

**ARTICLE**

# Paradox of public sector capacity building: Lessons from MATT2 UK–Bangladesh co-operation

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**Abstract**

This study focuses on the Government of Bangladesh and the UK Department for International Development (DFID) public sector capacity-building project under collaborative public governance. It examines the efficiency and effectiveness of a foreign-funded and multistakeholder-led public sector capacity-development initiative dubbed Managing at the Top Stage 2 (MATT2) project, and how it contributed to the human resource capacity development in Bangladesh. A combination of data from Government sources, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, participant observation and author analysis was adopted. The results showed the project to have been largely successful, despite some challenges.

**KEY WORDS**

Bangladesh, collaborative public governance, governance reform, public sector capacity building, training and development

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

The organizational landscape in most developing and transitional countries has changed over the decades due to the proliferation of agendas relevant to new public management (NPM) along with structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) and more recently the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These scenarios provide new challenges and opportunities to most developing and transitional countries to respond and manage their public affairs in an

ever-changing globalized world. Today, governance no longer remains solely within the domain of the public sector, but is made up of a heterogeneous group of local, international and transnational public, private and non-profit organizations. As a result, governance in Bangladesh has also gone through these transformations over recent decades (Hossain, Rohitarachoon, & Azizuddin, 2012; Hossain, Rohitarachoon, Eldridge, & Azizuddin, 2013; Houghton & Wilson, 2012).

In contemporary times, collaborative public governance has become a buzzword for organizations and nations (Agranoff & McGuire, 2003; Hall & O'Toole, 2004; O'Leary, Gazley, McGuire, & Bingham, 2009; O'Leary & Vij, 2012) as it conveys pooling resources to meet the ever-increasing needs for organizations and governments to solve individual weaknesses (Crosby & Bryson, 2010), create interdependency (Ansell & Gash, 2007), improve the efficiency and effectiveness of publicly funded programmes (O'Leary & Vij, 2012) and a medium through which citizens are engaged in public governance (O'Leary & Vij, 2012). Collaborative governance can take various forms in public sector policy arenas (Page, 2010) including capacity building. As a result of the lack of capacities in the public sector of many developing countries, organizations and governments need to build critical capacities to be able to set and achieve objectives, solve problems and perform important development functions (Jorge, 1997; Zafarullah & Rahman, 2008). Our article assesses capacity development in Bangladesh through the lens of collaborative public governance. We examine the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) and DFID's public sector capacity-building project: Managing at the Top, Stage 2 Programme (MATT2).

The main objective of this study is to examine the efficiency and effectiveness of MATT2 as a multistakeholder-led and foreign-funded public sector capacity-development initiative in Bangladesh. The study further assesses and analyzes the contribution of this initiative to the enhancement of performance management, organizational development, leadership and human resource management (HRM) processes in the public sector of Bangladesh. The rest of the article is structured as follows: the next sections examine the theoretical contexts of collaborative public management as well as the background of development in Bangladesh through capacity building and the development of human resources in the Bangladesh public sector. This is followed by an assessment of the Managing at the Top (MATT2) programme led by DFID and the Bangladesh Ministry of Public Administration (MOPA), with a critical examination of two of the performance improvement projects. The findings and analysis of these projects and MATT2 as a whole in Bangladesh are also examined. The concluding section suggests that learning and training initiatives that are financially supported by foreign organizations often struggle to build capacity in the public sector of developing countries. However, in the case of the MATT2 programme in Bangladesh, project participants were perceived to have gained good knowledge and experience through previous participation in different countries, and this was later applied to the implementation of the Super-Performance Improvement Programmes (known as S-PIP) related projects in Bangladesh. Furthermore, MATT2 enhanced the performance management, organizational development, leadership and HRM processes in Bangladesh.

## 2 | OVERVIEW OF COLLABORATIVE PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

In recent times, the need for inter-organizational collaboration to provide public good has become a feature of public management. Governments and other stakeholders come together to solve various common problems, including poverty reduction, HIV/AIDS, environmental pollution, empowering disadvantaged groups and the provision of infrastructure facilities. This could take the form

of governmental organizations, private businesses, non-governmental organizations, higher education institutions and community groups (Crosby & Bryson, 2010) pulling resources together to meet a developmental need. This has arisen as a result of failings in the individual sectors and the need to collaborate to overcome these individual weaknesses (Crosby & Bryson, 2010; Bryson & Crosby, 2008). Collaborations have been widely studied within the context of Collaborative Public Management (Goldsmith & Eggers, 2004; Agranoff, 2007; O'Leary & Bingham, 2009; O'Leary, Gerard, & Bingham, 2006; Kettl, 2009; Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2007, 2008; Crosby & Bryson, 2010), Public Private Partnerships (Ansell & Gash, 2007; Osborne, 2010; Salamon, 2002), and collaborative Governance (Ansell & Gash, 2007; Light, 2002; O'Leary, Gerard, & Bingham, 2006; Osborne, 2010; Page, 2010). Scholars treat both collaborative public management and collaborative governance as being the same (Agranoff & McGuire, 2003; O'Toole & Meier, 2007; Bingham, O'Leary, & Carlson, 2008). Other synonymous terms used in the literature to denote collaborative public management include integrated public governance (Goodsell, 2006), participatory management, interactive policy-making, stakeholder governance (Ansell & Gash, 2007) and collaborative networks, among others. Collaborative public governance according to O'Leary, Gerard and Bingham (2006, p. 7) is a concept that describes the "process of facilitating and operating in multi-organizational arrangements to solve problems that cannot be solved or easily solved by single organizations." To Ansell and Gash (2007) collaborative governance is an "arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engage non-state stakeholders in a collective decision-making process that is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative and that aims to make or implement public policy or manage public programmes or assets."

The collaborative public governance framework includes policy development, service delivery, infrastructure development, capacity building and economic development (Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2011). To them, capacity building helps to "develop the skills, systems and capabilities" of the targeted groups or organizations through the transfer of skills and knowledge to enhance organizational performance. This article looks at collaborative public governance in Bangladesh with different stakeholders who trained senior public servants with the aim of enhancing their capacities for national development. The collaboration involved the Ministry of Public Administration (MOPA) in Bangladesh, DFID in the UK, a private consultant in the UK and three UK-based universities namely the University of Manchester, the University of Bradford and the University of Wolverhampton under the MATT2 programme. This donor-funded capacity-building initiative fits very well within collaborative public governance because the stakeholders had different expertise and came from different organizations/countries with a specific objective: to enhance the capacity of the Bangladesh Civil Service, indicating how collaborative governance has become prominent in most organizations and countries (O'Leary & Vj, 2012).

### 3 | METHODOLOGY

Methodologically, this study is based on qualitative research which explores a social or human problem in which, among other things, the researcher conducts the study in a natural setting to derive meaning by utilizing focus group discussions, in-depth interviews and documented sources (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2010). In-depth interviews were used to elicit the views, experiences and beliefs of participants to generate a deeper understanding of how MATT2 had impacted the civil service of Bangladesh through capacity development. Further, the in-depth interviews provided the opportunity to probe answers that needed further clarifications (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). The focus group discussions were also employed because of their ability to generate spontaneous, rich and insightful

information from research participants (Wong, 2008) as well as elicit information that would be difficult to generate in one-to-one personal interviews (Kitzinger, 1995). In-depth interviews and focus group discussions were conducted between 2008 and 2016. Five focus group discussions were held involving 20 participants. These were individuals who had participated in the MATT2 project, i.e. the first three cohorts of the S-PIP teams who had part of their experiential learning tour in the University of Manchester between 2008 and 2010. These individuals were interviewed to solicit their views on how their experience had impacted on the development of the Bangladesh Civil Service. The focus group discussions were complemented by in-depth interviews of eight senior public servants in Bangladesh to find out their views on the successes and failures of MATT2. In addition to these, an extensive review of literature from Government sources and published articles on collaborative public management, capacity building and the governance system of Bangladesh and its civil service were conducted. Furthermore, the insight derived from the personal experience of the lead researcher on the Bangladesh public sector should be taken into account, as he served as the principal consultant as well as being a participant observer in the training exercise in the University of Manchester and the interviews in Bangladesh.

## **4 | THE CONTEXT OF PREVIOUS DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES AND PUBLIC SECTOR CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN BANGLADESH**

### **4.1 | Development initiatives**

The development of the People's Republic of Bangladesh both in the pre- and post-independence eras has attracted considerable attention from international development scholars over the decades. The country's contribution to wider international development has been a feature of academic discourse, varying from gloomy "basket case" to shiny Nobel Prize winner Grameen Bank and its microfinance model. However, over the years the emerging political elites increasingly controlled political institutions and enjoyed greater economic gains (Subhan, 2001), still very much a salient trait of public administration in Bangladesh. Various western political, administrative and management techniques have been adopted in the country without considering local customs, traditions, values and norms (Haque, 1997) of the citizenry. Although gradual changes have taken place in recent years, Bangladesh's sociopolitical and administrative legacy remains, with a mixed impact on developmental needs and efforts. Though the Bangladesh public administration has been struggling to respond to the various development needs of the country over the decades, various alternative development initiatives have also been tried, implemented by a range of local and international stakeholders in partnership with the Government. These include the Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD), later transformed into the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP). The IRDP had among its aims the introduction of a co-operative system and the development of the capacity of local government to co-ordinate and direct developmental efforts in Bangladesh. Besides, there have been many development initiatives—such as SAPs, PRSPs and MDGs—initiated by international organizations, as well as some civil service reforms. All aimed at injecting efficiency, effectiveness and eventual development of Bangladesh. Within the civil service for instance, at least 17 reform Commissions and Committees aimed at its reorganization have been constituted since independence. Following these Commissions' work, more than 20 reports on Public Administration Reform have been produced. In some instances the reports were prepared in collaboration with international development partners, including the World Bank, UNDP, ADB, DFID and USAID (UNDP, 2004; Kim & Monem, 2009) with the aim of enhancing the capacity building of the civil service. However, despite

the volume of reports and reform initiatives, Kim and Monem (2009) argue that training has neither been linked to career planning nor related to other dimensions of HRM.

## 4.2 | Human resource capacity building

Turning our attention to the public sector of Bangladesh, bureaucrats have been accused of being ineffective and inefficient (Zafarullah & Rahman, 2008; Khan & Islam, 2014) as most of them “lack the requisite knowledge and skills, are unclear of their duties and responsibilities, and have inadequate knowledge of rules and procedures” (Zafarullah & Rahman, 2008, p. 745). This is coupled with the fact that the Bangladesh Civil Service is beset with political patronage, unco-ordinated public management, fragile bureaucratic capacity, tardiness, incompetence, poor standards of professionalism, rent seeking and corruption among others (Zafarullah & Rahman, 2008; Rashid, 2014). Consequently, most bureaucrats often become involved in politics rather than providing “effective, efficient, quality and people-oriented service delivery” (Zafarullah & Khan, 2006). To turn this situation around, the Bangladesh public sector relied heavily on training (both pre- and in-service training) to build the capacity of the public sector to identify problems, assessing options to solving these problems, formulating and implementing policies that can have positive impact on the socioeconomic development of the entire country over a period of time (Waheed & Hayat, 1999). Apart from training, the public sector also embarks on coaching, seminars and workshops as additional impetuses to improve the sector (Shawkat Ali, 2010; Khan & Islam, 2014).

The need for capacity development in the public sector of Bangladesh cannot be overemphasized. Capacity building is viewed as the medium through which individuals, groups, organizations, institutions and societies increase their abilities to perform functions, solve problems and set and achieve objectives (UN, 2007; OECD, 2006). Capacity building therefore encompasses the country’s human, scientific, technological, organizational, institutional and resource capabilities. A fundamental goal of capacity building is to enhance the ability to evaluate and address the crucial questions related to policy choices and modes of implementation. At the organizational level, policy, people and systems are the broad elements of capacity building (World Bank, 2006) to achieve institutional effectiveness. Thus, developing and designing an enabling environment for employees prepares them to achieve organizational goals.

## 4.3 | Public sector capacity building

Since independence, the GoB has initiated administrative reform measures to build the capacity of the public administration in order to make them responsive to the developmental needs of the country. This is in line with the general feeling that the GoB needs to make the civil service more responsive to contemporary developmental demands. Indeed, civil service capacity building remains a challenge in Bangladesh as training, which is one of the pillars of capacity building has been characterized by a “lack of clear, bold and novel training policy” (Khan & Islam, 2014, p. 26). The core objectives of these reforms (including MATT2) were to build their capacity, improve performance by restoring integrity, efficiency and adoption of modern personnel and management practices (CPD, 2004).

With regards to public sector capacity building, integrated public governance<sup>1</sup> or collaborative public governance, a relatively new dimension for Bangladesh public administration within the context of development management was introduced (Goodsell, 2006). This kind of collaboration was

<sup>1</sup>Such as the inclusion of public, private and non-profit civil society organizations as stakeholders in the formulation of public policy and its implementation process (Goodsell, 2006).

timely because it was meant to improve efficiency and effectiveness. The collaboration provided a skills-based training programme for senior civil servants under the MATT2 programme jointly sponsored by DFID from the UK and MOPA in Bangladesh.

## **5 | THE CASE STUDY OF DFID AND THE GOVERNMENT OF BANGLADESH COLLABORATIVE PUBLIC GOVERNANCE**

### **5.1 | Managing at the Top Stage 2 (MATT2) programme**

The MATT2 programme began on 11 June 2006 in MOPA. It was known as MATT2 because it followed an earlier, smaller (three-year) MATT1 programme that ended in 2002. The seven-year MATT2 programme, which ended in 2013, was a joint initiative of the GoB and DFID to develop a reformed HRM system within the Bangladesh Civil Service as an important building block for incremental administrative reform (MATT2, 2012).

It is worth mentioning that the entire MATT2 project was sponsored and implemented by multiple public and private sector stakeholders at different phases which included DFID, a private UK-based consulting company, MOPA, Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC) and the universities of Manchester, Bradford and Wolverhampton (UK-based). The core responsibility to implement the entire project was outsourced to a UK-based private consulting company by DFID through a bidding process. The bid-winning company implemented the project in association with the UK and Bangladesh stakeholders during 2006–2013.

The programme aimed at creating a critical mass of reform-minded civil servants who, through mutual support and pressure, at strategic and influential locations within the civil service, and through their own improved performance, will generate and demand administrative reform from within the Bangladesh Civil Service. The programme was expected to generate performance improvement at the highest levels of the civil service and across all ministries in two main ways (MATT2, 2012):

- 1) Through developing reformed HRM systems within the Bangladesh Civil Service, including the development of the Career Planning Wing of MOPA; and
- 2) Through a performance-oriented management development programme.

With regard to reforming HRM systems, the priorities for reform action were focused on developing people and systems for improved needs-based deployment through workforce and career planning, merit-based promotion and performance appraisal. The personnel development programme was to develop the capacity of about 2,000 civil service administrators mainly at the level of Senior Assistant Secretary and above. The process was therefore aimed at promoting individual, organizational and institutional change (MATT2, 2012).

#### **5.1.1 | The training context**

MATT2 Stage 1: Primarily provided in-country opening programme for up to 300 officers per annum. These officers undertook a two-week regional exposure visit to Singapore, Malaysia or Thailand. The key element of the programme was “learning by doing”—a non-academic and non-theory based experiential learning. Participants focused on work-based reform through the development and implementation of PIPs on different reform topics by teams of five to six participants (Jacobs, 2009).

MATT2 Stage 2: Each year, the best 80 officers from the 300 participants in Stage 1 were selected for Stage 2 training at UK universities. These officers attended any of the Universities of Manchester,

Bradford or Wolverhampton between 2008 and 2010, and between 2010 and 2013 attended the Universities of Bradford or Wolverhampton in cohorts of 20. Officers in each cohort usually worked in four Super-Performance Improvement Programmes (S-PIP) teams—usually five officers in each team. The “Super-PIP” teams worked and developed performance improvement projects in key reform areas that were expected to aid in the development of Bangladesh. This involved a six-week placement in the UK which included an introductory phase (two weeks), a placement at a relevant host organization (two weeks) and a consolidation phase (two weeks). This was then followed by a six-month (S-PIP Project) implementation period in Bangladesh monitored by a Bangladesh Civil Service Secretary (Jacobs, 2009).

### **Examination Of Super-Performance Improvement Programmes (S-Pip) Projects**

The University of Manchester provided training to three cohorts of 60 MATT2 participants between 2008 and 2010. These participants developed 12 S-PIP Projects as part of their training, which were later implemented in Bangladesh upon their return from the UK. For research and evaluation purposes, four projects were selected of which the following two projects are examined and analyzed below:

**S-PIP Project 1: Facilitation of overseas employment of poor workers by providing collateral-free institutional loans** The first project, named S-PIP 1, focused on the facilitation of overseas employment of poor workers by providing collateral-free institutional loans. This loan is supposed to facilitate their effort to find overseas employment and cover their travel-related expenses. After the completion of the training at Manchester and on their return to Bangladesh the S-PIP team claimed that 80% of their planned project activities achieved the expected results. However, it should be noted here that the MATT2 Stage 2 training took place just as the global economic decline began in 2006/2007. Therefore, the devastating outcomes of the recession affected the implementation of this project as the possibility of finding jobs in many rich countries became restricted. Most of the countries that had previously attracted workers from Bangladesh started to encounter high rates of unemployment. Thus, foreign workers were not as much in demand as before.

Nevertheless, similar initiatives had been introduced earlier by GoB to facilitate overseas employment for Bangladeshi workers and one of the most worthy of mention was the co-operation between the GoB and the “Expatriate Welfare Bank.” This initiative had already planned 30 technical training centres for potential expatriates. The GoB also provided foreign language learning facilities for potential expatriates to learn the language of the country they intended to immigrate to for working purposes (this included Arabic, Korean and Japanese among others). Additionally, the Ministry of Expatriates’ Welfare and Overseas Employment expanded its activities. Therefore, it was not clear why S-PIP 1 prepared such a pilot project as part of the MATT2 training in Manchester and how this project would improve institutional capacity in Bangladesh.

Furthermore, it was observed that the political change in Bangladesh led to the promotion of some people whose political ideologies were in line with the government of the day. Simultaneously, those individuals whose ideologies did not chime with those of the Government were made redundant or designated as Officers on Special Duty (OSDs) without responsibilities. This indicated that there was high political interference in the activities of the programme.

Consequently, although the team claimed S-PIP 1 MATT2 was 80% successful, they also realized the negative impact of the economic decline in Bangladesh upon their return and this was compounded by the fact that the overseas labour market was also not as open as it used to be. Besides, the Ministry of Expatriates’ Welfare and Overseas Employment apparently had nothing to do with MATT2-led S-PIP 1 Project, although the team argued that the Ministry’s expansion of activities was an outcome of their contribution. This is because millions of Bangladeshi expatriate workers

were already away on jobs and had established a solid interaction with this Ministry. Thus, there is no logical connection between the outcomes of S-PIP 1 and the activities of the GoB. The GoB had already started implementing those points before S-PIP 1 was put into practice. Consequently, the 80% success rate achieved by the implementation of S-PIP 1 project cannot be justified. There may have been some additional discussions when MATT2-led S-PIP projects were implemented, but this did not contribute much to the GoB in terms of the S-PIP 1-led facilitation of overseas employment of poor workers. This is because the relevant Ministry had already taken other significant initiatives to support expatriate workers. Furthermore, a number of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries increasingly sought domestic female workers from Bangladesh, but this did not materialize because similar workers from countries like the Philippines and Indonesia had not had a good experience working in GCC countries. Therefore, attracting female workers from Bangladesh was not very easy for GCC employers. Moreover, in the context of the S-PIP projects, some of the MATT2 participants were made either inactive, redundant or were transferred to other sectors by the Government. Therefore, upon their return to Bangladesh they could not meaningfully participate in the implementation of the project. Thus, political interference did not contribute to equal participation and successful implementation of the project.

**S-PIP Project 2: Delivery of old age allowance programme** The second project, S-PIP 2, concentrated on the delivery of an old age allowance programme. It focused on developing a welfare programme for senior citizens—along the lines of the welfare and pension systems in most European countries. This programme was aimed at providing a financial allowance to senior citizens to enable them to cover their living expenses. Outdoing S-PIP 1, the S-PIP 2 team claimed that the project achieved 90% of its objectives. This was arrived at by comparing the amount of money the Government spent at the time and the number of beneficiaries. The GoB operated with 8,500,000,000 Bangladesh taka (BDT) among 2.2 million senior citizens in 2010, as compared to BDT 120,000,000 among a much lower number in 1998. Therefore, there was a significant increase in the budget available for supporting senior citizens as compared to 10 years previously.

The GoB was committed to supporting the S-PIP 2 project as well as its team members. There was also support from various local government authorities that helped the S-PIP 2 team members to identify the senior citizens. The most outstanding achievement was that, even though the project was run as a pilot in the capital city of Bangladesh, it was later expanded to cover the whole country.

However, there were some challenges as well. Many argued that the selection process of senior citizens was biased. For instance, people who supported the Government were favoured. Therefore, the selection process of senior citizens was flawed due to political bias. Additionally, the S-PIP 2 team claimed that the national level policy guideline was formulated based on this S-PIP 2 project. The GoB made remarkable improvements, but there were a few challenges as well. Notwithstanding this statement, S-PIP 2 had more authenticity than S-PIP 1. Though the claim that 90% of the project's objectives were achieved was exaggerated, how this project impelled the GoB to both formulate the national level policy guideline and implement it nationwide remains unclear. Even without S-PIP 2, the GoB would have taken those initiatives as part of the social safety network programme.

## 6 | FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Several lessons can be taken from the examination of the two S-PIP projects. First, the MATT2 and the S-PIP projects were relevant in addressing the public sector capacity-building of the GoB. The S-PIP 1 and S-PIP 2 teams were also qualified and knowledgeable, and already had years of experience

in implementing development projects in Bangladesh. The GoB supported the MATT2 in many respects, including the corresponding training and S-PIP preparation process, and subsequently the implementation process of the S-PIP projects despite the political changes in the country between 2006 and 2013. The S-PIP projects were largely successful, however, the achievements claimed cannot be fully confirmed as there was no clear evidence that the nationwide implementation of “facilitation of overseas employment” and “old age allowance” by the ministries concerned had anything to do with the MATT2-led S-PIP projects. Rowe et al. (2010), in their study of collaborative public sector capacity-building in Liberia argued that it is difficult to have an objective measure of organizational-level improvements or outcomes that could be related to self-reports, thereby limiting the ability to evaluate the full impact of capacity-development programmes. Moreover, most of the S-PIP members were senior level officers and were already experienced at a high level even before the training began. Therefore, one could question whether these senior civil servants really needed such training at this stage of their careers, as most of them were aged 50 or more and would soon retire from active service. The GoB should probably have selected younger civil servants for such training and possibly used it to facilitate governance reform over their careers.

Traditionally GoB officials have received capacity-building training in the UK, US, Canada, Japan, Australia and other OECD countries. The World Bank, the European Union and United Nations agencies and other development partners also provided various training opportunities to the country. In recent times, GoB and public officials have been invited to a range of training programmes in China, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, India, Russia and other countries. Seemingly, the GoB and its officials take up and benefit from these opportunities provided by partner countries and organizations. However, most of these training opportunities and initiatives are treated by the GoB as “stand-alone” processes and are not centrally co-ordinated by the GoB to develop the capacity of the civil service with regards to improving performance management, organizational development, leadership and HRM process.

Also, the lack of co-ordinated efforts between foreign donors and their training initiatives is quite visible and one can easily question whether these unplanned and unco-ordinated training programmes are genuinely useful to the country at all. More importantly, similar training programmes could have been provided by local experts and organizations. Above all, Bangladesh has a history of successful development models, such as IRDP, BRAC, the Grameen Bank and the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research Bangladesh (ICDDR), which are being replicated in a number of developing and transitional countries. In addition, apart from the leading public universities, a number of private universities, including North South University and BRAC University, are also well equipped to provide advanced professional training in governance reform. The Bangladesh Military Academy also has a proud history of providing professional and technical training. These organizations are already engaged in providing professional training to local and foreign organizations and the GoB could have tapped their expertise in national development.

Furthermore, it could be deduced that there were both internal and external challenges to MATT2 and its associated S-PIPs. The internal selection process was not deemed to be fair and the training itself and how it could be sustained and integrated into the mainstream civil service was generally not clear. Intergovernmental co-ordination between various ministries and departments became more confused as a result of external political influence. The six-month duration of the project per cohort was too short a time to have developed and implemented the project. These programmes required systematic co-ordination and genuine supervision within Bangladesh. The S-PIP projects were not all equally relevant to public sector capacity development of Bangladesh. Therefore, a more co-ordinated approach in designing and implementing future training programmes with foreign partners is very important. Additionally, Bangladesh could set its training priorities and negotiate with its development

partners—as many of the newly emerging global players (such as China, South Korea and India) tend to invite GoB officials and provide them with nominal training with the ulterior motive of simply expanding their market base in Bangladesh.

The organizational processes to implement the S-PIP projects had design flaws as many of the participating trainees were declared redundant or designated OSD upon their return to Bangladesh. The immaturity of key political parties with regard to public administration capacity building and politicization of administration was also a major obstacle in the implementation of the key parts of MATT2 in Bangladesh. It was further realized that many of the team members could not express their honest opinions in the implementation process of the S-PIPs. Other team members were also transferred to different locations during the S-PIP implementation phases, which raised questions regarding the sincerity of GoB to implement S-PIPs. Again, some other officers were also promoted to higher positions and subsequently assigned to different roles and responsibilities that had nothing to do with the implementation of S-PIPs, thereby creating an obstacle in the implementation process. Additionally, it has been argued that, in terms of projects or programmes (including MATT2), there is no proper system of monitoring, evaluation and feedback by the Government and the organizations responsible for the project(s) once they are completed. This supports the arguments of Blagescu and Young (2006) and Jones, Bailey, and Lyytikäinen (2007) that most organizations involved in capacity-building initiatives have been weak in monitoring and evaluating the impact of their interventions in their respective countries of study. In the case of Bangladesh, present and previous governments have not been able to collect feedback from their trainees or the monitoring institutions (Kabir & Baniamin, 2012; Zafarullah & Khan, 2006). Therefore, the GoB's commitment to building public sector capacity through MATT2 remained questionable.

Apart from the above, MATT2 was sponsored by DFID. The key responsibility for implementing the entire project was given to a UK-based private sector consultant in partnership with the GoB. Based on the consultant's choice, three UK institutions that provide foreign training (i.e. the University of Manchester, the University of Bradford and the University of Wolverhampton) were selected to provide training to the GoB officers during Stage 2 in the UK with prior training in Singapore at Stage 1. DFID's desire to diversify their key stakeholders in aid operation—especially by giving this very important responsibility to a private sector consultant might have been well justified in the UK as it reflected the new public management phenomenon in foreign aid distribution. With DFID's renewed strategy, the main partnership with regards to MATT2 was between the UK consultant and the GoB. It is believed there were internal conflicts between the UK consultant and the BCS in relation to the in-country training that was provided to the participants. The BCS did not see the relevance of the training to the development of Bangladesh. In addition, the three UK universities throughout the MATT2 programme provided service only for short periods. Though, in reality, all these stakeholders were sponsored by DFID, they had different interests and values in engaging with the project and implementing their parts. This raised a serious concern with regard to whether these models of partnership, dominated by a private sector consulting company had any integrity at all during the implementation process. Apparently, the participating universities' engagement with MATT2 and the GoB had non-profit oriented motives. However, for obvious reasons the private consulting company's motive was primarily driven by financial profit. This raises the issue of mutual trust and respect as envisioned by Jones et al. (2007) in their study of research capacity strengthening in Africa. Therefore, DFID's passive participation in the project implementation process could be questioned in terms of the moral dimension of aid, as well as the management of foreign aid. The total number of beneficiaries of the MATT2 project was quite insignificant to bring about tremendous change in the capacity building of the Bangladesh public service. In all, 240 public servants out of the over one million estimated civil servants (BBS, 2010) had benefited from the programme. Considering the size of the BCS, this

number was insignificant and alludes to the fact that DFID's capacity-development programmes are small and limited in scope. This is corroborated by the findings of the Oxford Policy Management Team (2006) study of DFID's capacity development in some selected sub-Saharan countries. The study identified the small scale and limited scope of the projects, as well as the fact that the projects were not designed exclusively to contribute towards capacity development as the main limitations of collaborations.

On the other hand, the MATT2 projects studied (i.e. S-PIP 1 and S-PIP 2) were mostly successful despite the fact that junior level professionals did not benefit from those opportunities. From the Bangladesh perspective, foreign exposure is very valuable to personal development as well as to the development of the civil service as a whole. Particularly for GoB, gaining experiences from other countries from Southeast Asia (e.g. China, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore) can provide useful insights to the development of Bangladesh as they also went through similar reform initiatives in the recent past. The perspectives from Australia, Europe and the US have always been perceived as very important to the reform and modernization process of Bangladesh. The entire MATT2 process provided genuine opportunities to civil servants to gain knowledge from UK, prepare S-PIP projects and implement them within their own country contexts.

Multistakeholder-led development management fits very well with the core values of NPM and also complies with the suggested paradigm of integrated or collaborative public governance (Goodsell, 2006). With equally committed development partners and stakeholders, this new way of managing aid projects can indeed provide opportunities to the aid recipients and make the development process successful. However, the capacity and willingness of the private sector consulting company to offer understanding and provide efficient services, as well as the sincerity and genuine commitment of the GoB in providing professional training to its officials, remained largely unclear. Despite these shortcomings, the goodwill of DFID and the participation of the UK universities were commendable. The MATT2 partnerships could have been better managed by the private consulting firm in opening new doors of opportunity for the multiple stakeholders involved and also for the intended beneficiaries of the project.

## 7 | CONCLUDING REMARKS

Developing countries face the challenge of adapting to the change of the traditional forms of public administration in managing development and public affairs. This underlines the necessity of further clarifying this concept by bringing in empirical perspectives. Hence, the diminishing role of development administration as a concept and the emerging role of collaborative public governance were examined and analyzed with regard to development projects. By drawing on the MATT2 project and two micro-level case-studies, this study argues that learning and training initiatives financially supported by foreign bodies do not necessarily lead to building capacity in the public sector.

More precisely, the assessment of the MATT2 project shares lessons that could also be applied to similar contexts worldwide. It was established that, although such projects might have clear objectives and foreign funding, they might face a wide range of both external and internal challenges. External challenges include the abrupt consequences of the global financial recession which increased the levels of unemployment and decreased the levels of overseas employment demand (as shown in S-PIP 1 above). Another significant external parameter that may well have impacted on the successful implementation of the project was that their application did not solely belong to the Government, but involved a collaboration of stakeholders to build the capacity of the Bangladesh public sector. However, the motivations of each stakeholder differed and so did their values. For

example, the private sector's stakeholders were financially oriented, whereas the universities had a different view. Therefore, such projects might not have been a "common project" for all stakeholders with "value differences."

In addition, internal challenges, predominantly political interference, were another stumbling block to the successful implementation of the programme. For instance, individuals who supported MATT2's implementation, but did not ideologically comply with the GoB, were rendered redundant or OSD after the project. Furthermore, some of the officers trained to implement such projects will have changed location or working position. This inevitably restrained their active participation in the actual implementation of the projects. Thus, politicization of administration, transfer and promotion seem to have undermined the beneficial outcomes of the projects. An additional internal obstacle was favouritism with regards to the target-group that such initiatives referred to. For instance, in S-PIP 2 senior citizens who complied with the Government's political ideology were preferred candidates. Finally, governments could have run such projects independently. However, this would not link the project to HRM, performance management and corporate development. Thus, attaining capacity building will remain challenging.

Despite the aforementioned external and internal challenges, the "case-studies" analyses indicated that the whole process could also bring some fruitful results. To begin with, the projects' participants gained knowledge and experience from the developed countries which enabled them to adopt and transfer their experiences to the Bangladeshi contexts. Additionally, governments enhanced the implementation of their projects by assisting their application, sometimes to the whole country (e.g. S-PIP 2). Thus, MATT2 contributed to the enhancement of performance management, organizational development, leadership, and HRM processes to some extent in Bangladesh.

To sum up, this study is a valuable understanding of the functioning aspect of multi-stakeholder led public sector capacity building projects. A single article of this nature cannot address all the critical and diverse aspects of multi-stakeholder led public sector reform and development. Therefore, future research could shed light on additional factors that are likely to affect the successful evolution of this topic.

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