesh's e-GP both made governm ent processes visible to citizens (Seoulsoluti on, 2014; World Bank Helps Bangladesh Tr ansform Public Procurement into a Sustaina ble Online System, n.d.). UDCs in Banglade sh and India's e-Panchayat also used public i nformation to stop corruption. Feedback tool s like hotlines, complaint portals, and comm unity monitoring can strengthen this effect. Experts suggest designing systems with tran sparency from the start, such as including pr oject data and performance reports on public dashboards.

3. Improve access and digital capacity

A major challenge in Bangladesh is low digi tal skills and weak internet in rural areas (Isl am et al., 2023). To fix this, the government should invest in internet access, local langua ge content, and training for both officials an d citizens. Public-private partnerships can he lp expand reach. Awareness campaigns are a lso needed to build trust in digital systems, e specially among those who fear misuse or d o not understand the tools.

4. Link central and local efforts

E-governance must be well-coordinated bet ween national and local levels. Isolated ICT projects do not work well (Islam et al., 2023). Bangladesh's reforms show that national p rograms like NIDs and e-GP only succeed w hen local governments adapt and apply them . Also, aligning digital systems with anti-cor ruption laws (like the Right to Information Act) makes them more effective. For exampl e, the National Integrity Strategy (2012) clea rly linked digital procurement and informati on sharing as key goals.

5. Regular monitoring and updates are es sential

The e-GP system was rolled out step by step . Features like citizen portals, mobile apps, a nd geo-tagging were added over time (Worl d Bank Helps Bangladesh Transform Public Procurement into a Sustainable Online Syste m, n.d.). This shows that digital reforms sho uld be updated regularly. Continuous trainin

g, feedback, and audits are needed to make s ure systems work as planned. Policies shoul d include tools for measuring progress and fi xing problems.

6. Digital tools must fit within wider gover nance reforms

Finally, digital governance works best when it is part of a bigger reform plan. Estonia, for example, matched digital systems with citize n rights and legal changes (Alumni, n.d.). In Bangladesh, e-governance helped reduce pet ty corruption, but deep issues like political i nfluence and weak law enforcement still rem ain (Full_Report_UDC_02122017.pdf, n.d.; (PDF) Controlling Corruption through e-Go vernance: Case Evidence from Bangladesh (U4 BRIEF), n.d.). These examples show that technology must be used along with instituti onal reforms. Otherwise, the impact will be l imited.

CONCLUSION

Between 2015 and 2025, Bangladesh made s trong progress using e-governance to improv e local public management and reduce corru ption. Programs like e-Procurement, e-servic es at Union and Upazila levels, and online fi nancial management helped increase transpa rency. These efforts removed many bureaucr atic delays. Evidence from citizen surveys a nd project data shows real results. There was less tender abuse and big cost savings from e -GP (World Bank Helps Bangladesh Transfo rm Public Procurement into a Sustainable O nline System, n.d.). Petty bribery also fell at rural service kiosks (Full_Report_UDC_021 22017.pdf, n.d.). Local projects were monito red better (PDF Controlling Corruption thro ugh e-Governance: Case Evidence from Ban gladesh (U4 BRIEF), n.d.). International exa mples from Seoul, Estonia, and India confir m that digital platforms can break down corr uption.

However, Bangladesh's experience shows th at e-governance alone cannot solve all probl ems. Challenges like poor infrastructure and political resistance remain. Technology wor ks best when strong institutions support it. A nti-corruption gains last longer when e-syste ms have open access, audit trails, and when citizens can use them effectively. Governme nt accountability also needs to be active (Ful l_Report_UDC_02122017.pdf, n.d.; PDF Co ntrolling Corruption through e-Governance: Case Evidence from Bangladesh (U4 BRIEF), n.d.). The lesson from this decade is clear: digital tools raise the cost of corruption and i mprove services, but they must be part of a wider reform strategy.

REFERENCES

Alumni, E. (n.d.). E-Governments vs. Corruption. The case of Estonia. *Technology and Operations Management*. Retrieved June 20, 2025, from https://d3.harvard.edu/platform-rctom/submission/e-governments-vs-corruption-the-case-of-estonia/

An empirical investigation on the nature of corrupt practices in the Local Government Bodies in Bangladesh at the Union Level: A way forward for promoting environmental sustainability. (n.d.). Retrieved June 19, 2025, from https://ideas.repec.org/a/jso/coejbm/v1y2013i4p175-183.html

Bhattacharya, D., Rezbana, U. S., & Fuad, S. M. (n.d.). *Decentralised Governance, Corruption and Anti-corruption Measures: An Enquiry in Bangladesh Experience*.

Corruption Circle involved in project implementation of Union Parishad | Download Scientific Diagram. (n.d.). Retrieved June 19, 2025, from https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Corruption-Circle-involved-in-project-implementation-of-Union-Parishad_fig1_327261353

Corruption—Good news in a depressing context. (n.d.). Retrieved June 20, 2025, from https://ti-bangladesh.org/articles/commentary/72

Figure 1: Corruption Circle involved in project implementation of Union... (n.d.). ResearchGate. Retrieved June 19, 2025, from https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Corruption-Circle-involved-in-project-implementation-of-Union-Parishad_fig1_327261353

Impact of E-Government Initiatives to Combat Corruption Mediating by Behavioral Intention: A Quantitative Analysis from Emerging Economies. (n.d.). Retrieved June 19, 2025, from https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/15/3/2694

Islam, M. N., Hossain, M. A., Islam, M. K., & Aziz, M. T. B. (2023). E-Governance Challenges and Opportunities for Improving Public Service Delivery and Citizen Engagement. *European Proceedings of Social and Behavioural Sciences*, *Building a Sustainable Future: Fostering Synergy Between Technology, Business and Humanity*. https://doi.org/10.15405/epsbs.2023.11.10

(PDF) Controlling corruption through e-governance: Case evidence from Bangladesh (U4 BRIEF). (n.d.). Retrieved June 20, 2025, from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332241666_Controlling_corruption_through_e-governance_Case_evidence_from_Bangladesh_U4_BRIEF

(PDF) E-Governance as an Anti-Corruption Tool for Government in Bangladesh. (n.d.). Retrieved June 19, 2025, from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/258124240_E-Governance_as_an_Anti-Corruption_Tool_for_Government_in_Bangladesh

(PDF) Nexus between E-Governance and Local Government in Providing Effective Public Service Delivery in Upazila Parishad in Bangladesh. (n.d.). Retrieved June 20, 2025, from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/390172238_Nexus_between_E-Governance_and_Local_Government_in_Providing_Effective_Public_Service_Delivery_in_Upazila_Parishad_in_Bangladesh

Seoulsolution. (2014, August 5). *E-Government of Seoul opens a new chapter of transparency, efficiency and public participation*. 서울정책아카이브 Seoul Solution. https://seoulsolution.kr/en/content/e-government-seoul-opens-new-chapter-transparency-efficiency-and-public-participation

World Bank helps Bangladesh transform public procurement into a sustainable online system. (n.d.). Retrieved June 20, 2025, from https://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2023/05/03/world-bank-helps-bangladesh-transform-public-procurement-into-a-sustainable-online-system