Challenges of e-GP Implementation in Public Procurement: Case study on Election Commission Secretariat, (a constitutional organization) Dhaka, Bangladesh

By
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A Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Masters in Procurement and Supply Management (MPSM)

BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD)
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November, 2023

Declaration

I, Md. Ruhul Amin Mollik declare that this study titled "Challenges of e-GP Implementation in Public Procurement. Case study on Election Commission Secretariat, (a constitutional organization) Dhaka, Bangladesh" is my original work, and I am the sole author of this research. I confirm that this study has not been submitted for any other degree, and it is not currently under consideration for any academic qualification.

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Ethics Statement

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled Challenges of e-GP implementation in public procurement. A case study on Election Commission Secretariat, (a constitutional organization) Dhaka, Bangladesh is the own initiative of Md. Ruhul Amin Mollik that is completed under my direct guidance and supervision. So far, I know, the dissertation is an individual achievement of the candidate's own efforts and it is not a co-joint work.

I, also certify that I have gone through the draft and final version of the dissertation and found it satisfactory for submission to the BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), BRAC University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in Procurement and Supply Management (MPSM).

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Executive Summary

Effective procurement management plays a pivotal role in streamlining supply chain operations, ensuring timely and appropriate product acquisition, and cost-saving through bulk purchases and supplier relationships. In the context of Bangladesh, delays in procurement have historically been a major contributor to project overruns in its development initiatives. With a vision to achieve Middle-Income, Upper Middle-Income, and Higher Income Country status by 2041, the government seeks to allocate 80% of funds through public procurement, emphasizing the need for values and ethical standards and good governance.

The introduction of the Public Procurement Act 2006 (PPA-2006) and Public Procurement Rules 2008 (PPR-2008) marked progress in project implementation efficiency. However, challenges yet persisted in reducing time and cost overruns. The Electronic Government Procurement (e-GP) system was introduced as a milestone for enhancing procurement efficiency, at first in engineering organizations, later on expanded to include 1437 organizations, with the BEC initiating its implementation in 2022. While e-GP has been adopted widely, numerous public sector organizations face implementation hurdles, inhibiting its widespread utilization. Moreover, its long-term effects on social, economic, environmental, sustainability, and inclusiveness factors remain underexplored. This study specifically focuses on the challenges encountered by the Bangladesh Election Commission (BEC) in implementing e-GP and underscores the need for readiness and preparedness.

Conducting a questionnaire survey among BEC procurement officials, the study recommends measures to mitigate these challenges. While e-GP presents several benefits over traditional methods, such as efficiency and transparency, challenges include a lack of leadership, inadequate training facilities, and logistic supports requirements. The study paves the way of institutionalization and emphasizes the importance of further research to explore the full potential of e-GP.

The literature review highlights some strengths and weaknesses of the BEC regarding procurement performance. Strengths found are that as a constitutional body it can submit demand for money as much as it requires. It enjoys autonomy in implementing power without any external influence. The BEC disposes complaints raised by any bidder within define time-period. Side by side, it has some weaknesses also. Conducting national and local bodies' election being its main business, procurement activities are found to be support services. While Election Officers are adept in election rules and regulations, they have only average

capacity in implementing procurements. This is evident by the fact that only a few have procurement and project related professional certifications like MCIPS/PMP/MPSM, etc.

To address e-GP implementation challenges, the following recommendations are proposed:
Intensive Training: Offer comprehensive training and workshops to enhance e-GP skills.
Promote Awareness: Increase awareness and willingness among officials to use the e-GP system effectively.
Direction & Motivation: Encourage top management to provide direction and motivation.
Simplify Processes: Streamline post-qualification verification and procurement processes.
Capacity Building: Invest in skilled manpower for successful e-GP implementation.
Engage Tenderers: Educate and engage tenderers in the e-GP processes.
Streamline Apps: Ensure user-friendly e-GP applications.
Computer Competency: Provide additional training for computer and language competency.
Network Facilities: Ensure sufficient network and computer facilities.
Data Management: Develop effective data management strategies.
Enhance Connectivity: Improve internet connectivity and infrastructure.
Stakeholders' Engagement: Engage all stakeholders for performance measurement and policy alignment.

It is also recommended that the Election Commission Secretariat (ECS) is to cease manual tenders and fully transition to e-GP for a more efficient procurement process. Active management support and continuous user feedback are crucial for successful e-GP implementation.

For future research in the realm of e-GP, several areas hold significant potential, including exploring actual cost savings, evaluating performance metrics, investigating e-GP's viability for audit trials, considering ethical considerations, and assessing e-GP as an innovative procurement system.

As e-GP becomes more deeply rooted in Bangladesh, these recommendations and research areas can contribute to better governance and economic outcomes through optimized e-GP implementation.

Acknowledgement

I want to express my real sense of gratefulness to Allah, for giving me the opportunity to study in my present working field. It is the reality that I have not adequate words to express my heartful sense of gratification, indebtedness and sincere appreciation to my research supervisor Mr. Inthaqab Wahid Ruso, an esteemed adjunct faculty of the BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), BRAC University and Superintendent Engineer of the Roads and Highways Department for his throughout guidance, suggestion, assistance, affectionate encouragement, constructive criticism and direction for successful completion of this dissertation. He guided me in selecting the Topic, designing the questionnaire, continued brainstorming and in conducting the Research. I feel very glad to extend my gratitude to Mr. Ashoke Kumer Debnath, Additional Secretary of Election Commission Secretariat and Project Director, SCDECS project for arranging the scholarship to study this prestigious MPSM course in the BRAC University.

I acknowledge my heartiest gratitude to Brigadier General Abul Hasnat Mohammad Sayem, Respected Project Director, Mr. Nuruzzaman Khan, Joint Secretary and Respected Additional Project Director (Admin & Finance) of the IDEA Project (2nd Phase) for giving me full support to complete the course on Procurement and Supply Chain Management. Mr. Saiful Huq Choudhury, Joint Secretary, Late Mr. Sabedur Rahman, Deputy Secretary, Mr. Rajib Ahsan, Sr. Assistant Chief and Ms. Fahmida Sultana, Assistant Secretary all from Election Commission Secretariat deserve thanks for providing stimulation, motivation, assistance and co-operation during the entire course creating an enabling study environment which made me eligible to do standard result at this age.

Thanks go to those officials of the Bangladesh Election Commission and Election Commission Secretariat who spared time in answering the questionnaire from their busy time schedule. Thanks also to my office colleagues who helped me providing with data and information for preparing the case studies which graced the Dissertation Report. Special thanks to Ms. Tanjina Mizan, Coordinator of the BIGD of BRAC University for her assistance all along the Masters Course. Finally, I would like to express felicitation to my beloved wife Rasida Zaman, my affectionate son Sabit Ahnaf and daughter Dordanah Sarah Amatullah whose sacrifice and inspiration created the driving force to overcome all the hurdles and besets on the way of studying such a long course and crowned me with success.

Any positive criticism on the improvement of this research would be welcomed from my side cordially and with sincere gratitude.

Dhaka: November, 2023

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ABBRIVIATIONS

APS	:	Advanced Planning Systems
ABC	:	Activity Based Costing
APP	:	Annual Procurement Plan
BWDB	:	Bangladesh Water Development Board
CPAR	:	Country Procurement Assessment Report
CSP	:	Country Strategic Papers
CPTU	:	Central Procurement Technical Unit
CIPS	:	Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply
DIMAPP	:	Digitizing Implementation Monitoring and Public Procurement Project
E-GP	:	Electronic Government Procurement
EC	:	Election Commission
ECS	:	Election Commission Secretariate
GoB	:	Government of Bangladesh
ICT	:	Information and Communication Technology
IDEA		Identification System for Enhancing Excess to the Service
IMED	:	Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division
KII	:	Key Informant Interview
LCCM	:	life-cycle cost method
LGED	:	Local Government Engineering Department
LLP	:	Lead Logistics Provider
LSP	:	Lead Services Provider
MPSM	:	Master in Procurement of Supply Management
NOA	:	Notification of Award
OP	:	Operational Plan
PPP	:	public private partnership
PE	:	Procuring Entity
PPA	:	Public Procurement Act
PPR	:	Public Procurement Rules
PPRP	:	Public Procurement Reform Project
PCR	:	Project Completion Reports
PERP	:	Preparation of Electoral Roll with Photograph
REB	:	Rural Electrification Board
RHD	:	Roads and Highways Department

SCM	:	Supply Chain Management
SWOT	:	Strengths, Weakness Opportunities and Threats
SMART	:	Specific, Measurable. Achievable, Realistic, Time Bound
STD	:	Standard Tender Documents
TOC	:	Tender Opening Committee
TEC	:	Tender Evaluation Committee
WB	:	World Bank
FGD	:	Focus Group Discussion

Chapter-1

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Scope/Rationale of the Research works: According to the Constitution of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Election Commission (EC) is responsible for conducting Presidential elections and National elections. Its other legal responsibilities include conducting Local Government level elections, preparation, correction, distribution of National Identity (NID) Card, providing national identity verification service and maintaining National Identity database. It has one secretariat, ten regional offices, 64 districts, and 523 Thana/Upazilas offices. Its general function is like a ministry to the government. But Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) has some additional financial power compared to other ministries. There are 4(four) ongoing projects under Election Commission in the Financial Year of 2023-24. Election Commission Secretariat (ECS) is a Secretariat that has been established (by the law) to give secretarial assistance to Bangladesh Election Commission. Bangladesh Election Commission is funded by the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) that enables the commission to, carry on its duties. So, it has to follow the country's rules and regulations. It also helps to fulfill Government's Vision 2030 through achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) (like Goal 6.9[1]).

The Government introduced Electronic Government Procurement (e-GP) in public procurement in June 2011, a digitalized single platform, to ensure good governance in public procurement. e-GP is used both for works and goods procurement since 2011. For example, RHD, LGED, BWDB are procuring a lot of works and some goods since then. On the other hand, REB procures lots of goods and works through e-GP. Service procurement is not incorporated in e-GP till now. It's a big challenge for GOB to introduce e-GP to all public organizations. The government has a plan to improve public procurement management & enhance monitoring capacity to ensure efficiency, transparency, accountability, competitiveness, equitable treatment, and free & fair competition in public procurement through e-GP.

Election Commission Secretariat (ECS) has to do a variety of centralized and decentralized procurement functions. The procurement of electoral materials, office equipment, software, Electronic Voting machines, Smart card, construction of office buildings (works), and different types of services procurement has been conducting by this constitutional organization. The ECS has experience in procuring all four types of items as per Kraljic Matrix i.e. Routine, Leverage, Bottleneck, and Strategic items. So, all types of procurement

procedures are being practiced at the Election Commission secretariat.

According to the guidelines of IMED[1], Election Commission Secretariat has a procurement cell consists of 10 working members. The staff dealing with procurement at the entry-level need to have clearly identified terms of reference to carry out procurement in a more professional way. They should be well equipped with adequate training arranged by CPTU[1] and organization itself. But Election Commission secretariat recently started e-GP. Here is the scope of the study. Is the Election Commission Secretariat (ECS) ready for taking on e-GP implementation challenges? What are the facts? These are the prime concern of the study and give the recommendations that will help to overcome the challenges of e-GP implementation. This study is a requirement of partial fulfillment of a Master's degree in Procurement and Supply Management, required to be completed within a stipulated timeframe.

1.2 Objectives of the Study: The main objective of the study is to assess the challenges of e-GP implementation in the procurement practice of the Election Commission Secretariat (ECS). Specific objectives of the study are:

- To know about the whole picture of the existing procurement process of ECS.
- To identify & examine the e-GP implementation challenges for ECS
- To suggest recommendations for overcoming implementing challenges of the e-GP

1.3: Research Organization: The study is primarily focused to explore the reality of the procurement activities in ECS with present facilities and their effect on public procurement. This study will also aim to clarify the confusion among the procuring entities regarding the application of the e-GP system. To achieve the objectives, the study will be based on primary data. Secondary sources of data will also be used. In this regard for primary data, the study will mainly use the survey method, and then data from secondary sources will also be used to validate the survey data. We collected survey data, through a questionnaire. The questionnaire will be formulated and finalized based on responses and recommendations of a pilot survey made among the officials who are directly involved in procurements. The elements of different aspects of public procurement will be gathered based on a synthesis of relevant literature, responses to the pilot survey, and personal experience and expectations of the procurement managers. A 5-point Likert-type scale may be used in the questionnaire to know the opinion and preference of the respondents about specific elements of public procurement. The respondents shall be selected randomly. Similar types of research and evidence will be considered for secondary sources of data. Moreover, personal experience and informal interview methods also are used to have some more insights into the issue.

[1]SDG 16.9 by 2030 provide legal identity for all including free birth registrations

1.4 Ways and Formation followed to constitute the study:

To reach the goal we have followed the following path way:

- At the beginning of the study, we collect & reviewed related secondary documents, reports, literatures for knowledge.
- Examine the existing procurement process of ECS
- Identify Scope of the Research
- Schedule the framework of interview questionnaire
- Selecting the population and target groups
- The data Analysis
- Reach to conclusions and make recommendation

1.5 Chapter Outline

The organization of this study is summarized below:

Chapter-1

Discusses about the background of the study, Scope/rationale of the Research works, Objectives of the Study, Research organization, Ways and Formation followed to constitute the study, Chapter outline. It highlights the problem statement why the researcher opts for this study. This study is based on both primary and secondary data.

Chapter-2

Describes the literature review of this study, Procurement, Public Procurement, The Public Procurement Regime in Bangladesh, Public Procurement Reforms, Public Procurement Act-2006, The Public Procurement Rules-2008, Delegation of Financial Powers (DOFP), e-Procurement, what is e-GP, e-GP Guidelines 2011 of Bangladesh, e-GP status in Bangladesh, Advantages of E-Tendering in Bangladesh.

Chapter-3

Describes about procurement in ECS, Background, and Data collection Focus Group Discussion (FGD) from concern officials.

Chapter-4

Describes the research methodology, Commencement, Sample size and sampling technique, Sample Characteristics, Methods of Data Collection, Data Collection and Analysis

Chapter-5

This chapter is outlining the study findings and analysis, Introduction, Interview Analysis, and Section-A: General Information, Section-B: Information of e-GP, Section-C: Logistics Support for e-GP.

Chapter-6

Provides conclusion and recommendations of this study, based on the information leading to conclusion.

Appendix-A

Questionnaire, Section-A: General Information regarding Procumbent, Section-B: Information on e-GP, Section-C: Logistics Support for e-GP

Appendix-B

Draft Question

Chapter-2

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Procurement: Procurement is the essential organizational function responsible for acquiring necessary supplies efficiently. Whether operating independently or as part of an integrated supply chain, its role encompasses sourcing or facilitating the sourcing of items at the right time, ensuring right quality, and securing the correct quantity at a competitive price. Furthermore, effective supplier management is integral to enhancing the enterprise's competitive advantage and achieving its corporate strategy, as outlined by Moses Manuel in April 2021. The Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS) offers another perspective on procurement, emphasizing its role in acquiring goods and services that allow organizations to run their supply chains profitably and ethically. The definition of procurement can be flexible and vary across sectors and activities within an organization, as stated by CIPS in June 2022. Lastly, the Public Procurement Rules (PPR), 2008 of Bangladesh defines procurement as the acquisition of goods, works and Services through purchasing or hiring through contractual means.

2.2 Public Procurement: Public procurement, as defined in the PPR 2008, refers to the process through which public entities acquire goods, services, and works using funds allocated from the public treasury. This practice typically fosters an environment that promotes open competition among potential suppliers and serves as a means to uphold fundamental procurement principles, including cost-effectiveness, fairness, equal opportunity, and accountability. Furthermore, it plays a pivotal role in mitigating the risks associated with corruption, coercion, and collusion.

2.3 The Public Procurement Regime in Bangladesh: The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh does not directly address the subject of Public Procurement. However, it firmly establishes that all state powers must be exercised on behalf of the people and in accordance with the Constitution. Article 85 of the Constitution stipulates, "The custody of public funds, their deposit into and withdrawal from the Consolidated Fund or, where applicable, the Public Account of the Republic, and matters related to or supporting these matters, shall be regulated by an Act of Parliament. Until such provision is enacted, the President may establish rules for this purpose." Under this provision, public procurement is governed by both legal rules and regulations. The Public Procurement Act of 2006, together with the supplementary Public Procurement Rules of 2008, the e-GP Guidelines of 2011, and the Delegation of Financial Powers (DOFP), collectively shape the framework for public procurement. The Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Planning each hold distinct responsibilities in relation to public procurement.

2.3.1 Public Procurement Reforms: In 1999, the World Bank (WB) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) collaborated to perform a comprehensive evaluation of the country's portfolio performance, subsequently formulating an action plan for the government in the realm of public procurement. This assessment, known as the Country Procurement Assessment Report (CPAR), identified several deficiencies within the government's procurement system in Bangladesh-

- Absence of sound legal framework governing public sector procurement
- Complex bureaucratic procedure causing delay
- Lack of adequate professional competence of staff to manage public procurement
- Generally poor-quality bidding documents and bid evaluation
- Ineffective administration of contracts
- Absence of adequate mechanism for ensuring transparency and accountability

The Key Recommendations of CPAR to the government was-

- Set up a Public Procurement Policy Unit
- Issue Public Procurement Rules
- Streamline Procurement Process & Financial Delegation
- Develop Procurement Management Capacity
- Publish Contract Awards
- Introduce Appeal Procedure

On February 14, 2002, in accordance with the suggestions outlined in the Country Procurement Assessment Report (CPAR), the Government of Bangladesh initiated the "Public Procurement Reform Project (PPRP)" with support from the International Development Association (IDA), which provided both technical expertise and financial assistance. The primary goals of this technical assistance project included the establishment of a Procurement Policy Unit, the development of a legal framework, and the enhancement of procurement management capacity.

As a significant outcome of the project, the Government established the Central Procurement Technical Unit (CPTU) in a pivotal role, led by a Director General and initially supported by a team of 20 personnel. The CPTU was integrated into the Implementation Monitoring & Evaluation Division (IMED) of the Ministry of Planning. This unit, the Central Procurement Technical Unit (CPTU), took on the crucial mission of bolstering sectoral governance and embarked on a comprehensive effort to enhance the performance of public procurement. It played a pivotal role in formulating and introducing a series of legal frameworks, including the Public Procurement Regulations of 2003, PPR Implementation Procedures of 2003, and Public Procurement Processing and Approval Procedures (PPPA). Subsequently, following

the successful execution of the PPRP, the World Bank extended financial support to the CPTU to launch the PPRP-2, aimed at advancing procurement-related activities such as the enactment of the Public Procurement Act of 2006, the Public Procurement Rules of 2008, and the e-GP Guidelines of 2011. During this phase, the CPTU also promulgated numerous state-of-the-art documents covering various areas, including Standard Tender/Proposal Documents (STDs), Procurement Processing and Approval Timetables, among others. In an effort to enhance procurement management capacity, the CPTU initially assembled 30 National Trainers divided into three clusters (goods, works, services) and conducted a substantial number of training courses, imparting valuable training to over 3000 officials from various sectors.

It's important to emphasize that the fundamental principles guiding the reform of public procurement are centered around guaranteeing transparency, accountability, impartial treatment, and fostering open and fair competition when utilizing public funds for procurement purposes. The results of various assessments indicate substantial progress in achieving these objectives. The Central Procurement Technical Unit (CPTU) remains committed to further enhancing reform efforts and working toward new objectives and outcomes. [*Ridwanul Hoque.* Dec 4, 2016*]*

2.3.2 Public Procurement Act-2006: The Public Procurement Act of 2006 (Act No. 24 of 2006) received approval from the Parliament. Subsequently, based on the provisions of the PPA 2006, a fresh set of Public Procurement Rules (PPR 2008) were promulgated. The PPA-2006 and PPR-2008 came into effect starting January 31, 2008, applying universally to all entities engaged in procurement activities with public funds across the nation. This encompassed government bodies, semi-government organizations, autonomous entities, corporations, state-owned companies, and public authorities, without exception. Over time, in response to evolving circumstances and to meet current demands, the PPA-2006 has undergone multiple amendments. Notable amendments include the Public Procurement (1st and 2nd Amendment) Act of 2009, the Public Procurement (Amendment) Act of 2010, and the Public Procurement (Amendment) Act of 2016. Additionally, associated laws, policies, and guidelines, such as the e-GP Guidelines and DOFP, have been periodically reviewed and updated to ensure the seamless implementation of the PPA-2006. - [Source: https://cptu.gov.bd]

2.3.3 The Public Procurement Rules-2008: The Public Procurement Rules (PPR) of 2008 was developed in accordance with Section 40 of the Public Procurement Act of 2006. This comprehensive set comprises 130 rules and 14 schedules, serving as a valuable supplement to

the Public Procurement Act of 2006. These rules aim to facilitate the prequalification and enlistment process for potential and participating bidders in public procurement, which is categorized into domestic and international procurement.

For the procurement of goods, related services, and works within the domestic context, the preferred method recommended is open tendering method (OTM). However, there are alternative methods available, including limited tendering method (LTM), two-stage tendering method (TSTM), and the request for quotation method (RFQM), as well as direct procurement method (DPM). These alternative methods can be applied under specific conditions. Direct procurement is applicable for emergency situation, very low value procurement, sole supplier, additional procurement (variation), patented products/services. It is also an option for the procurement of goods, services, and works of an extremely urgent and essential nature.

The Request for Quotation Method may be employed for readily available, low-value goods or physical assets found in the market, or for the procurement of goods needed for urgent repairs or maintenance. Two-stage tendering methods are particularly suited for complex and large-scale projects, situations where complete technical specifications may not be attainable in a single stage, or in industries with rapidly evolving solutions and alternatives.

The Public Procurement Act mandates similar processes, including open tendering, limited tendering, quotation methods, and the two-stage tendering approach, for international procurements. However, there are notable variations to uphold standards and foster competition. Importantly, the law provides substantial flexibility in deciding whether to conduct local or international procurement. Furthermore, while the law sets specific conditions that must be met for procurement method to comply with statutory requirements, the choice of method ultimately rests with the procuring authority's discretion.

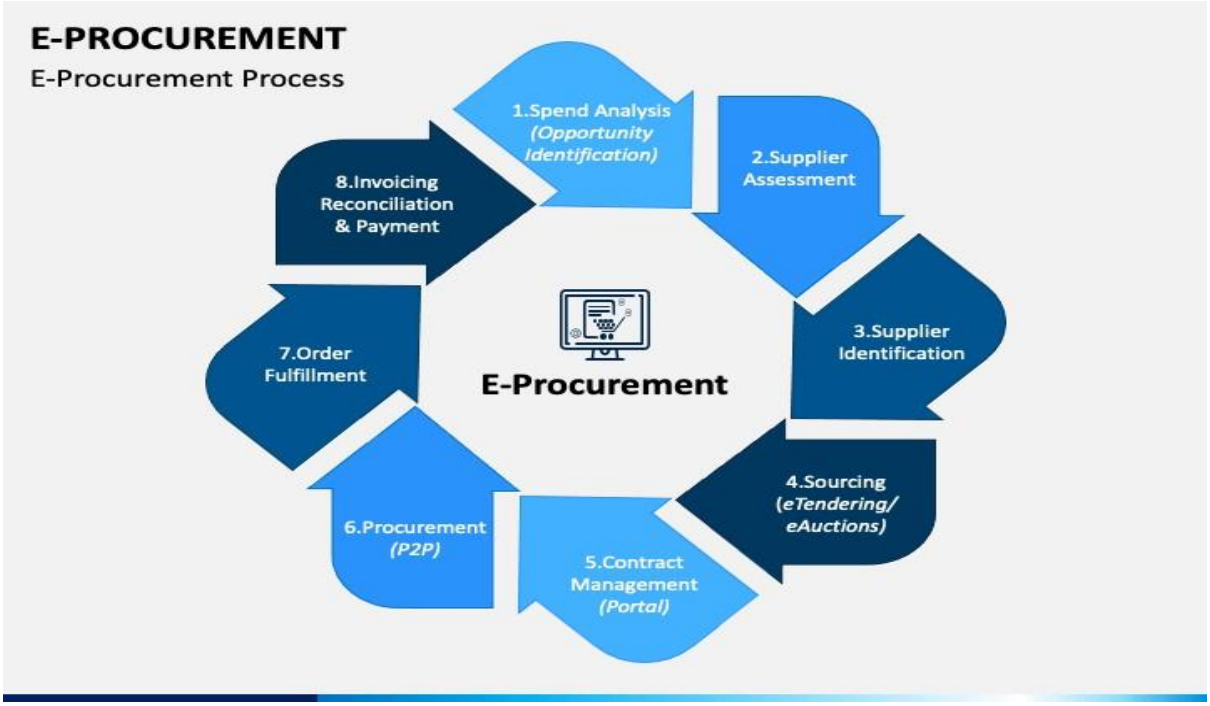
The law also includes provisions for "emergency flexible purchases." The government has delegated authority to the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) to modify the procurement methods outlined in the Procurement Plan to employ the Direct Procurement Method (DPM) or Single Source Service (SSS) methods. In cases of national urgency or disasters, goods and services can be procured urgently with prior approval from the CCEA using the DPM.

Additionally, the law grants the government the right to exempt certain procurements from the scope of the PPA-2006 in the interest of national security and defense. However, it's worth noting that defense purchases in Bangladesh are still subject to the PPA, PPR, and internal audits within the Defense Services, which currently operate without monitoring by the CPTU.

2.3.4 Delegation of Financial Powers (DOFP): The Ministry of Finance periodically releases the Delegation of Financial Power (DOFP) for government institutions, which delineates the authority to allocate and expend government funds. The DOFP also provides guidelines for fund release procedures and enumerates specific cases that necessitate consultation with the Finance Division before any expenditure is authorized.

Procurements within various institutions are financed from both operational and development budgets, each subject to distinct approval thresholds. The financial authority also varies depending on the project category, which is divided into Category-A (projects with a cost exceeding Tk. 100.00 crore), Category-B (projects with a cost ranging from Tk. 50.00-100.00 crore), and Category-C (projects with a cost below Tk. 50.00 crore).

2.3.5 e-Procurement: As per Section 68 of the PPA-2006 and Rule 128 of PPR-2008, it is a requirement for all government institutions to adopt an electronic management system in their procurement processes. E-procurement encompasses a variety of technologies and modules designed to automate both internal and external procedures associated with sourcing and procurement. It serves as a comprehensive tool for creating an efficient environment for procurement activities, covering aspects such as sourcing, ordering, receiving, erecting, commissioning, and processing payments across the entire spectrum of procurement-related tasks.



The Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) e-GP Working Group provides a definition of e-GP as follows: "e-GP involves the utilization of information technology, especially the internet, by governments to facilitate their procurement interactions with suppliers when

acquiring works, goods, and consultancy services required by the public sector." E-Procurement represents the integrated utilization of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Access to Information (A2I) through electronic means to enhance both the internal and external procurement and supply management processes. This system establishes an Internet-based interface that enables both tenderers and procuring entities to engage in a fair and transparent manner (Hasan: 2008).

In the terminology of the Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply (CIPS), e-procurement specifically focuses on the "purchase-to-pay" stage within the purchasing cycle. This stage encompasses activities from the approval of a purchase to the product's receipt, and often, but not always, the subsequent payment (CIPS: 2017). E-procurement typically emphasizes the localization of business administration by decentralizing purchasing to local users. It covers various aspects of the procurement process, including requisition against established contracts, authorization, order placement, receipt of goods, and payment.
E-procurement involves the online facilitation of business-to-business procurement processes through web-based applications. Its implications are extensive, allowing buyers to identify potential suppliers, assess product options, make product selections, and conduct purchase transactions directly over the Internet. E-procurement applications may take the form of web-based Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) solutions, automating transactional procurement processes. They simplify quotation and tendering procedures and bring together multiple buyers and sellers within a unified digital environment (Abdullahil: 2015).

One of the key advantages of e-Procurement is its ability to promote communication across organizational boundaries, resulting in transformative changes in procurement procedures, processes, and perspectives (Lysons & Farrington: 2012). This approach fosters flexibility, networked organization, organizational learning, accelerates service delivery, and promotes a customer-centric approach to procurement functions, serving as a comprehensive "one-stop shop" to streamline all categories and reduce the friction associated with manual procurement (Abdullahil: 2015)

2.3.6 What is e-GP: The e-GP system functions as a unified web portal that offers procurement authorities (PAs) and procuring entities (PEs) a secure, dedicated web-based dashboard for conducting their procurement activities.

- ✓ **The objectives of e GP:** The e-GP (Electronic Government Procurement) system in Bangladesh is designed to achieve specific objectives aimed at improving the efficiency,

transparency, and accountability of the public procurement process. These objectives include:

- ✓ **To streamline the procurement process:** The e-GP system seeks to streamline and automate the entire procurement process, encompassing tender publication through contract management. This centralized platform efficiently handles all procurement activities, significantly cutting down on the time and labor previously needed for manual procedures.
- ✓ **To increase transparency and accountability:** The e-GP system fosters transparency and accountability within the procurement process by offering convenient access to information such as tender notices, bid documents, evaluation criteria, and contract awards. This accessibility plays a crucial role in preventing corrupt practices and ensuring equitable competition among suppliers.
- ✓ **To promote competition and efficiency:** The e-GP systems simplify procurement procedures, minimizing the need for extensive paperwork and reducing administrative workload. This streamlining can result in cost reductions, heightened efficiency, and expedited procurement cycles. Moreover, the e-GP system establishes an equitable platform for suppliers, fostering a climate of fair and transparent competition. It further empowers buyers to evaluate bids with precision and effectiveness, ultimately delivering superior value for money and enhanced quality in outcomes.
- ✓ **Standardization and Simplification:** Improved reporting and procurement analytics facilitate more comprehensive oversight of procurement operations. The implementation of standardized procedures and documentation streamlines the procurement process, rendering it more accessible for government bodies and suppliers alike to engage in.
- ✓ **To improve governance:** The e-GP system contributes to governance enhancement through the provision of precise and punctual data regarding procurement endeavors. This, in turn, allows for more effective monitoring and control by concerned stakeholders. Additionally, it offers advanced tools for addressing issues related to fraud and corruption.
- ✓ **Data Security and Privacy:** Safeguarding confidential procurement data is of paramount importance. To maintain the confidentiality and integrity of procurement information, e-GP systems must strictly comply with robust cybersecurity protocols.
- ✓ **Capacity Development and Training**: Effective training and capacity-building initiatives are indispensable to empower procurement professionals and stakeholders with the skills necessary for proficient utilization of e-GP systems.
- ✓ **Integration with Complementary Systems:** It is imperative for e-GP systems to seamlessly harmonize with other government systems, including financial management and contract management platforms, to facilitate uninterrupted data flow and reporting.

- ✓ **Incorporating Public Engagement and Feedback Channels:** Integrating mechanisms for public participation and feedback serves to amplify transparency and offers stakeholders a platform for expressing concerns and ideas. This, in turn, promotes heightened participation from potential bidders who have improved awareness and access to opportunities.
- ✓ **Legal and Regulatory Guidelines:** Well-defined legal and regulatory frameworks are imperative for overseeing the implementation of e-GP, encompassing critical aspects like electronic signatures, data protection, and the resolution of disputes.
- ✓ **Supervision and Assessment:** Consistent monitoring and evaluation of e-GP systems are essential to pinpoint areas requiring enhancement and to verify the system's efficacy in attaining its objectives.
- ✓ **To Foster Economic Growth:** The e-GP system has the potential to advance economic development through increased involvement of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in public procurement, leading to job creation, stimulating innovation, and encouraging entrepreneurship. It also contributes to environmental conservation by reducing the need for printing, distributing, and storing paper documents. Additionally, it can result in cost savings on procurement expenditures, as increased competition often leads to lower bid prices, with reported savings typically around 10%.

In summary, Bangladesh embarked on the implementation of the e-GP system around 2010. This system represented a significant departure from the manual procurement processes, aiming to enhance efficiency, transparency, and accountability, even though its introduction preceded the full maturation of the manual system in Bangladesh. The social and economic impacts of this shift are yet to be comprehensively evaluated. On the global stage, countries like South Korea have taken a leading position, while others such as Georgia, Canada, Chile, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, the Philippines, and Portugal are progressing in tandem with Bangladesh, each at various stages of maturity. Many other countries are observing and planning to follow suit. [Reference: "E-government procurement handbook. Mandaluyong City, Philippines: Asian Development Bank, 2013"]

2.3.7 e-GP Guidelines 2011 in Bangladesh: The e-GP guidelines were developed by the Central Procurement Technical Unit (CPTU) in accordance with Section 65 of the Public Procurement Act, 2006. These guidelines serve as the foundation for the implementation of the e-GP system, which has evolved as a business process re-engineering (BPR) initiative aimed at enhancing the efficiency of procurement management for goods and works. The system encompasses all Public Agencies, including both Procuring Agencies (PAs) and Procuring Entities (PEs), and records all procurement activities throughout the entire

procurement lifecycle. It also establishes a vital link among government agencies and various stakeholders in the procurement community, extending to overseas bidders, through its web-based platform.

Although e-GP initially commenced as a pilot program within the Central Procurement Technical Unit (CPTU) and sixteen other Procuring Entities (PEs) associated with four development departments—BWDB, REB, RHD, and LGED—it has since expanded its reach to encompass nearly 300 public agencies and a substantial number of organizations across all districts and sub-districts. Concurrently, the introduction and dissemination of the e-Contract Management System (e-CMS) has played a significant role within the e-GP framework. e-CMS, an electronic contract management system, offers a platform for activities such as developing the work-breakdown structure (WBS), setting milestones, project management, progress monitoring, quality assessment, report generation, facilitating progress payments, and reviewing long-term contracts exceeding three years. It incorporates provisions for inflation adjustments, vendor evaluations, and the issuance of completion certificates. [Source: www.eprocure.gov.bd]

Stringent efforts have been dedicated to ensuring equitable access for all Bidders and Tenderers within the e-GP framework while preserving the core principles of efficiency, transparency, and accountability, which underpin the Public Procurement Reform (PPR) Program. The National e-Government Procurement (e-GP) portal, found at https://www.eprocure.gov.bd, is a development of the Central Procurement Technical Unit (CPTU) within the Implementation Monitoring & Evaluation (IME) Division of the Ministry of Planning, and it is owned and operated by the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. The successful implementation of the e-GP system is attributable to the support and financing provided by our long-term and reliable development partner, the World Bank. The Bangladesh e-Government Procurement (e-GP) system encompasses a comprehensive suite of interconnected modules, including:

a) Centralized Registration (Contractors/Suppliers/Consultants, Procuring Entities, and other e-GP stakeholders)
b) Workflow Management System
c) e-Tendering (e-Publishing/c-Advertisement, e-Lodgment, e-Evaluation, e-Contract award)
d) e-Contract Management System (e-CMS)
e) e-Payments
f) Procurement Management Information Systems (PROMIS)
g) System and Security Administration
h) Handling Errors and Exceptions

I) Application Usability & Help

j) Standard Tender Documents.

To ensure the creation of standardized tender documents, stimulate competition, offer consistent guidance to tenderers, and furnish comprehensive market information, the CPTU has instituted the e-GP system. Within the e-GP framework, Procuring Entities are mandated to use standard tender documents (STD) as outlined below:

(In case of manual procurement for goods and related services):

2.3.8 e-GP status in Bangladesh: As of 04 May, 2023, 143 Organizations under 47 Ministries are using e-GP. The total 11175 Procuring entities are using is e-GP system currents are discuses below:

Table-1: e-GP status in Bangladesh

Registered Ministry, Division, and Organization and PE offices:

Agency	Details	PE Offices
No. of Ministry:	47	38
No. of Division:	27	12
No. of Organization:	1437	11175

Registered Tenderers / Consultants, Individual Consultants:

Organization	National	International	Total
Tenderers / Consultants:	105468	41	105509
Individual Consultant:	75	0	75
Total:	105543	41	105584

Organization	No. of tenders/ Proposals Invited	No. of tenders/ Proposals processed	No. of Contract Awarded
Ministry	691036	92677	**475607**
Division	473452	68100	**327563**
Organization	**691036**	**92677**	**475607**

(Reports retrieve from www.eprocure.gov.bd :04 May, 2023)

By May 3, 2023, the e-GP system in Bangladesh has garnered a significant user base, with a total of 105,569 registered tenderers and 11,174 procuring entity offices. Up to this point, the e-GP system has seen the issuance of 686,703 tenders, amounting to Tk 7,07,104 crore. Bangladesh has maintained its leadership position in the digital transformation of the entire procurement cycle, spanning from planning to contract implementation management. Notably, the e-GP system has expanded to incorporate electronic contract management (e-CMS), electronic audit (e-Audit) modules, and the Tenderers' Database.

Furthermore, the Central Procurement Technical Unit (CPTU) has developed the Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP) Policy, which is currently in the finalization stage. The CPTU is actively involved in the implementation of the "Digitizing Implementation Monitoring and Public Procurement (DIMAPP)" project, supported by the World Bank. This digitization effort has resulted in substantial cost savings, with an annual estimate of $600 million. Moreover, it has significantly reduced travel distances, approximately by 497 kilometers, and conserved around 1,053 million pages of paper.

In addition to these achievements, the e-GP system has contributed to a noteworthy reduction of approximately 153,000 tons of carbon dioxide emissions. Furthermore, the procurement lead time has been substantially reduced, bringing it down to 57 days from the previous 100 days. Overall, the digital system has not only streamlined processes but has also realized substantial time and cost savings (The Business Standard, May 3, 2023, 06:25 pm).

2.4 Some Reference on Advantages of E-Tendering in Bangladesh: The implementation of e-GP, or electronic tendering, in the country has led to significant economic and environmental benefits. Annually, a staggering 1.1 billion dollars are saved, equivalent to approximately 12,100 crore takas when converted at the rate of 110 takas per dollar. Moreover, the need for physical travel for tender-related activities has been significantly reduced, with a total distance reduction of 497 million kilometers. This shift towards online operations has alleviated the necessity for in-person visits. Notably, this transformation has also contributed to the conservation of approximately 1,053 million sheets of paper and a substantial reduction of carbon emissions, amounting to 153,559 million tons, promoting environmental protection.

These findings have been reported by the Implementation, Monitoring, and Evaluation Department (IMED) under the guidance of the Center Procurement Technical Unit (CPTU). This information was presented during the 17th meeting of the Public-Private Stakeholder Committee (PPSC) held on Sunday, the 25th June, 2023. The meeting was presided over by IMED Secretary Mr Abul Kashem Mohiuddin, held at the NEC conference room in the Planning Commission campus, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207.

Mr. Mohammad Shoheler Rahman Chowdhury, Director General of CPTU, said the e-GP (Electronic Government Procurement) introduced in 2011 in the public Procurement flourished in home and abroad. Bangladesh now stands as a benchmark in the realm of government procurement through e-GP. Representatives from numerous countries worldwide have been visiting Bangladesh to gain firsthand experience. Different indicators regarding

dropping of tenders to the quantum of a record-breaking 46,553 tenderers participated in a single day and reducing the tender processing period from 117 days to 53 days reveals the advantage of the e-GP over traditional tendering methods. The government treasury has benefited from an infusion of 2,100 crores taka due to e-GP tender processing activities, with the CPTU consistently contributing an annual average of 400 crores taka to the government treasury in this regard.

In the initial article, Mohammad Shoheler Rahman Chowdhury emphasized the need for a digital transformation in all government procurement processes, emphasizing the importance of a smart approach. The Central Procurement Technical Unit (CPTU) has been actively implementing a range of initiatives toward this end. One prominent effort involves the creation of a comprehensive database for tenderers, which will serve as a repository for all contractor-related information. This database streamlines the verification of contractor credentials and facilitates their work. Furthermore, CPTU has forged a connection with the Finance Ministry's Ibas++ system for digital bill payments. Additionally, there are ongoing endeavors to establish contract management systems, e-audit systems, develop modules for domestic procurement management (DPM), create modules for international tenders, and establish an electronic project information management system (e-PIMS). These multifaceted activities are continually progressing.

In parallel, CPTU is promoting public engagement in government procurement and advancing various reform efforts. Transformation of CPTU into a Public Procurement Authority has been passed by the Parliament in the recent past. Furthermore, the development of Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP) policies and disposal policies is well underway, with significant progress achieved in these areas. In his presidential address, Abul Kashem Md. Mohiuddin highlighted that approximately 80 percent of the government's development budget is allocated to government purchases, a context within which opportunities for corruption and irregularities often arise. Therefore, the greater the transparency in this process, the more beneficial it becomes for everyone involved. He emphasized that ensuring citizen participation in the government procurement process for project implementation would establish transparency and accountability. Furthermore, he observed that, thanks to the implementation of e-GP, conflicts over tenders and incidents of tampering with tender boxes have become increasingly rare, contributing to a more streamlined and trustworthy procurement system. *[Source: The Daily Jugantor, June 25, 2023, Online Edition, 09:55 PM]*

Chapter-3

3.0 Procurement in ECS

3.1 Background: All the expenditure of the Bangladesh Election Commission Secretariat is finance by the Government of Bangladesh (GOB). According to the constitution of Bangladesh it is one sort of compulsory Budget. One of the important functions of the Election Commission is to superintend, direct and control of the preparation of the electoral rolls for elections to the office of the President and to the Parliament and the conduct of such elections shall vest in the Election Commission which shall, in accordance with this Constitution and any other law –

(a) Hold elections to the office of President;

(b) Hold elections of Members of the Parliament;

(c) Delimit the constituencies for the purpose of elections to the Parliament; and

(d) Prepare electoral rolls for the purpose of elections to the office of the President and to the Parliament.

The Election Commission shall perform such functions, in addition to those specified in the foregoing clauses, as may be prescribed by this Constitution or by any other law.

The Government of Bangladesh is legally bound to provide necessary budget according to the requirement of the BEC. Furthermore, there are 4 (Four) ongoing development projects under this (As the sponsoring ministry) organization. ECS uses development budget of the Government for project implementation. Sometimes, various development partners like UNDP, the World Bank, Government of Netherland, etc. provide for project assistance. The main outputs of these projects are preparation of a comprehensive Voter list before administering national parliamentary Election, conducting free and fair elections for electing representatives in different tiers of Local bodies.

To understand Procurement functions of this organization, let us have a bird's eye view on the organogram of the Bangladesh Election Commission Secretariat. The Commission is headed by the Honorable Chief Election Commissioner. Unlike other Ministry or Division, here the Honorable Chief Election Commissioner enjoys the status of a minister of the institution for making decision on important, strategic and core functions of this organization. The Election Commission has 10 Regional offices headed by a Regional Election Officer, 64 District Offices headed by District Election Officers and also 523 Thana/Upazilas offices headed by Thana/Upazilas Election Officers. On the other hand, the Secretariat is headed by a Senior Secretary/Secretary of Bangladesh Government.

In the Election Commission Secretariat, there are 6 Wings. Among those, one important Wing (National Identity Registration Wing) is headed by a Director General who is an Additional Secretary and other Wings are headed by Joint Secretaries or Equivalents. The Planning & Development Branch (the development wing), headed by a Deputy Chief, who is responsible for planning, processing and taking approval of projects undertaken by the Commission. There is also an Election Training Institute (ETI), headed by a Director General who is equivalent to a Joint Secretary. The ETI regularly imparts training to its own personnel and to officials of the related organizations like Planning Commission, IMED, Finance Division and some other stakeholder line ministries. The Commission contemplates spending for the development of the human resources is a better investment for the development of Bangladesh. In the vast Organogram of the Commission, out of a total of 4852 posts only 792 are for the 1st Class Officers (Grade-9 and above). The remaining 4060 posts are for filling up with the second-, third- and fourth-class employees. On an average, 20% posts remain vacant at different tiers mostly at the entry level of class-1 posts due to the time elapse between the retirement of personnel vacating the posts and then the new recruitment against those vacant posts.

Almost 90% of the development fund is spent for procurement of electoral materials like printing of Voter registration forms and ballot papers, collecting Electronic Voting Machines (EVM), buying ICT equipment to maintain a huge and robust National Data Base, purchasing and personalizing Smart Cards, etc. Some other materials like office stationaries, computers and accessories, vehicles, furniture, etc. are also procured. Different Consulting and Non-consulting firms are also engaged and outsourced under those projects for performing procurement, human resources and audit and accounts services.

A procurement plan (PP) is an indicative plan which includes the division of goods, works and services required for a project, plant, facility, etc. The PP is indicative and rolling in nature because it can be changed over the financial-year on approval of the HOPE and the requirements of the project or the Authority. It may be for the for annual basis (The APP) or for the overall project (The entire PP) consolidating the APPs. The PP is divided into individual packages and time schedules for performing all activities related to the publishing of tender, signing of the contract and completing the contract for the package under the consideration. Other ingredients of a PP are package number & description of the package, unit/quantity, procurement method & type, contract approving authority, estimated cost and source of the fund.

A PP is prepared on the basis of the time sequences of the criticality of project requirement as evident from the CPM, PERT and considering many other factors like seasonal weather conditions, availability of fund, etc. Moreover, due consideration is given to the aim of attracting maximum competition for the benefit of the buyer organization.

An analysis of the procurement plans collected from different cost centers of ECS reveals most of the centers procure materials and inputs which are of recurrent nature. Although similar nature goods are procured by all the cost centers but these are done separately i.e. in decentralized manner. Due to the smallness of the size of contract, large or international bidders do not feel interest to participate in these tenders. Although some framework contracts through OTM are done but these are made with domestic tenderers and only for one year. So, these framework contracts do not seem to keep good contribution in terms of economy, time, competition, transparency. However, some sorts of responsibility, lesson learning and capacity building have been created to the officials.

Photo-1: Data collection from concern officials.

A review of the procurement plans of the cost centers against four wings of ECS for the FY 2022-23 to know about the whole picture of the existing procurement process of ECS and its findings are delineated below:

Name of cost center	**Analysis of procurement**	**Comments**
ICT wing:	Total budget for this center is Tk. 150.06 million of which Tk. 6.36 million for ‘tender purchase’ and Tk.8.70 crore for ‘direct purchase’. The entire budget was from GOB operational budget. Procurement methods are	Classification of the procurement methods is not correct. There is no ‘tender purchase’ type of procurement method in PPA-2006 or PPR-2008. Quantity is mentioned ‘1 Nos.’ which is not correct. Type of method followed is DPM which is a restricted method.

Name of cost center	Analysis of procurement	Comments
	mentioned 'DPM'. Approving authority was the Secretary (HOPE) of the ECS. The three timeline milestones are advertisement date, contract signing date and contract completion date are mentioned respectively 01 September 22, 23 December 22 but no completion date.	Because DPM/SSS is a method used to procure from a renowned supplier or in case of urgent procurement or for additional and downstream assignment. Time allocated up to contract signing is 75 days. If we add further 30 days for supply of goods, it is 105 days spent for procurement of the remaining 260 days. This seems neither to be competitive, nor to be time efficient.
NID Wing	Under this cost center substantial procurement of some strategic goods i,e., a total of 7 pieces of Server, all flash storage, SAN Switch, Server firm switch, 1560 pieces of multi-functional printer to print IT card, laminating machine, cutting machine, 01 set of Server for testing solution of NID. Estimated cost is Tk. 15.51 crore and financed from GOB source. Goods are supposed to be procured by national open tendering method (OTM) and contract packages are to be cleared by the HOPE.	Contents of this procurement plan were found to be correctly inserted. However, proper reason behind some direct procurement was not clear.
Common Services Wing	This cost center conducts huge quantity of stationeries materials of recurrent nature by framework contracts.	In most of the cases, these frame work contracts do not fulfill the parameters of supply chain like storage through bulk buying and availing the discount.
IDEA-2 Project	This is the colossal and largest Cost Center in the ECS. The approved cost of the IDEA-2nd phase project is approximately Tk. 15,090 million. It is a	The IDEA-2nd phase project is the largest Cost Center dealing with a huge number of multifarious packages. A group of procurement personnel consisting of 17 members including one

Name of cost center	Analysis of procurement	Comments
	national priority project. The project time period is from December 2015 to December 2025. Here almost 80% of the budget is for the procurements. The Procurement Plans contain more than 100 packages ranging from RFQ to big national open tendering procurements (OTM). The project is now at the middle of its implementation with physical progress (Appx. 50%) and has already implemented two APPs during the FYs 2021-22, 2022-23.	Project Director (PD), two Additional Project Directors (APD), a Deputy Project Director (DPD) and a Procurement Consultant is dedicated to implement these packages. The study found that annual procurement plans (APP) are precisely produced consistent with the allocations in the budget.

3.2 Observation on some procurement packages using monitoring tools: Reviewing some procurement packages procured in the recent past it seems that, it could not be known as how many bidders participated and how many of them were responsive in these tenders. It was also unclear about the quality of the supplied goods and compliance of the requirements of PPA-2006 and PPR-2008. Again, the Researcher could not collect any information regarding the supply of the strategic goods within the specified time-period and imposition of any liquidated damage (LD) for inexcusable delays. This cost center could not provide information about warranties and special warranties and the corresponding defect liabilities (DL). It can be inferred that these procurements were not transparent up to the mark. Analyzing the big procurements, it seems that most of the strategic goods are sourced from overseas countries. But these goods are procured through local distributors with premium prices. As international bids are not invited, no international bidders participated, so these procurements cannot be considered fully standard and economic.

Moreover, the project authority forms the tender opening committee (TOC) and tender evaluation committee (TEC) and follows procedures in compliance with PPA, 2006 and PPR, 2008 and with high ethical standards. The authority disposes complaints in a definite time period. However, it is not used to follow modern implementation tools like Gantt Chart, Load Chart, critical path method (CPM) and project evaluation and review technique (PERT) in the project management procedure.

Earlier procurements were being done centrally and materials were distributed to various Departments or Offices on consideration of local demand fulfillment. But procurements of Standard and uniform items should be continued to be procured centrally. It is mandatory for the ECS to follow PPA-2006 & PPR-2008 in its procurement activities like other government organizations. Cash flows for those myriads of activities happen through cost centers. Out of a total of 671 cost centers, the ECS incurs its expenses through 10 central cost centers and the district/sub-districts field offices and processes their spending through the other 661cost centers spread all over the country. This dissertation study is done on the basis of expenditure data accumulated in the central cost centers.

Chapter-4

4.0 Methodology

4.1 Commencement: In order to attain the intended outcomes, the methodology plays a critical role in the execution of social research. This dissertation incorporates both quantitative and qualitative data, primarily adopting a descriptive approach without undertaking any hypothesis, null or alternative. For gathering primary data from procurement personnel at the Bangladesh Election Commission, a purposively random sampling method was chosen, involving the distribution of questionnaires. A 5-point Likert-type scale was employed within the questionnaires to assess the opinions and preferences of the respondents regarding various aspects of public procurement. The formulation and finalization of the questionnaire were guided by feedback and suggestions gathered through a preliminary survey conducted among officials directly engaged in procurement process.

Secondary data sources have also played a pivotal role in this study. Various quarterly progress reports, in-depth study reports, and project completion reports (PCR) from projects such as PERP, IDEA, and IDEA (Phase-2) were employed as supplementary resources. The sample size was determined using a statistical formula that factored in parameters such as design effect (representing population size), confidence level (Z), probabilities of event occurrence and non-occurrence (p, q), and acceptable error (e).

Additionally, a comprehensive review of diverse literature sources, including the World Bank's Country Procurement Assessment Report (CPAR), development partners' Country Strategic Papers (CSP), and various evaluation and review reports conducted by the Central Procurement Technical Unit (CPTU) on sectoral procurement matters, was undertaken. Furthermore, personal experience and informal interviews were employed to gain further insights into the subject matter. The study aimed to extract valuable insights by exploring the correlation between dependent and independent variables. Furthermore, it sought to identify and address existing uncertainties among cost centers, ultimately contributing to the clarification of issues related to the implementation of the e-GP system.

The selection of the study area, population, and target groups is a critical aspect of conducting high-quality research. In this study, the entire body of officials and staff at ECS is considered the population, with a focus on those personnel directly involved in procurement activities as the target group. The research was conducted within specific wings/branches of ECS where individuals engage in either manual procurement or e-GP activities. This boundary was deliberately set by the researcher because the respondents in this area are directly relevant to the study, and it allows for efficient data collection within a specified timeframe.

The study encompassed seven distinct cost centers located at the Head Office, which includes the election conducting wing, general service wing, human resources department, public relations branch, national identity registration wing, ICT wing, electoral training institute, and IDEA project (2nd Phase). Each of these units is responsible for procuring a unique category of goods, works, consulting, and non-consulting services. However, it's worth noting that all units are mandated to adhere to the Clauses and Rules outlined in the PPA and the PPR, ensuring a consistent framework for procurement practices across the organization.

4.2 Sample size and Sampling technique: Researchers use random sampling to guarantee that every individual in the population has an equal probability of being selected, and this ensures that the sample is most similar to the overall population. Sample is a little proportion of a population that is selected for research observation and analysis. According to the size of the population and aim of the study, the researcher adopted purposive quota sampling i.e., at least one from each category posted in any wing/branch but with procurement assignment. The researcher tried to ensure maximum representation of the procurement officials and staffs to make the research outcomes practical and justified. Considering the small size of population (n=40), researcher used the sampling formula

$S= (Z \times pq \times DE) / e^2 = 1.96*0.4*0.6*1.6 / (0.06\ of\ 40)^2 = 27$

Where Z is the level of significance (1.96), p is probability (0.6) of occurrence, q is non-probability (0.4=1-0.6) of occurrence and DE, the design effect of the sample which is a function of the population size (1.6=4% of 40) and with e= 0.060% error of population. So, considering all these factors and parameters, the sample size (S) stands at 27. The sample size seemed to be sufficiently significant and representative.

4.3 Sample Characteristics: All respondents are worked on public procurement but only a few of them are experienced in e-GP system. However, each of them has been found to be somehow come up with the e-government procurement (e-GP). An insignificant portion (only 4 persons) has been found to have handful experience of using e-GP portal either as registered or non-registered user. Among 18 respondents, there are I HOPE (The Secretary), 1 as the Chair of the Tender/Proposal Evaluation Committee (The Addl. Secretary), 1 as the Member-Secretary of the Evaluation Committee (DS), 1 as the Admin User, 1 as Procurement Desk Officer and 1 procurement Assistant. One Member of the evaluation committee is also acting as the Member of the tender opening committee (TOC). Most of them have masters or equivalent discipline and 3 respondents have additional higher procurement related professional degree.

For a better understanding of the problem, the Researcher at the very outset tried to perceive the issues and the underlying variables and tried to hypothesize the supremacy of e-GP over the manual system of procurement. The Researcher consulted and reviewed certain secondary sources like web-based information, articles, published reports, etc. List of the reports, documents, articles and detailed web addresses reviewed are attached in the Bibliography.

4.4 Methods of Data Collection: The study is designed to find out the overall e-GP user perception regarding e-GP implementation challenges in ECS and identify the scopes for overcoming the barriers. The main methodology of the research was Questionnaire survey Respondents were selected randomly but purposively. The questionnaire consisted of four sections with a total of 30 questions. Out of these, section-A has 14 questions are relating to general information of the respondents regarding their knowledge on procurement. This section aims to extracting information about the whole scenario of procurement process of ECS. Again, the section-B includes a total of 2 questions regarding information on e-GP, the section-C contains 5 questions pertaining to logistic supports for e-GP and the section-D includes a total of questions and on the challenges of implementation & mobilize recommendations for way out of these challenges for smooth implementation of e-GP. (The questionnaire and the draft questionnaire are attached in Annexure -A).

4.5 Data Collection and Analysis: Data collection of the study started in August, 2023. Before preparing the questionnaire, the Researcher reviewed the literature and then mailed, reached individually to the stakeholders and organized discussions meeting with the procurement officials to collect data. After completion of the collection of the data, these have been clarified, cleaned and edited according to the suggestions of the local supervisor for analysis. Questionnaire was developed to assess the e-GP implementation challenges in ECS by exploring the strengths; weakness opportunities and threats (SWOT) of the ECS including higher management support for smooth operation of e-GP system.

SPSS statistics 20.0 and Microsoft Excel have been used for statistical analysis of the acquired data. Then the Researcher drew required tables, pie charts, Line and Bar graphs explaining their implications relating to the objectives of this Dissertation. The Researcher attached also some photographs collected during data collection and group discussion with required leveling to justify his effort and sincerity in formulating the report. The Dissertation report was organized in the formats provided by the BRAC University. However, it was frequently consulted with both of the local and academic supervisors over the whole gamut.

Photo-2: Data collection from the respondents.

4.6 Limitation of the Study: The Researcher faced a lot of challenges all along the research process. Some of them are worth-mentioning here for the preparedness of future researchers to surmount those easily.

- One of the major difficulties was the carrying out additional duties assigned by the authorities for conducting Government procurement in the election commission secretariat. The researcher has to continue this study after completion of his official activities.
- For collecting secondary data, the researcher has to visit the concerned offices repeatedly due to their busy schedule. As a result, a significant amount of time has been spent to collect secondary data and materials.
- There was no fund allocated for conducting this research. The statistical confidence level and minimizing the level of error of the study improves with the size of the sample size. Due to fund and time constraints the Researcher could only interviewed on a small sample size and the study has to remain confined within the procurement personnel of the Head Office.
- The respondents could not grant available time due to their business in liable and regular official works. Therefore, the Researcher should have to wait and could have to meet the respondents at their convenient time.

Chapter-5

5.0 Study Findings and Analysis

5.1 Introduction: This chapter delineates the analyses of collected data by means of questionnaire survey on not only on the findings of the study but also an evaluation of the respondents in terms of their qualification, level of knowledge and the role played in the procurement cycle they dealt with. The Researcher thought that a well-designed questionnaire is the pre-condition for collecting primary data and focusing on the specific requirement of this study. At first researcher drafted the questionnaire and consulted with the supervisor many times and corrected the questionnaire as per guide line. Attention has been given to collect data specific, measurable. Achievable, realistic, time bound (SMART) as per as possible, focusing on the target.

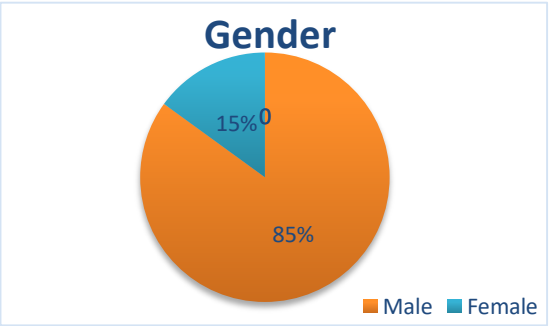
5.2 Interview Analysis: The data collected from the questionnaire has been analyzed both quantitively and qualitatively. Quantitative data has been analyzed and expressed by the pie, column, line, bar, histogram, stock, combo chart etc. to understand the very common and common opinions and view of respondents. Sometimes we also used percentage to understand quantitative the strengths and weakness of the opinion. Qualitative has been collected by analyzing different documents report focus group discussion (FGD) and key informant interview (KII). Recommendation and conclusion has been made based on both primary and secondary data analysis.

Section-A: General Information:

This section-A covers 14 (Fourteen) questions mostly on general information of the respondents like their name, designation, their role in public procurement and e-GP of the ECS. Moreover, these questions covered respondents' gender, general education, specialized education/membership of procurement professional bodies and on the registered users of e-GP, role in e-GP system, work experience and training on public procurement and e-GP. The responses are summarized below:

Table 5.2.1 Respondents Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	23	**85**
Female	4	**15**
Total	**27**	**100.0**

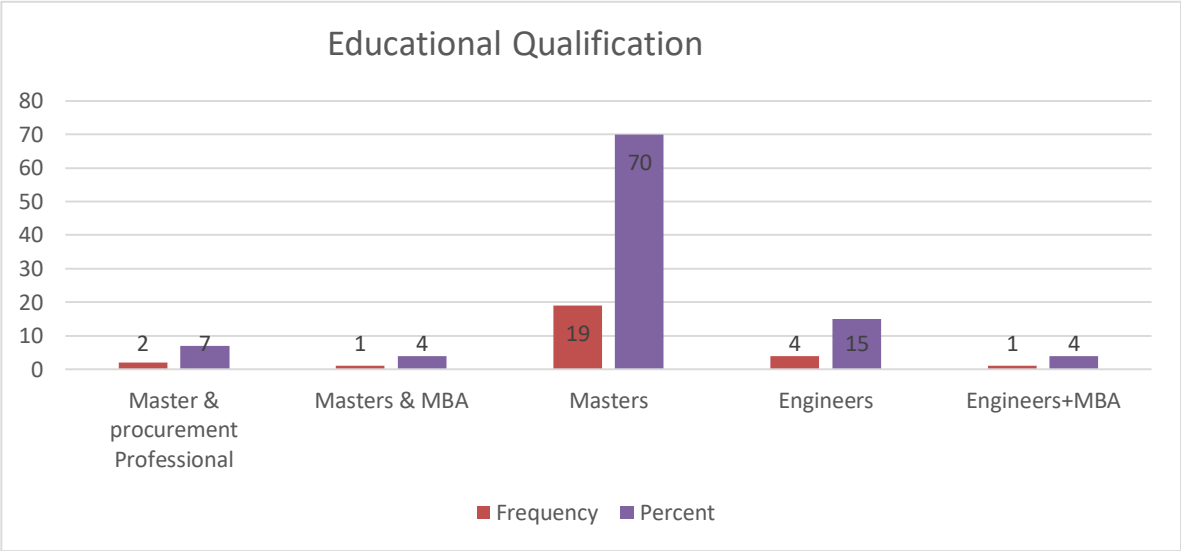


The above distribution shows that total number of respondents of the study is 27 out of which

85 % 85% are male and 15 % are female. According to National Economic Survey, 2021-2022 published by the Finance Division of the Gov. of Bangladesh the ratio is of the male and female employees working in the public sector of Bangladesh at present is nearly 71:29. That means ratio of female employe in procurement sector is lower than the national ratio. Female are less interested to assume the procurement assignment.

Table 5.2.2: Educational level of the respondents:

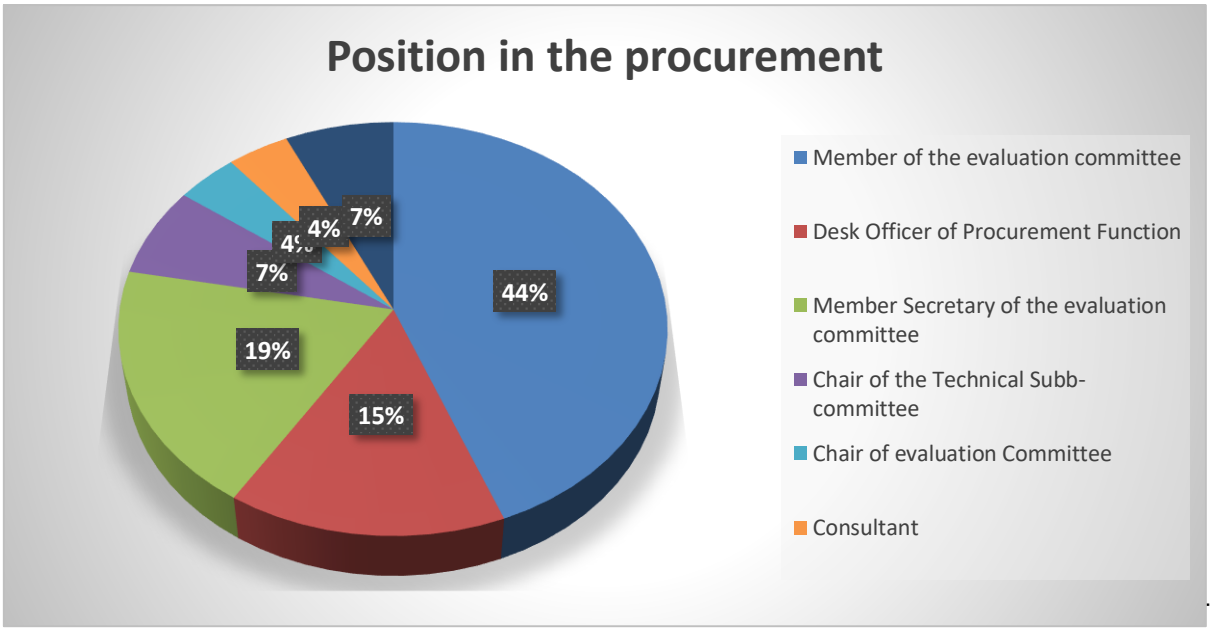
Level of Education	Frequency	Percent
Masters & Procurement Professional	2	**7**
Masters in any discipline with MBA	1	**4**
Masters	19	**70**
Bachelor Level Engineering Education	4	**15**
Engineers +MBA	1	**4**
Total	**27**	**100**



The table 5.2.2 shows that the highest percentage (70%) of the respondents' educational level belong to Master's, 19% have Engineering degree, 15% possess Masters & Procurement professional degree, 7% respondents have Master's with MBA degree and finally 4% respondents have Engineering with MBA degree 4%. The data reveal that significant portion of respondents are working in the public procurement field both traditional and e-GP systems without having procurement related academic background. It is to be noted that the education curriculum of the universities in Bangladesh do not have any sort of procurement or auction related course.

Table 5.2.3: Respondents' position and function in the procurement activities:

Designation of the respondents		Role in Procurement	Number of respondents	Percent
Director	1	Member of the tender/proposal evaluation committee	12	44
Deputy Secretary	6			
Deputy Chief	1			
Deputy Director	3			
Assistant Secretary	1			
Senior Asst. Secretary	2	Desk Officer of Procurement Function	04	15
Assistant Secretary	1			
Assistant Secretary	1			
Assistant Director	5	Member Secretary of the tender/proposal evaluation committee	05	19
System Manager	2	Chair of the Technical Sub-committee	02	7
Joint Secretary & Additional Project Director	1	Chair of tender/proposal evaluation committee	01	4
Procurement Consultant	1	Consultant	01	4
Maintenance Engineer	2	Member of the Technical sub-committee	02	7
Total			**27**	**100**

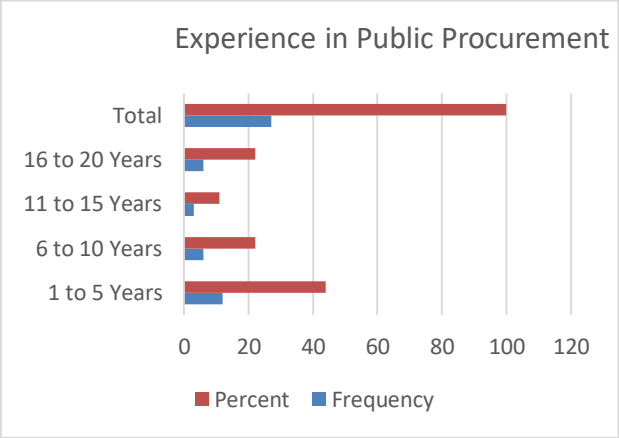


Secretary/ Members of the Evaluation Committees, some other play role as Approving

Authorities and some are involved in tender preparation and processing. Now the statistical analysis and graphical presentation was done for easy understanding. The majority of the official (44%) are discharging their duties and obtaining experience in procurement as the members of the evaluation committee, followed by (19%) as member secretary of the tender/proposal evaluation committee, further followed by (15%) desk officers. Moreover, the other few are assuming the duties as Chair of the Technical sub-committee (7%), Chair of tender/proposal evaluation committee (4%), Consultant (4%) and Member of the Technical sub-committee (7%). The analysis shows that some of the official working in one assignment he also working as chair person or other responsibility in another assignment to fulfill processes of procurement according to PPR.

Figure 5.2.4: Experience in Public Procurement.

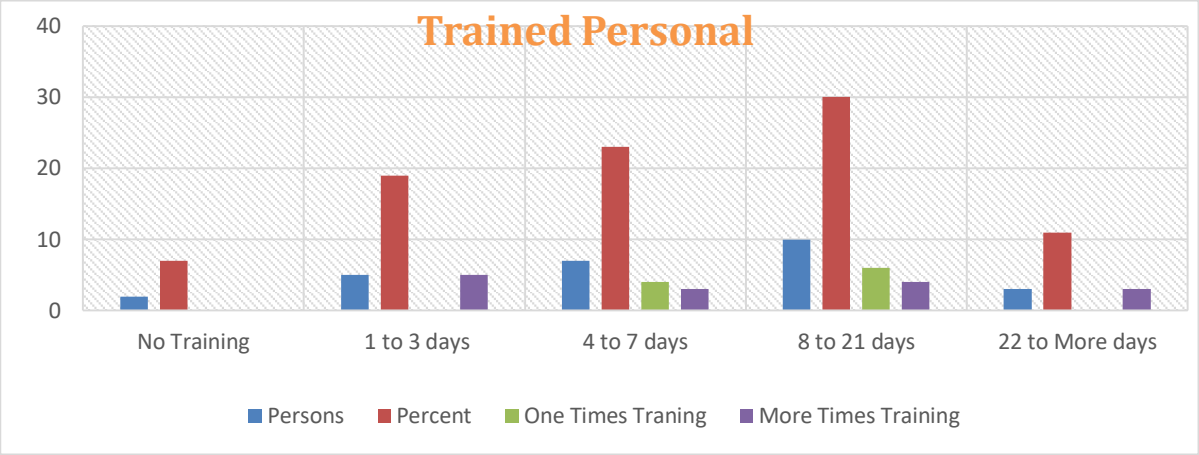
Experience of Years	Frequency	Percent
1 to 5 Years	12	**44**
6 to 10 Years	6	**22**
11 to 15 Years	3	**11**
16 to 20 Years	6	**22**
Total	**27**	**100.0**



The analysis of the questionnaire shows that most (44%) of the procurement officials are refresher having 1 to 5 years' experience on procurement. The next lower majorities are working mid-level (22%) and highest level (22%) procurement official and only (11%) element percent official are working immediate below the most experience officer.

Table 5.2.5: No. of PPR Training received by the respondents

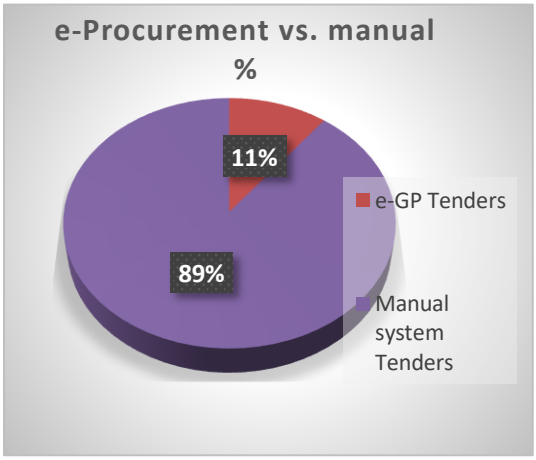
Training	Persons	Percent	One Times	More Times
No Training	**2**	**7**	**0**	**0**
1 to 3 days	5	**19**	0	**5**
4 to 7 days	7	**23**	4	**3**
8 to 21 days	10	**30**	6	**4**
22 to More days	3	**11**	0	**3**
Total	**27**	**100**		



Out of the 27 individuals in the sample, 25 underwent training for varying durations and at different times. Two individuals have not yet undergone any training but are currently engaged in procurement assignments. Among those who received training, five individuals underwent 1 to 3 days of training on five occasions. Seven individuals participated in 4 to 7 days courses, while ten individuals attended courses lasting 8 to 21 days, repeating four times. Additionally, three individuals received training for courses lasting 22 days or more, occurring three times. The majority of people in procurement roles have undergone short-term training sessions frequently. However, this is deemed insufficient for cultivating expertise in procurement.

Table 5.2.6: e-Procurement vs. Manual

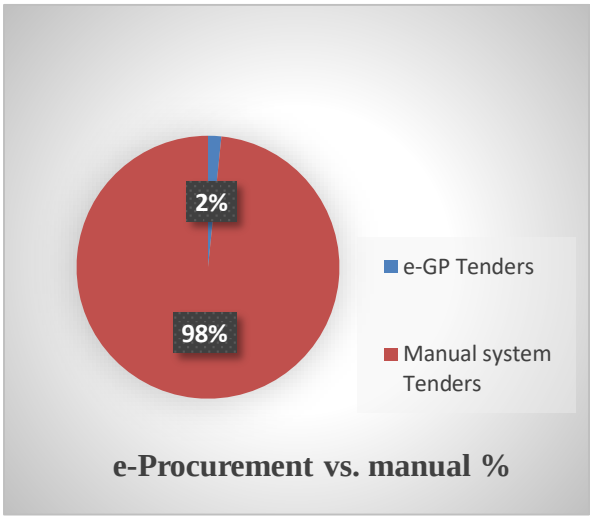
Procurement Process	Number of Package	Percent
e-GP Tenders	12	**11**
Manual System Tenders	102	**89**
Total	**114**	**100**



The table reveals that a mere 11% of packages have undergone processing via the e-GP system, whereas a substantial 89% have been processed manually. This suggests a lower inclination to utilize the e-GP system, likely stemming from a lack of knowledge, skills, and apprehension towards this new method.

Table 5.2.7 e-Procurement vs. Manual in terms of Budget Process Flowed in Last Financial Years for seven cost centers.

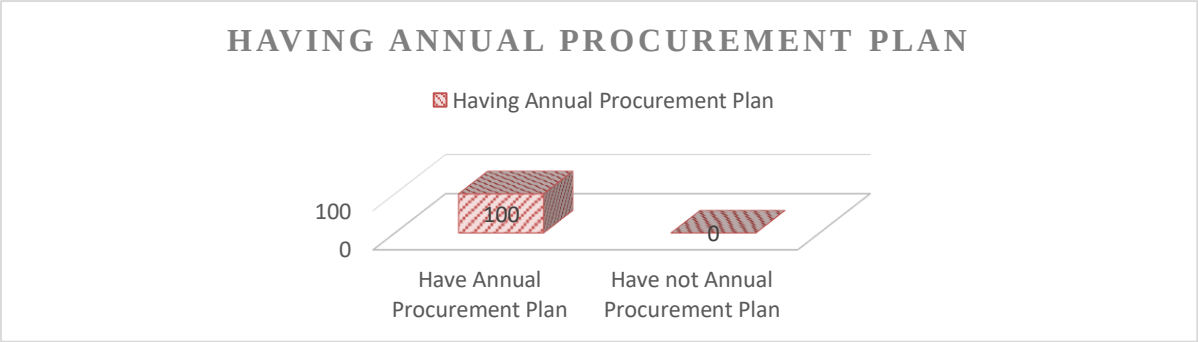
Procurement Process	Budget (Core) Approx.	Percent
e-GP Tenders	20.00	2
Manual System Tenders	1206	98
Total	**1224**	**100**



The Table shows comparative budget assigned to the e-GP Tenders and Manual System Tenders; only 2% budget was allocated for the e-GP Tenders and the remaining 98% for Manual System Tenders. That means fewer as well as smaller packages are selected for e-GP system. The Election Commission is giving less emphasis on e-GP system.

Table 5.2.8: responses about annual procurement plan

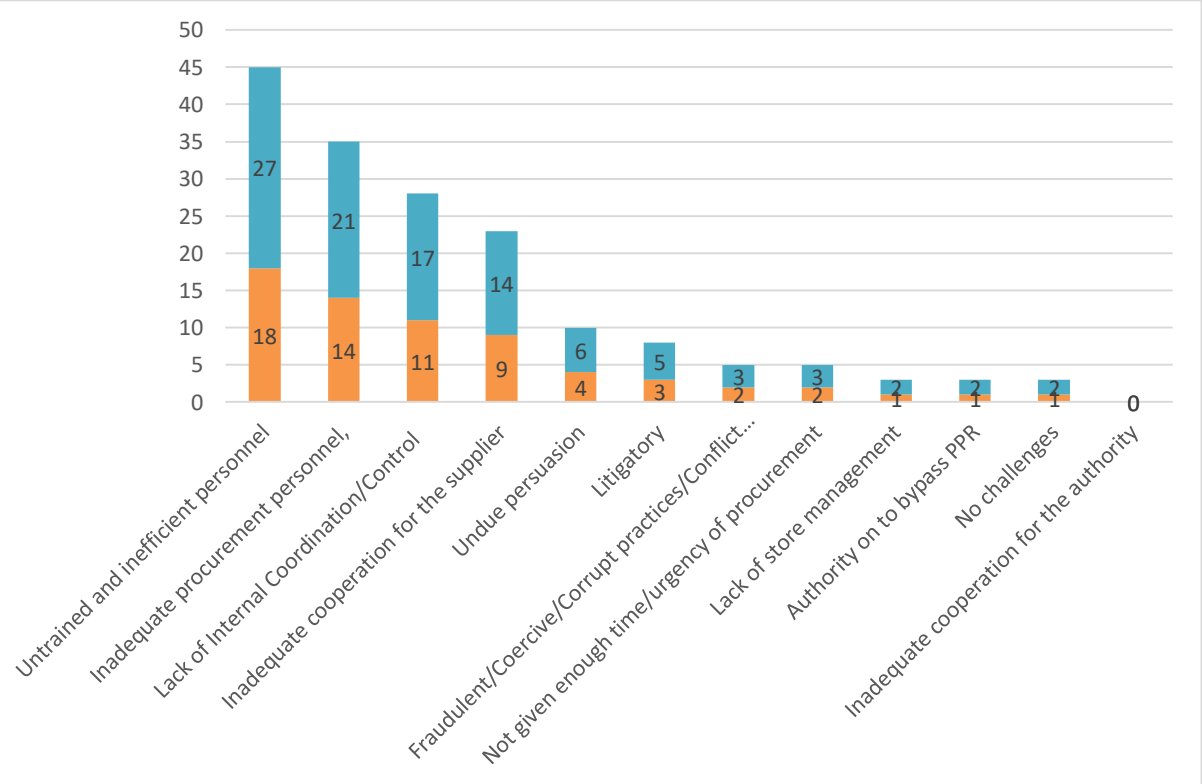
Procurement Plan	Frequency	Percent
Have Annual Procurement Plan	27	100
Have not Annual Procurement Plan	0	0
Total	**27**	**100**



The Table shows that 100 % cost the have annual procurement plan.

Table 5.2.9: Type of Challenges faces by the procurement personnel ECS.

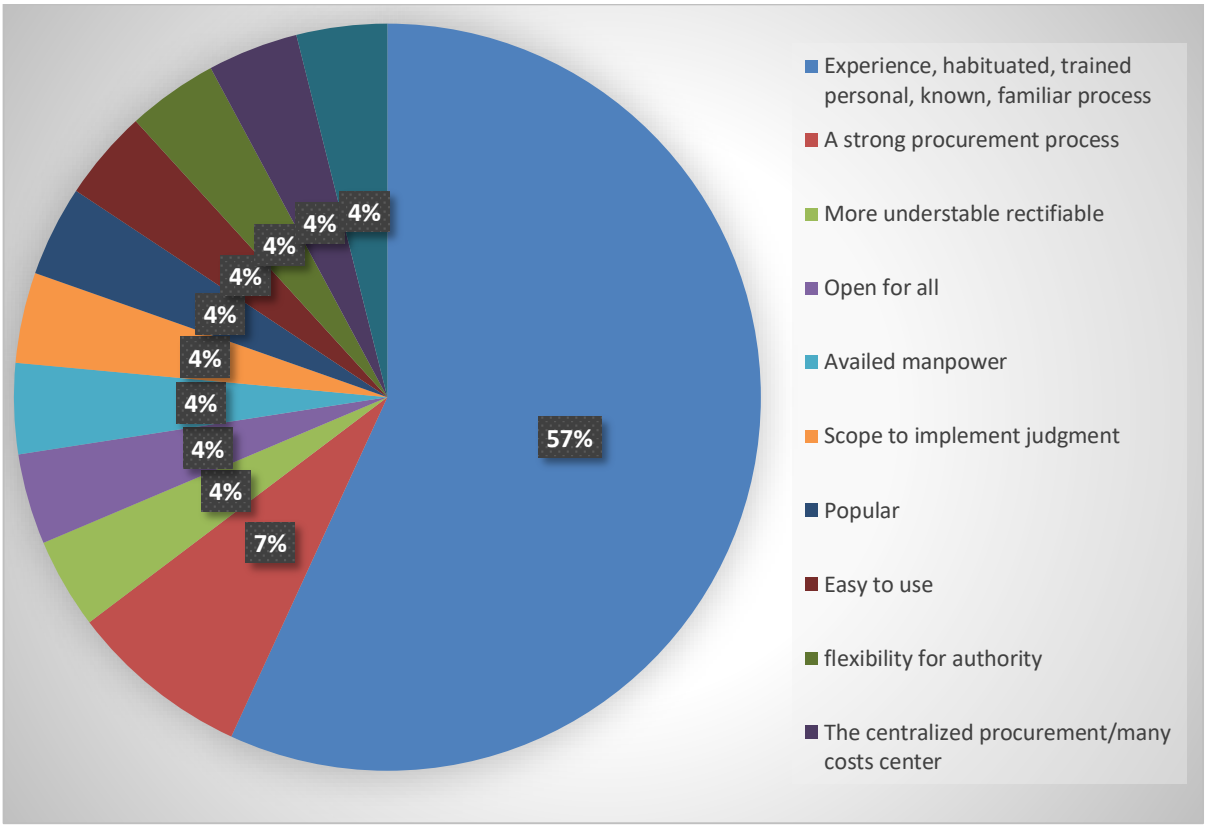
Challenges	Number of Respondent	Percentage
Untrained and inefficient personnel	18	27
Inadequate procurement personnel,	14	21
Lack of Internal Coordination/Control	11	17
Inadequate cooperation for the supplier	9	14
Undue persuasion	4	6
Litigatory	3	5
Fraudulent/Coercive/Corrupt practices/Conflict of interest (COI)	2	3
Not given enough time/urgency of procurement	2	3
Lack of store management	1	2
Authority on to bypass PPR	1	2
No challenges	1	2
Inadequate cooperation for the authority	0	0
Total	66	100



The primary obstacle to conducting procurement activities professionally is the deficiency in training and inefficiency in managing procurement assignments, accounting for 27%. Following closely is the insufficiency of procurement personnel, constituting 21% of setbacks. Another significant challenge is the lack of internal coordination and control, identified as a substantial setback at 17%. Inadequate cooperation from suppliers is also a notable impediment, contributing to 14% of setbacks. Additionally, there are minor challenges in this domain. These obstacles not only affect the absorptive capacity of the Bangladesh Election Commission but also impede its ability to deliver services to the country's communities. The progress in capacity building for Election Commission officials faces delays.

Table 5.2.10: Strength of manual procurement in ECS:

Sl. No.	Strength of manual procurement	Number of Respondent	Percentage
1.	Experience, habituated, trained personal, known, familiar process	15	58
2.	A strong procurement process	2	8
3.	More understable rectifiable	1	4
4.	Open for all	1	4
5.	Availed manpower	1	4
6.	Scope to implement judgment	1	4
7.	Popular	1	4
8.	Easy to use	1	4
9.	flexibility for authority	1	4
10.	The centralized procurement/many costs center	1	4
11.	No strength	1	4

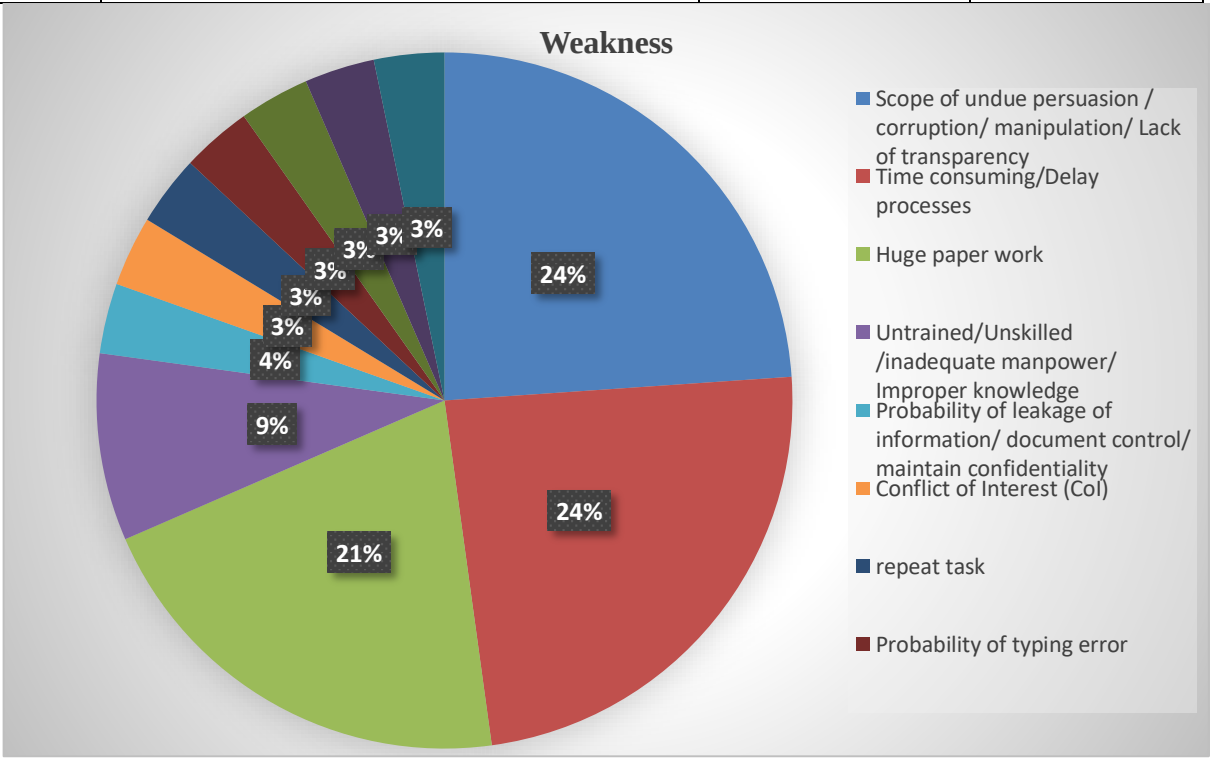


The advantages of manual procurement, as highlighted by respondents in the study, were recognized by 15 officials (58%) at the Bangladesh Election Commission. They identified strengths such as acquired experience, habituation, training, knowledge, and familiarity with the manual procurement process. Another 8% of respondents considered the manual process to be a robust procurement method. A further 36% expressed opinions on the strengths of the manual process, emphasizing attributes like understandability, transparency, the availability of manpower, the application of judgment, popularity, ease of use, flexibility for authority, centralized procurement, and more. Only 4% acknowledged its weaknesses. The analysis concludes that the strengths of the manual procurement process in the Election Commission of Bangladesh lie in the experience, habituation, and training of personnel, as well as the familiarity with the known process.

Table 5.2.11: The weaknesses of ECS in terms of manual procurement.

Sl. No.	weaknesses of manual procurement	Number of Respondent	Percentage
1.	Scope of undue persuasion / corruption/ manipulation/ Lack of transparency	8	22
2.	Time consuming/Delay processes	8	22
3.	Huge paper work	7	19
4.	Untrained/Unskilled /inadequate manpower/ Improper knowledge	4	11
5.	Probability of leakage of information/	3	8

	document control/ maintain confidentiality		
6.	Conflict of Interest (CoI)	1	3
7.	repeat task	1	3
8.	Probability of typing error	1	3
9.	. It is challenging to keep track of paper documents	1	3
10.	Inefficient regulation and uneconomic	1	3
11.	Time constant in case of urgent needs	1	3
12.	N/A	1	3

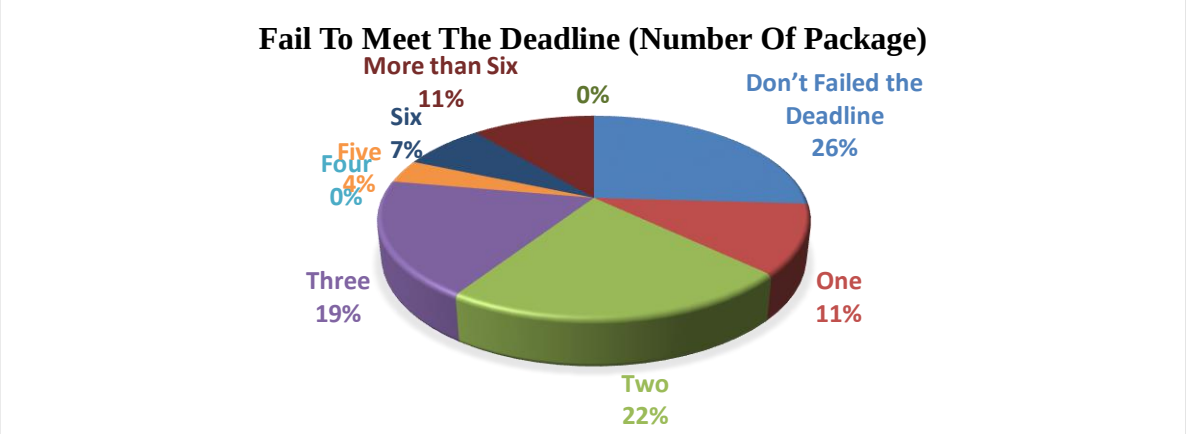


On the other hand, the respondents identified some weaknesses of the manual process as well. These are the scope of undue persuasion / corruption/ manipulation/ Lack of transparency (22%), Time consuming/Delay in processes(22%), Hugeness of paper work(19%), Untrained/Unskilled and inadequate manpower and their Improper knowledge (11%), Probability of the leakage of information/ document control/ maintain confidentiality, conflict of interest (CoI) (8%), repetition of task (1%), probability of typing error (1%), challenges of keeping track of paper documents (1%), inefficiency of the regulations and its uneconomic ness (1%), time constraints in case of the urgent needs (1%).

Comparing the strengths and weaknesses of manual system, it is evident that maximum respondents emphasized on the acquired experience, habituation, training, knowledge, and familiarity with the manual procurement process as the strengths of the process. However, a sizable number of respondents mentioned the undue persuasion, corruption, manipulation, etc. as the weakness of the manual system.

Table 5.2.12: The procurement was unsuccessful in meeting the deadline for singing contract during the last financial year.

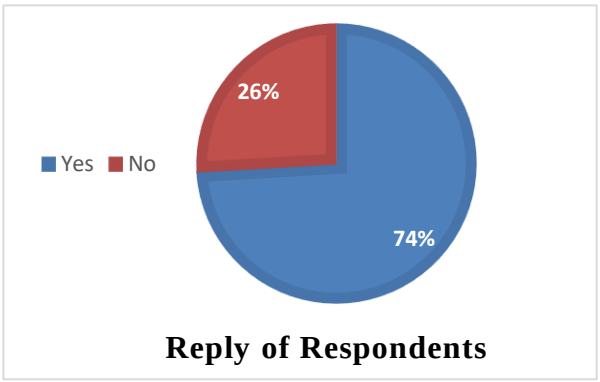
Fail to meet the deadline (number of package)	Persons	Percent
Don't Failed the Deadline	7	26
One	3	11
Two	6	22
Three	5	19
Four	0	0
Five	1	4
Six	2	7
More than six	3	11
Total	**27**	**100**



According to the study in case of 26% of the packages there were no failure in meeting the deadline to complete procurement cycle. However, 11% of procurement personnel failed each with one package, 2% of PE failed for 2 packages each, of procurement personnel failed with three packages each.

Table 5.2.13: Whether PPR-2008 is enough to ensure fair practices in ECS:

Reply of Respondents	Persons	Percent
Yes	20	**74**
No	7	**26**
Total	**27**	**100**



The majority (74%) opined regarding the sufficiency of the PPR-2008 to ensure fair practices and the minority of them expressed their sceptics about the sufficiency of the PPR-2008.

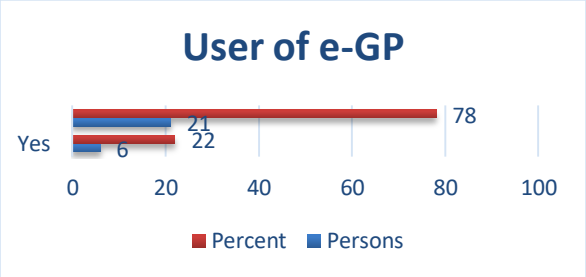
While 20 persons of the respondents said that PPR-2008 is enough to ensure fair practices in procurement of ECS but other 8 respondents mentioned the limitations of PPR-2008 to ensure fair practices. From the above data and reviewing the procurement document. we may concluded that, these limitations are such difficulties to maintain proper procurement method during emergency, scope of miss procurement in case of direct purchase, issuance of NOA to the overloaded contractors beyond their absorption capacity causing time over-run and cost over-run frequently and also hampering distribution of resources, inability to apply life-cycle cost method (LCCM) during equipment purchase, tendency towards issuing NOA in favor of bidders quoting the lowest price and failure to achieve the goal of sustainable procurement (SP).

Section B: Information on e-GP:

Section-B covers 4 (Four) questions mostly on e-Government Procurement(e-GP) practicing, if not the reasons of not practicing e-GP, how much training received on e-GP, duration of practicing e-GP. The responses got are summarized below:

Table 5.2.14: Users of e-GP:

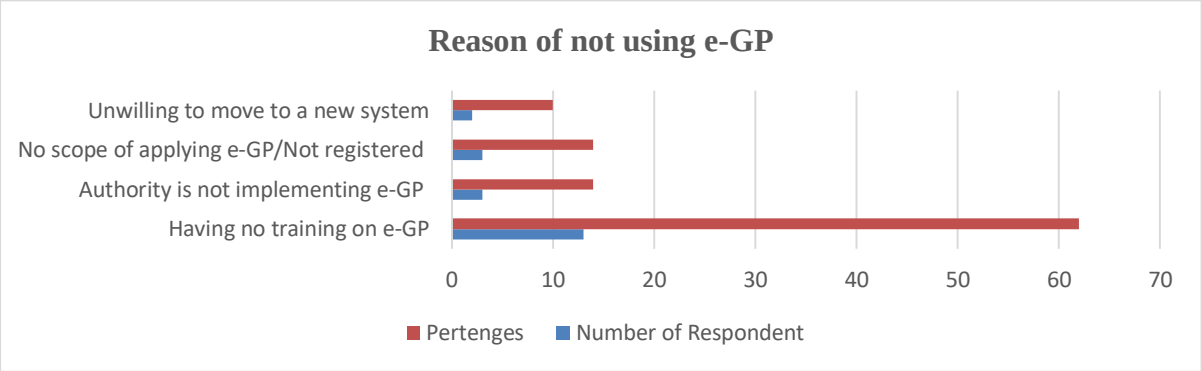
User of e-GP	Persons	Percent
Yes	6	**22**
No	21	**78**
Total	**27**	**100**



Out of 27, only 6 respondents are used to e-GP and 21 respondents are found not used to e-GP. In response to the question, why they are not using e-GP, the respondent's reaction is given below:

Table 5.2.15: Reasons of not using e-GP

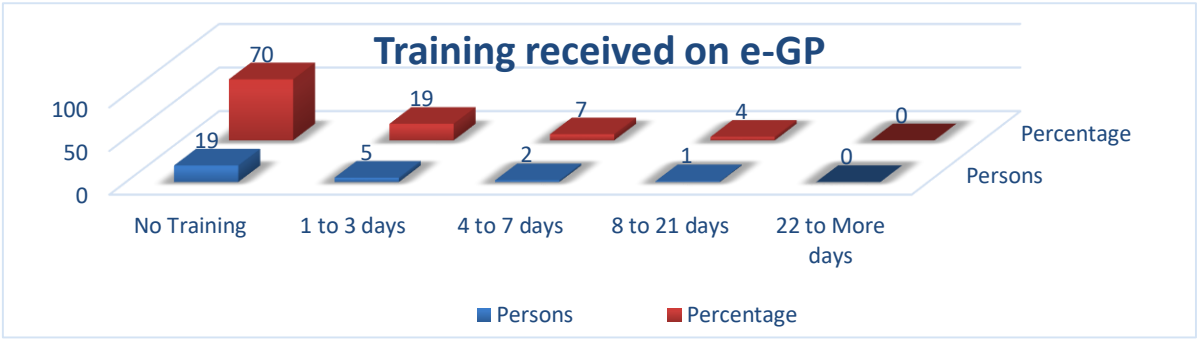
Sl. No.	Response	Number of Respondent	Percentage
1.	Having no training on e-GP	13	62
2.	Authority is not implementing e-GP	3	14
3.	No scope of applying e-GP/Not registered	3	14
4.	Unwilling to move to a new system	2	10
	Total	21	100



Out of 27 only 13 respondents, that's means 62 percent respondents said that, they are not using e-GP because they have no training on e-GP. Only 3 respondents, that's means 14 percent respondents said that, authority is not implementing e-GP that's why they are not using e-GP. The same percent said that they are not using e-GP because they have no scope of applying e-GP or they are not registered. Only 2 respondents said that they do not want to move to a new system.

Table5.2.16: Training received on e-Government Procurement (e-GP):

Training received on e-GP	Persons	Percent
Received No Training at all	**19**	**70**
Training up to 1 to 3 days	**5**	**19**
4 to 7 days	**2**	**7**
8 to 21 days	**1**	**4**
22 or more days	**0**	**0**
Total	**27**	**100**



The table shows that most of the officials of the sample are remaining untrained (70%), followed by having training for 1 to 3 days (19%), further followed by training for 4 to 7 days (7%) on PPA and

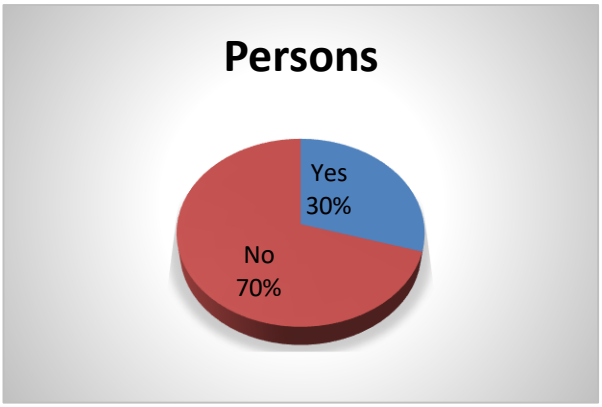
Table: 5.2.17: How much time saved in e-GP system compared to manual (traditional) procurement system (from IFT publication step to notification of award (NOA) step.

Time saved	IFT Publication to Tender Opening		Tender security verification to tender evaluation process		Tender evaluation to NOA		NOA to Contract Signing	
	No. of Respondents	Percentage	No. of Respondents	Percentage	No. of Respondents	Percentage	No. of Respondents	**Percentage**
No Saved	15	78.95	0	0.00	5	26.32	11	**57.90**
1-5 days	4	21.05	6	31.58	11	57.90	3	**15.79**
6-10 days	0	0.00	10	52.63	2	10.52	3	**15.79**
More than 10 days	**0**	**0.00**	**3**	**15.79**	**1**	**5.26**	**2**	**10.52**

According to the Table-5.2.17, on an average 59.21% is in favor of time-saving (efficient) and 40.79% is in favor of not saving time. Detail analysis of the contents of the Table-5.2.17 also shows that processing time can be saved in all the 4 steps of tendering process while following the e-GP system compared to the manual (traditional) system. However, time-saving is found to be variable in different stages. According to the data of the 'IFT publication to tender opening' step, only 21.05 percent respondents are in the opinion that the saving of time will be in the range of 1-5 days. Analysis also shows that all the 100% respondents gave their opinion that time is saved in the 'Tender security verification to tender evaluation' stage. Out of these, 31.58% opinioned as 1-5 days, 52.63 % opinioned as 6-10 days and 15.79% as 'More than 10 days. Whereas in the 'Tender evaluation to NOA' stage a total of 73.68% opined that the e-GP system will be more efficient than manual system i.e., time is saved. Out of these 57.90% respondents is in favor of 1-5 days, 10.52% is in favor of 6-10 days and the remaining 5.26% is in favor of 'More than 10 days. In the 'NOA to Contract Signing stage' in total 42.10% respondents opined that e-GP system may save time of which 15.79% respondents gave their opinion for1-5 days, 15.79% opined 6-10 days and 10.52% said as 'More than 10 days 'Section C: Logistics support for e-GP

Table 5.2.18: Use to Do Computerized Official Work

Use to with computerized official work	Persons	Percent
Yes	8	**30**
No	19	**70**
Total	**27**	**100**



The nineteen respondents who do not perform their e-GP-related computerized official tasks by themselves is present barriers to utilizing logistics in e-GP. This observation is analyzed in the subsequent table.

Table 5.2.19: Barriers to use e-GP Apps

Barriers to use e-GP Apps	Persons	Percent
Not used to working on e-GP app	10	**53**
Unavailability of adequate helping hands	6	**32**
Not adept in operating e-GP related logistics	3	**16**
Unavailability of sufficient computer related logistics	0	**0**
Others	0	**0**
Total	**19**	**100**

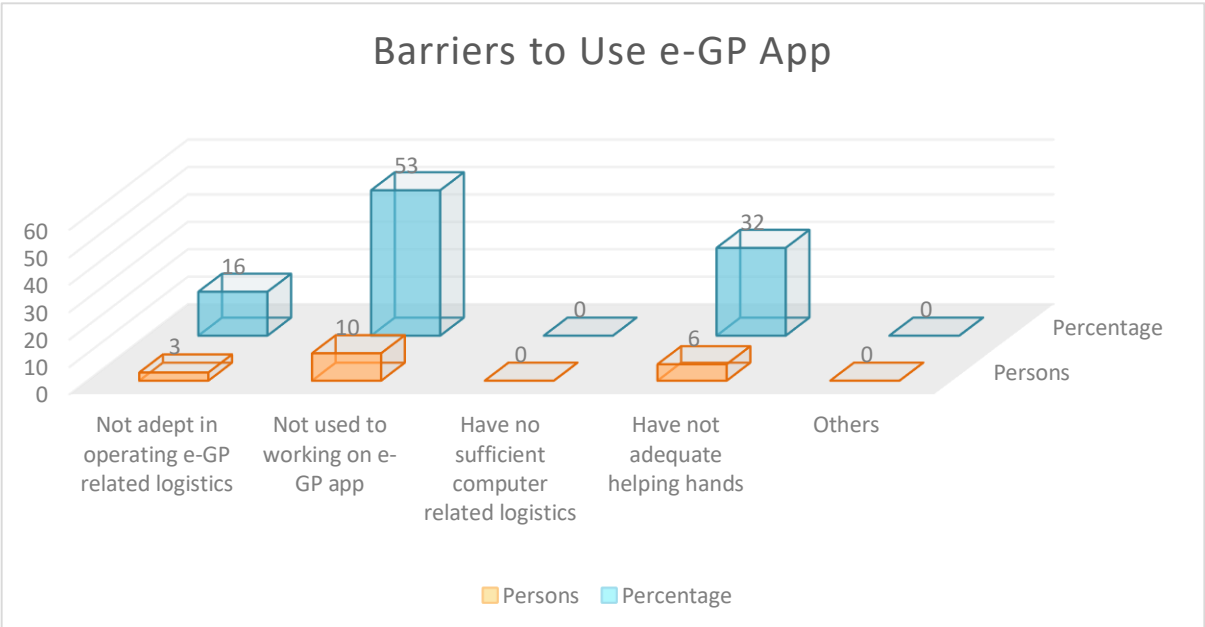
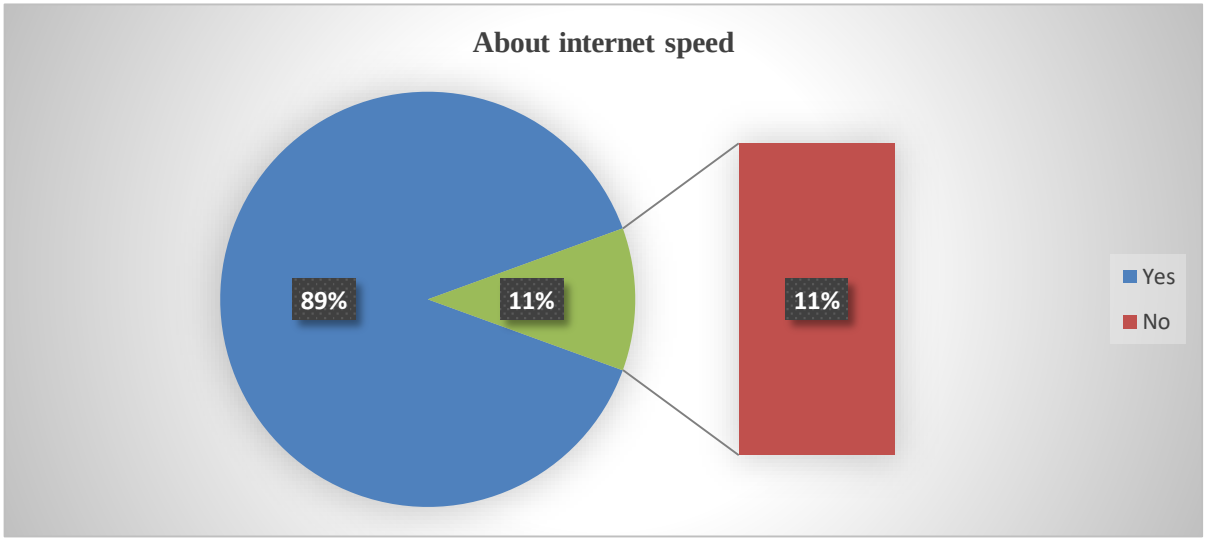


Table 5.2.20: About internet speed 24 respondents said that they have sufficient internet speed only 3 respondent responses was negative.

About internet speed	Persons	Percent
Yes	24	**89**
No	3	**11**
Total	**27**	**100**

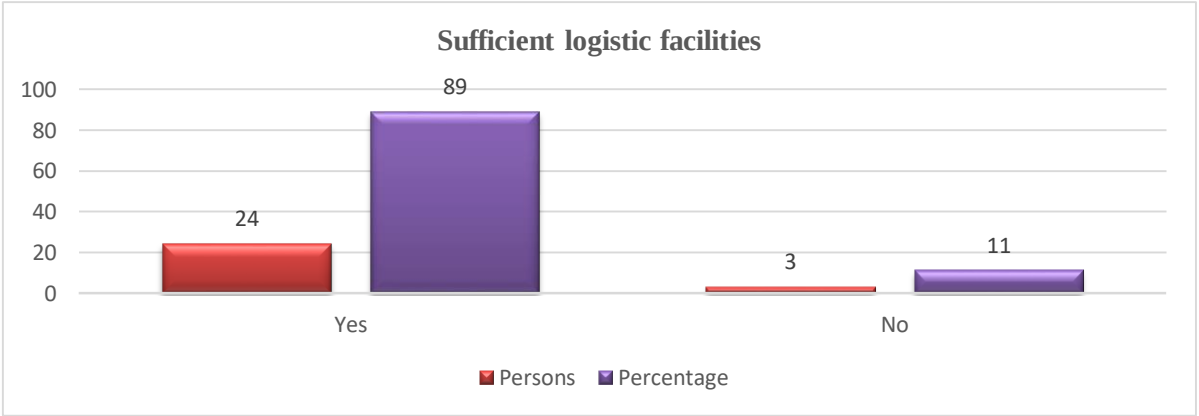


The above distribution shows that the official of the Election Commission Secretariate have access to desire level of internet speed, because only 11% response was negative about internet speed and 89% says that they have sufficient internet speed.

Section-C Logistic Support

Table 5.2.21: Logistics support

Sufficient logistics facilities	Persons	Percentage
Yes	24	**89**
No	3	**11**
Total	**27**	**100**



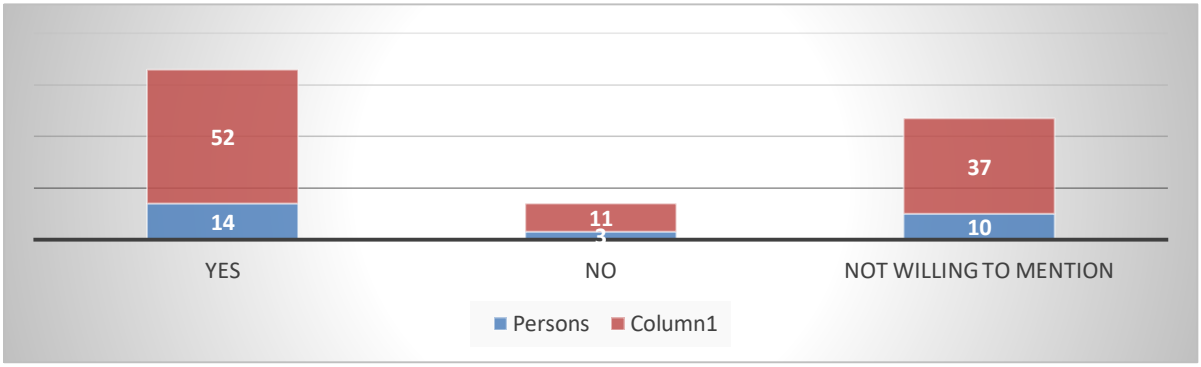
Logistics support plays vital role for any organization to introduce any advance system. That's why researcher tried to understand about the present facilities like of printer/scanner/photocopier etc. The response about sufficient facilities (e.g., printer/scanner/photocopier) to support e-GP works are shown that 89% of the ECS officials have sufficient logistics and only 11% persons response was negative.

Section-D: Challenges of e-GP implementation & mitigation measures for the way out:

This section constitutes with 11 (eleven) questions. In this section, the researcher tried to find out, what are the main hindrances in the implementation of e-GP and what the ways to overcome are.

Table5.2.22: Support from the management:

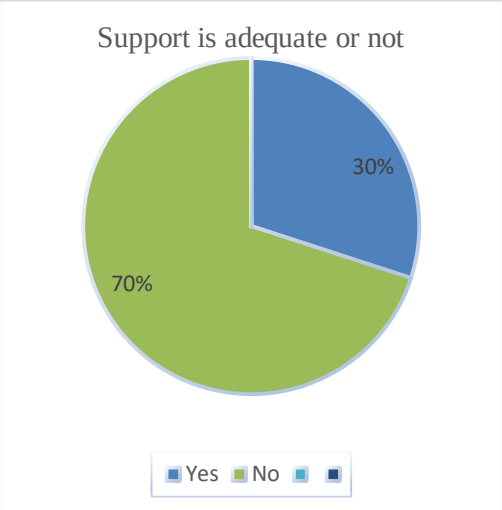
sufficient support from the management	Persons	Percentage
Yes	14	52
No	3	**11**
Not willing to mention	10	**37**
Total	**27**	**100**



52% of the respondents said that, the support from the management is sufficient. Only 11% of the respondents said that they are not getting sufficient support from the management. A remarkable number (37%) of respondents declined to comment about Support from the management.

Table 5.2.23: Support from management is adequate or not:

About logistics facilities	Persons	Percentage
Yes	8	30
No	19	**70**
Total	**27**	**100**

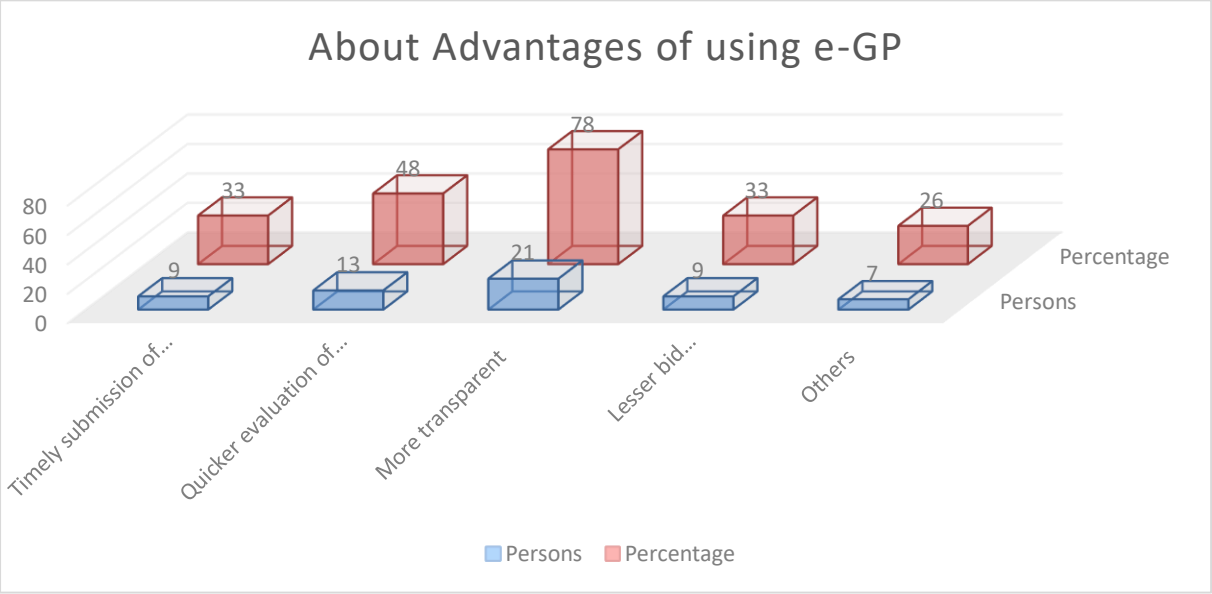


Analysis shows that 30% respondent think they are getting adequate support from the management but 70% respondent not think that the support from the management is not adequate they need training on e-GP and support from the expert.

Table 5.2.24: Advantages of using e-GP:

About the advantages of using e-GP	Number of Respondents	Percentage
More transparent	**21**	**78**
Quicker evaluation of tender	**13**	**48**
Timely submission of tender	9	**33**
Lesser bid processing/administration cost	**9**	**33**
Others	**7**	**26**
Total	**27**	**100**

Regarding the advantages of the e-GP, 78 percent responded about the leverage of the transparency of e-GP, 48 percent responded about the quicker evaluation capability of tenders, 33 percent opined about the potentiality of the timely submission of tender, the other 33 percent opined regarding the suitability of the lesser bid processing/administration cost and 26 percent about the other opinions. So, the highest number of the respondents expressed their opinion regarding the advantage of the more transparency followed by the quicker evaluation potentiality of the e-GP.

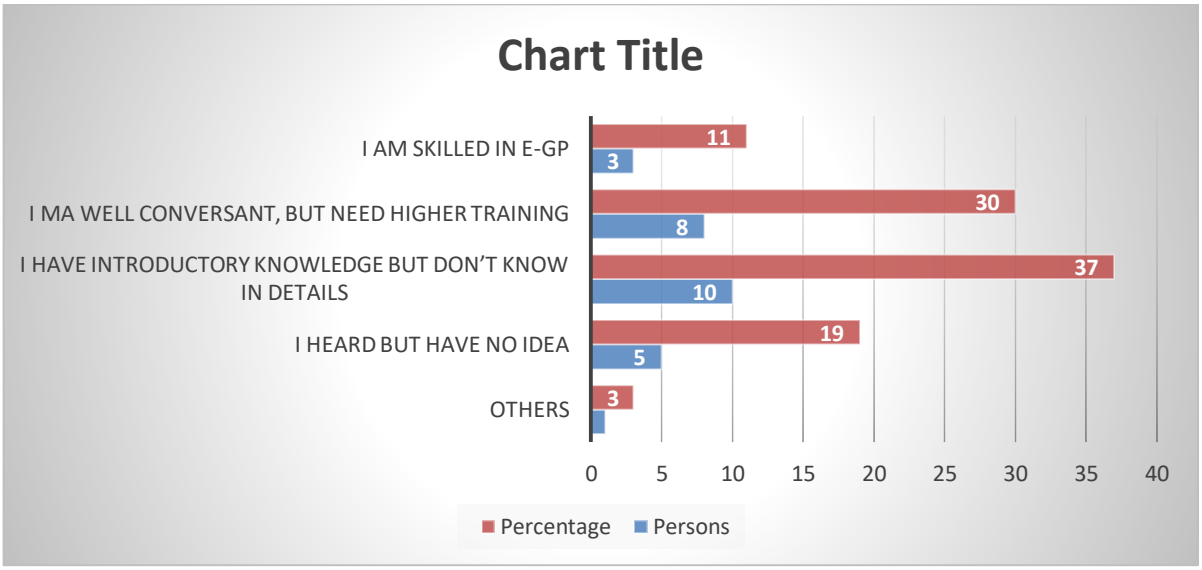


5.2.25: How much efficient is the e-GP system compared to manual procurement system in terms of time saving over the whole gamut of procurement cycle?

Most of the respondents said that they have no idea or data about the indicator 'time saving' on the e-GP system. Very few respondents said that a duration of 7 to 14 days can be saved in the whole tender processing cycle from the 'tender opening' to the 'approval stage' in the e-GP system compared to the manual procurement system.

Table 5.2.26: knowledge or thinking about e-GP:

About Advantages of using e-GP	Number of Respondents	Percentage
I have introductory knowledge but don't know in details	**10**	**37**
I am well conversant, but need higher training	**8**	**30**
I heard but have no idea	**5**	**19**
I am skilled in e-GP	3	11
Others	**1**	**3**
Total	**27**	**100**



The above table shows that only 11% of the respondents are skilled in the e-GP System. On the other hand, 30% of the respondents are well conversant, but they need higher training. Maximum respondents, i.e., 37% respondents have an introductory knowledge on e-GP but they don't know in details. To the contrary, 19% of the respondents said that they have 'no idea' about e-GP. However, the remaining 3% of the respondents have either no idea or have no interest on the e-GP.

Table 5.2.27: The challenges to implement e-GP

Challenges	Number of responses	Percent
Insufficient training arrangement on e-GP	23	**21%**
Lack of willingness to use e-GP System	21	**19%**
Scarcity of skilled manpower	19	**17%**
Incompatibility of e-GP App	10	**9%**
Lack of computer/language competency of officials	8	**7%**
Complication of post-qualification verification	7	**6%**
Difficult to apply judgement	6	**5%**
Lack of awareness of tenderers	5	**5%**
Inadequate internet connectivity	5	**5%**
Lack of Network & computer facilities	3	**3%**
Hugeness of data	3	**3%**
Total	**110**	**100%**

The pattern of the replies to the questionnaires reveals that there are multiple options to choose. Study also shows that a lot of challenges exist on the way of establishing the e-GP. However, the most remarkable ones are as follows:

Insufficient training arrangement on e-GP (21%), lack of willingness to use e-GP System (19%) and scarcity of skilled manpower (19%). Again, the gravity of the challenges varies from the very severity to normal. While mitigation of some of the challenges is within the control of the authority, some of them are beyond the control. So, mitigative measures are to be prioritized in the order of the 'severity' to the 'normal' of the challenges. Exhaustive training-cum-mentoring courses on procurement can be organized for the officials at every level on priority basis to minimize the challenges.

Table 5.2.28: Suggestions for speedy implementation of the e-GP System in ECS:

Suggestions for speedy implementation	Number of Response	Percentage
Imparting training or capacity development activities	16	49
Stopping all manual tenders and needing to start /initiation/beginning/deployment/implementation of e-GP soon	10	30
Use of Bangla version	3	9
Necessity of assistance from the CPTU	2	6
Availability of budget for this	1	3
e-GP users' feedback	1	3
Total	**33**	**100**

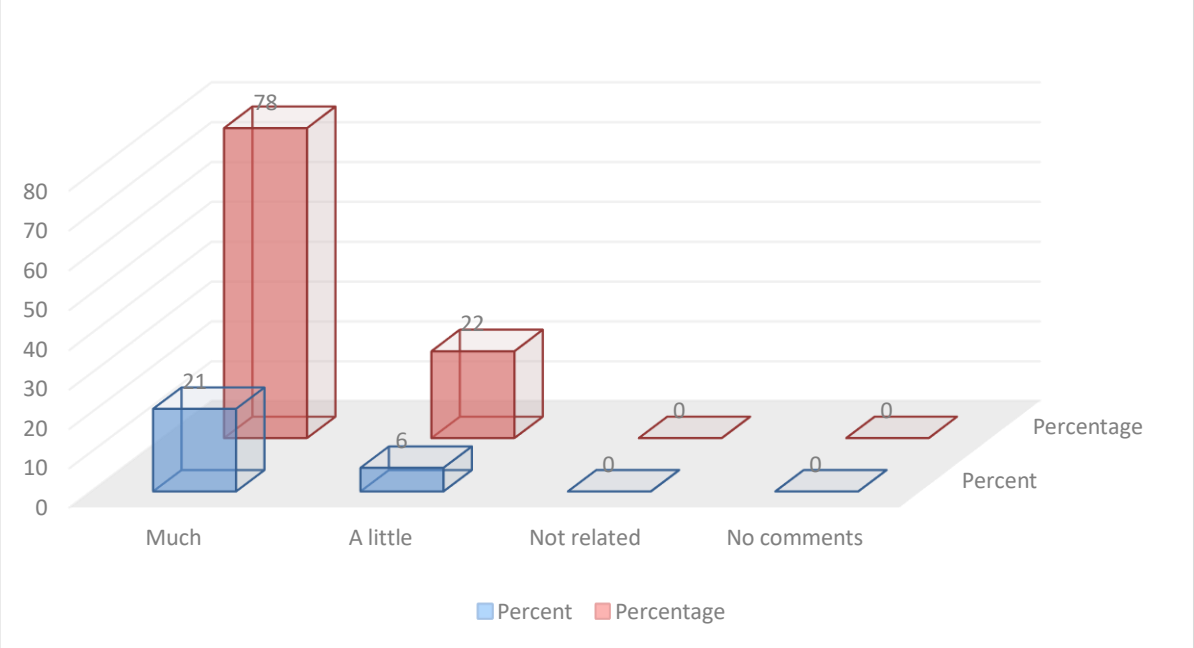
An analysis of the qualitative data regarding suggestions for speedy implementation of the e-GP System in ECS reflected in the **Table 5.2.28** reveals that 49 percent respondents emphasized on the issue of 'Imparting of training or capacity development activities' while 30 percent emphasized on 'starting the implementation e-GP system and at the same time stopping all manual tenders.' Of course, a few of the respondents underscored on the 'Necessity of assistance from the CPTU'. Only insignificant amount of them gave importance on the 'Availability of budget for this (3%)' and evaluation of the 'Feedback from those organizations already in use of the e-GP System'.

Table 5.2.29: The role of e-GP in establishing the "Smart: Bangladesh":

The Govt. envisioned Smart Bangladesh by 2041 which is the extended vision of the earlier decision transforming the country to a higher income country (HIC) with the technologically advanced nation. Rooted in the four pillars of Smart Citizens, Smart Government, Smart Economy, and Smart Society, the initiative aims to overcome digital disparities by introducing and expanding sustainable digital solutions. These solutions are designed to benefit all citizens and businesses, irrespective of their socio-economic status or size. Serving as a progression from the foundation laid by Digital Bangladesh, Smart Bangladesh represents a significant stride toward realizing Bangabandhu's vision of Shonar Bangladesh, a Golden Bangladesh. E-GP may work as a building block to constitute the Smart Government.

That's why we are trying to understand the role of e-GP in establishing the "Smart: Bangladesh"

About Advantages of using e-GP	Persons	Percent
Much	21	**78**
A little	6	**22**
Not related	0	**0**
No comments	0	**0**
Total	**27**	**100**



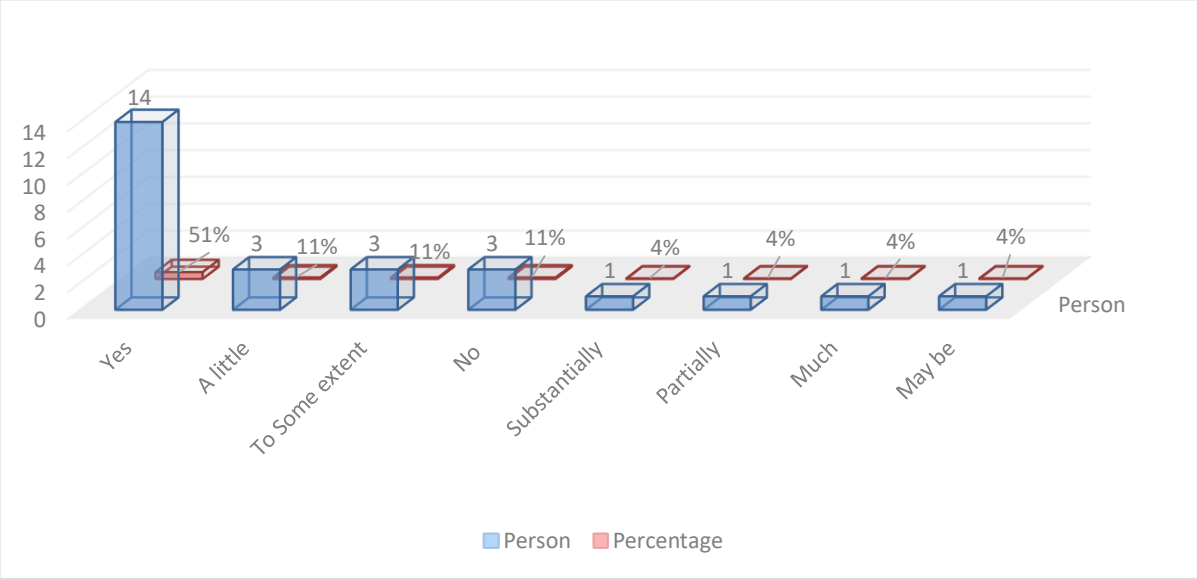
Government has envisioned "Smart Bangladesh" during the time- period 2021-2041. Different missions and initiatives have been undertaken to achieve this long-term objective. In reply to a question how much "e-GP system" will contribute to the achievement of this vision, 78% gave opinion as 'much', 22% gave opinion as 'a little'. As almost 80% of money of the Development budget and also a considerable portion of the operational budget is spent for procurement, so it keeps high impact on the sustainable development. By and large, it can be decided that "e-GP system" may considerably contribute to the achievement of the "Smart Bangladesh".

Table 5.2.30: e-GP will be helpful in achieving the SDGS, 2030.

There is a relationship between the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and e-Government Procurement (e-GP). According to the Brundt Wood Commission sustainability can be defined as the amount of consumption by the present generation without compromising the ability of the future generation. While the SDG emphasizes on sustainability which mainly consists of three bottom lines like economy, social justice and

environment protection, the e-GP contributes to achieve this by building resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation. (SDG 9), by promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels (SDG 16). The e-GP can enhance transparency, accountability, and integrity in public procurement, aligning with the goal of building strong and inclusive institutions and aiding in efficient resource allocation, sustainable consumption and production. That's why we ask this question to the respondents "Will the e-GP be helpful in achieving the SDGS, 2030?" The responses we got are given below:

Suggestions for speedy implementation	Number of Persons	Percentage
Yes	14	51
Much	1	04
Substantially	1	04
To Some extent	3	11
Partially	1	04
A little	3	11
May be	1	04
No	3	11
Total	27	100



An analysis of the table reveals that 51 percent of the respondents are of the opinion that e-GP will play a significant role in the accomplishment of the SDGs by 2030. Eleven percent expressed a belief that e-GP might be somewhat beneficial in achieving the SDGs, while another 11 percent held the view that e-GP's contribution would be limited in this regard. On

the contrary, 11 percent of respondents expressed disbelief in e-GP's ability to aid in achieving the SDGs. Four percent of the respondents believe that e-GP will make a substantial, partial, significant, or possibly valuable contribution to achieving the SDGs by 2030.

5.2.3: Summary of the Findings:

The three objectives of the dissertation are

i) To know about the whole picture of the existing procurement process of ECS,

ii) To identify & examine the e-GP implementation challenges for ECS and

iii) To suggest recommendations for overcoming implementing challenges of the e-GP System. Findings are grouped aligned with those objectives:

Whole picture of the existing procurement process of ECS:

The Election Commission Secretariat (ECS) is a constitutional organization. It uses fund from both from operational budget and development budget. The procurement activities of ECS are conducted through 605 cost centers like Upazilla/Thana Election office, Senior District/District Election office, Reginal Election Office, Electoral NID win, Election commission Secretariat. This study focused on procurement of Election Commission Secretariat (ECS). Majority of these centers follow traditional System while only a fewer of these with insignificant budget follow e-GP System in their procurement. All of them prepare Annual Procurement Plans (APP) commensurate to the availability of fund in the operational budget and in the Annual Development Program (ADP).

Based on the analysis of data collected from secondary sources we found that the cost center related to IDEA (2nd phase) is the largest one and very significant with huge packages. However, use of implementation tools like Gantt chart, critical path method (CPM), project evaluation and review technique (PERT) is not practiced here. Analyzing the above data, we saw that, the procurement officials are mainly male (85%) and have various educational backgrounds, with 70% holding Master's degrees, indicating that many officials may not have specific procurement education. Most officials practicing the procurement function with 1 to 5 years of experience in procurement. the existing procurement process of the ECS (Election Commission Secretariat) appears to be a mix of manual and e-GP systems. Study found that most of the official involve in the procurement activities have got 7 to 21 days training. Only 7 percent are remained untrain. 27 percent of the respondents express their opinion that Untrained and inefficient procurement personnel, and 21 percent said that Inadequate procurement personnel is the main challenge for ECS. 22 percent of the response reflect that scope of undue persuasion, corruption, manipulation, Lack of transparency is the weaknesses

of ECS in terms of manual procurement. On the other hand, another 22 believe that Time consuming, Delay processes is the weaknesses of ECS in terms of manual procurement. 89 percents of the respondents is happy with logistics support from ECS. 52 percents said that their getting support from the management. But, 70 percents respondents think the support from the management is not adequate.

58 percents of the respondents think that Experience, habituated, trained personal, and familiar process is the main strength of manual procurement in ECS. 74 percents make a positive respond on PPR-2008 they deliberate that PPR is enough to ensure fair practices in ECS. 51 percents of the respondents think that e-GP will be helpful in achieving the SDGS, 2030 and 78 percents of the respondents remarks that e-GP will play an important role in establishing the "Smart: Bangladesh. 78 percents of the respondents think that e-GP more transparent than manual system. 78 percents procurement personnel of the ECS are not using e-GP. It is noteworthy that e-GP usage is limited, with only 11% of packages being processed through e-GP compared to 89% processed manually.

To identify & examine the e-GP implementation challenges for ECS:

The main objective of this dissertation is to identify the feasibility of introducing e-GP in the ECS. It is to be noted that a good number of organizations in public sector specially of engineering nature are using e-GP. And they found it more efficient than manual system. However, the impact of e-GP Systemin the society is yet to be evaluated. The ECS can be considered as a mediocre developmental organization. The Researcher gathered different quantitative and qualitative data on some key indicators from a reasonable number of officials directly or indirectly related to procurement process. Results of those indicators are briefly delineated below:

Insufficient training: 62 % respondent is not using e-GP due to not having training on e-GP. 21% of respondents cited a lack of training on e-GP as a significant challenge.

Lack of willingness: 9% mentioned a lack of willingness among officials to use the e-GP system.

Scarcity of skilled manpower: 17% noted a shortage of personnel with the necessary skills.

Incompatibility of e-GP apps: 53% of the respondents mentioned that they are not familiar with e-GP App. 37 percents of the respondents think that they have introductory knowledge but don't know in details and other 30 present said that they are well conversant, but need higher training on e-GP. 9% cited issues with the compatibility of e-GP applications.

Lack of computer/language competency: 70% of the respondents is not use to with Computerized Official Work. 17% expressed concerns about officials' computer and language competency.

Complication of post-qualification verification: 6% mentioned complications in post-qualification verification.

Difficulty in applying judgment: 5% found it challenging to apply judgment on the substantiality of responsiveness while evaluation.

Lack of awareness among tenderers: 5% noted a lack of awareness among tenderers.

Inadequate internet connectivity: 5% mentioned inadequate internet connectivity.

Lack of network and computer facilities: 3% cited a lack of necessary infrastructure.

Huge data: 3% expressed concerns about handling a large volume of data.

Chapter-6

6.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion:

By the literature review it shows that e-GP is efficient, enhances transparency, accountability, keep good contribution to the environment, reduces time over run, cost overrun and ensure good governance. Although e-GP is widely used in Bangladesh in public procurement still impact is yet to be analyzed on indicators in the longarm social, economic, environmental, sustainability and inclusiveness. But only a few large organizations are widely using e-GP. Though e-GP implementation started in 2011 as a pilot basis and exploded vigorously rising up to 1437 organizations but Bangladesh election commission introduced in 2022. BEC is a special organization. To overcome the challenges in implementing the e-GP system in ECS, the following recommendations can be considered:

Intensive Training: most of the respondents said about imparting training or capacity development activities will make speedy implementation of the e-GP System in ECS, and a major portion respondents think that initiation of e-GP is important. Provide comprehensive training, workshop and refresher training to officials to enhance their e-GP skills and understanding.

Promote Awareness: Increase awareness and willingness among officials to use the e-GP system effectively.

Direction & Motivation: Top management dynamic direction & motivation to implement e-GP

Simplify Processes: Simplify post-qualification verification and procurement processes. 78 percents of the respondents think that e-GP more transparent than manual system.

Capacity Building: Invest in developing skilled manpower for e-GP implementation.

Engage Tenderers: Educate and engage tenderers in e-GP processes.

Streamline Apps: Ensure compatibility and user-friendliness of e-GP applications to ease adoption.

Computer Competency: Provide additional training to improve computer and language competency.

Network Facilities: Ensure adequate network and computer facilities to support e-GP.

Data Management: Develop effective data management strategies to handle large volumes of data efficiently.

Enhance Connectivity: Improve internet connectivity and infrastructure.

Stakeholders' engagement: All stakeholders of e-GP system need to be more engaged for performances measurement, to measure change milestones as well as policy alignment.

In addition, the ECS should consider stopping manual tenders and making a full transition to e-GP, as this can lead to a more efficient procurement process. Proper support and commitment from management are essential for the successful implementation of the e-GP system. Finally, feedback from e-GP users should be actively collected and incorporated into system improvements. 49 percents of the respondents said about imparting training or capacity development activities will make speedy implementation of the e-GP System in ECS, and 30 percent respondents think that initiation of e-GP is important.

6.2 Recommendations for Future Research

Following the successful pilot phase of Electronic Government Procurement (e-GP), the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) is now in the process of institutionalizing e-GP systems across 47 Ministries, 27 Divisions, 1437 organizations and 11175 Procuring Entities that play an essential role in the government's development budget. Despite e-GP having been in operation for approximately 13 years, it remains a relatively unexplored area of study. The current research has delved into the challenges of e-GP implementation in the context of Public Procurement at the Election commission secretariate (ECS) while also assessing the readiness of the ECS. This field holds substantial potential for further investigation, including:

1. Examining the actual cost savings achieved in the tendering process through e-GP in comparison to traditional procurement methods.
2. Evaluating the performance metrics of e-GP.
3. Assessing the performance of both the organizations and tenderers within the e-GP system.
4. Exploring ethical considerations in the realm of e-GP.
5. Evaluating e-GP as an innovative procurement system."

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Appendix-A: Approved Questionnaire

(Manual Questionnaire for officials of ECS)

Research Topic: Challenges of e-GP implementation in public procurement. Case study on Election Commission Secretariat, (a constitutional organization) Dhaka, Bangladesh

The Election Commission Secretariat has to procure huge goods, works and services to conduct its assigned responsibilities. Although e-GP has been undertaken by the most of the large public bodies for procurement functions but e-GP is still at the embryonic stage at ECS. However, it is trying its best to keep pace with the advancement of the public procurement system. But it is facing lot of challenges. The objective of this study is to unearth those challenges and trying how to overcome/minimize those within a reasonable time. This Questionnaire is designed to gather opinion of the people related to public procurement of ECS for extracting information about the whole scenario of the present procurement process, to find out the challenges of e-GP implementation, and to prepare some recommendations as how e-GP can be established in ECS.

Questionnaire No. Date:……

Name of the Respondent:…….…….. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐

Name of the position (in procurement): ……..… Designation:…….

Highest Educational Qualification:……..

Phone/Mobile No:…….……Email:…….

Section-A: General Information regarding Procurement:

01. How long are you working in public Procurement?

Mention years …….

02. What type of procurement is frequently done by you?

Goods ☐ Works ☐ Consulting Services ☐ Non-Consulting Services ☐

03. Do you have training on procurement? (If yes, then please specify the number of days)

Yes ☐ 3/5/21/More Days No ☐

04. How many trainings did you receive on public procurement?

(Please mention in number):……

05.How many tenders did you process in e- Government Procurement (e-GP) for the last three financial-years?

Ans:……..

06. How many tenders did you process in manual system for the last three financial-years?

Ans:……..

07. What was the budget in the last financial year for your procurement?

Ans:…….

08. How many packages were included in the procurement plan of the last FY?

Goods --------, Works --------, Services ---------, Non-Consulting Services……

09. Do you have approved annual procurement plan (APP)?

Yes ☐ No ☐

10. What type of Challenges do you face usually? (Please select your opinion one or more).

a) Inadequate procurement personnel, b) Untrained and inefficient personnel

c) Litigatory d) Fraudulent/Coercive/Corrupt practices/Conflict of interest (COI)

e) undue persuasion f) Inadequate cooperation for the supplier g) Inadequate cooperation for the authority h) Lack of Internal Coordination/Control i) Others, please mention-------

11. What are the strength of manual procurement in ECS?

Ans:…….

12. What are the weaknesses of manual procurement in ECS?

Ans:……

13. How many of your procurements failed to meet the dead-line during last three financial years?

Ans:

14. Do you think the PPR-2008 is enough to ensure fair practices in procurement of ECS?

Yes ☐ NO ☐

If no, please mention the reasons……

Section-B: Information on e-GP:

15. Are you a user of e-GP introduced by the CPTU?

Yes ☐ No ☐

a). If no, why you are not using e-GP?

Ans:……

b). If yes, please mention the duration of using e-GP? (Mention months)

Months:…….

16. Are you trained on (e-GP)?

Yes ☐ No ☐

(If yes then please specify the number of days……)

Section-C: Logistics support for e-GP:

17. Do you perform your e-GP related computerized official works by yourself?

Yes ☐ No ☐

18. If yes, what are the barriers to performing computerized official works?

a) I am not adept in operating e-GP related logistics

b) I am not used to working on e-GP App

c) I have not sufficient computer related logistics

d) I have not adequate helping hands

e) Others……

19. Do you have sufficient internet speed? Yes ☐ No ☐

20. Do you have sufficient facilities (e.g Printer/scanner/photocopier) to support your e-GP work.? Yes ☐ No ☐

21. Do you have Photocopier? Yes ☐ No ☐

Section-D: Challenges of e-GP implementation & mitigation measures for the way out:

22. Do you have sufficient support from your management?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Not willing to mention ☐

23. If yes, what support you are getting? ……..…

a) Is it adequate? ……..

b) If no, what support do you expect (Please recommend some steps).

Ans: ……

24. What are the advantages of using e-GP?

a) Timely submission of tender b) Quicker evaluation of tender

c) More transparent d) Lesser bid processing/administration cost

e) Others, (Please mention) ……...

25. How much efficient is the e-GP system compared to manual procurement system in terms of time saving over the whole gamut of procurement cycle?

a) During the process of pre-qualification/enlistment, if applicable ……. days

b) From IFT publishing to tender submission dead-line including pre-bid meeting……. days

c) From tender opening to completion of the procurement evaluation process……. days

d) From taking approval to the issuing of NOA ……..days

e) From contract signing to the completion of the contract ……. days

26. What do you think about e-GP?

a) I am skilled in e-GP

b) I am well conversant, but need higher training

c) I have introductory knowledge but don't know in details

d) I heard but have no idea

e) Others……

27. In your opinion, what are the challenges to implement e-GP?

☐ Inadequate internet connectivity	☐ Lack of Network & computer facilities
☐ Scarcity of skilled manpower	☐ Lack of computer/language competency of officials
☐ Incompatibility of e-GP App	☐ Complication of post-qualification verification
☐ Difficult to apply judgment	☐ Insufficient training arrangement on e-GP
☐ Lack of awareness of tenderers	☐ Lack of willingness to use e-GP System
☐ Hugeness of data	☐ Any other (Please mention)

28. What are your suggestions for speedy implementation of the e-GP system in ECS? (Please mention)

Ans:……..

29. What will be the role of e-GP in establishing the "Smart Bangladesh"?

a) Much b) A little c) Not related d) No comments

30. Do you think the e-GP will be helpful in achieving the SDGs, 2030?

Ans:……

Signature and name (Optional)

Declaration: This Questionnaire has been prepared for the purpose of a dissertation project as partial requirement of Masters in Procurement and Supply Management (MPSM) program run by the BRAC Institute of Governance & Development (BIGD) of BRAC University, and will be used only for the academic purpose.

Thanks for co-operation.

Md. Ruhul Amin Mollik,
Deputy Secretary
&
Deputy Project Director (Procurement),
IDEA Project (2nd Phase),
Student ID: 19282002, BIGD,
Brac University.

Appendix-B: Draft Questionnaire

(Questionnaire for officials of ECS)

Research Topic: Challenges of e-GP implementation in public procurement.
Case study on Election Commission Secretariat, (a constitutional organization) Dhaka, Bangladesh

The Election Commission Secretariat has to procure huge goods, works and services to conduct its assign responsibility. Although e-GP has been under taken most of the large public organization but e-GP is steel at the embryonic stage at ECS. However, it is trying its best to keep pace with the advancement of the public procurement system. But it is facing lot of challenges. The objective of this study is to unearth those challenges and trying how to overcome those within a reasonable time. This Questionnaire is designed to gather opinion of the people related to public procurement of ECS for extracting information about the whole scenario of the present procurement process, to find out the challenges of e-GP implementation, and to prepare some recommendations as how e-GP can be established in ECS.

Questionnaire No. Date:……

Name of the Respondent:……. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐

Name of the position (in procurement): ……..… Designation:…….

Highest Educational Qualification:……..

Phone/Mobile No:……Email:…….

Section-A: General Information regarding Procurement:

01. Which one is your main role or function regarding Procurement? (Select multiple if applicable) HOPE Approving authority Authorized Officer Procuring entity TOC/POC member ☐ TEC/PEC member ☐

02. What do you procure mainly? Goods Works Service How long are you working in public procurement? (Mention years) _____Years

03. Do you have training on procurement? (if yes, then please specify the number of days) Yes ☐ 3/5/21 Days ☐ No

04. How many trainings do you have received on Public Procurement? (Please mention in number)……

05. Do you have training on e-Government procurement (e-GP)?

Yes ☐ No ☐

(if yes then please specify the number of days…….)

06. How many training do you have received on e-GP ? (Please mention in number) ____

Section-B: Information on e-GP:

07. Are you a registered user of e-GP in Bangladesh? Yes ☐ No ☐

08. How long are you using e-GP? (Mention months)……Months

09. Total number of tenders that you have handled since last 3(Three) years? ----------

10. Approximately how many tenders have you invited/prepared current year through-

a) Manual system?..... b) e-GP system?.....

11. On an average how many Suppliers participated in each tender?……

12. What kind of Standard Tender Documents (STD) you use for procurement? CPTU IDA Others

13. Can you use EXCEL file provided by CPTU to write tender notice? ☐ Yes ☐ No

14. If yes, do you VALIDATE the excel file after writing tender notice?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not applicable

15. Do you visit CPTU website to CHECK your tender notice?

☐ Yes ☐ Not always ☐ No

16. Do you PRINT your tender notice from CPTU website? Yes Not always No Not applicable

17. Do you know the name of CPTU"s website for using e-GP ? If yes ,please mention the

18. website Address for GP? ☐ Yes ☐ No

19. Do you know how to sell tender document in e-GP system?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

20. Do you know how to receive tender security/performance security in e-GP system?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

21. Do you know how to issue Notification of Awards (NOA) through e-GP system?

☐ Yes ☐ No

22. Are the reports generated by e-GP system adequate for ECS? (If no, please recommend

23. reports those need to be incorporated) ☐ Yes ☐ No

24. How much time saved in e-GP system compared with traditional (manual) procurement system (from tender advertisement publication to Contract Award) [if no time save, then write zero (0)]

a) IFT Publication to Tender Opening……day(s)

b) Tender Security verification to evaluation process……days

c) Tender evaluation to NOA……..days

d) NOA to Contract Signing…….days

25. Your knowledge level about Electronic Government Procurement (e-GP)

a) I have clear understanding I have idea, but need training to know more

b) I know about, but don't know details I have no idea

26. According to your opinion. How far e-GP contributed in reducing time & cost overrun in project implementation

a) Time overrun reduce b) Cost overrun reduced

c) Both reduced d) Same as before

27. In which way do you like to submit tender?

a) Traditional manual b) e-GP method If e-GP, why?

c) Easier to submit d) Submission time less

28. What are the challenges in establishing e-GP?

a) Lack of commitment b) Lack of training

c) Lack of experience d) Rear of the new

Section-C: Logistics support for e-GP:

29. Do you have computer/Laptop at office for your own use? ☐ Yes ☐ No

30. Do you do your official works in computer by yourself?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not usually

31. Do you have adequate internet access? ☐ Yes ☐ No

32. Do you have printer? ☐ Yes ☐ No

33. Do you have scanner? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Section-D: e-GP Implementation Challenges & recommendation for way out:

34. Do you think the Top management support regarding e-GP system is adequate? (If No, please recommend some steps). ☐ Yes ☐ No

35. In your opinion, what are the challenges to implement e-GP?

☐ Inadequate internet connectivity ☐ Lack of Network & computer facilities

☐ Scarcity of skilled manpower ☐ Lack of computer/language competency of officials

☐ Incompatibility of e-GP App ☐ Complication of post-qualification verification

☐ Difficult to apply judgment ☐ Insufficient training arrangement on e-GP

☐ Lack of awareness of tenderers ☐ Lack of willingness to use e-GP System

☐ Hugeness of data ☐ Any other (Please mention)

36. Do you have any suggestions for the improvement of e-GP system at ECS? (Please mention)

37. What is your opinion on e-GP?

a) Easier b) difficult

c) Average d) Bad

38. How far e-GP will be helpful in achieving digital Bangladesh and Smart Bangladesh within 2041? Overall opinion:…….

_____

Signature and name (Optional)

Declaration: This Questionnaire has been prepared for the purpose of dissertation project as partial requirement of Master in Procurement and Supply Management program run by the BRAC Institute of Governance & Development (BIGD) of BRAC University, and will be used only for academic purpose.

Thanks for cooperation.

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