

ABSTRACT

The term 'Parliament' is usually associated with the British system of parliamentary government which has influenced the development of representative assemblies in many parts of the world. In pre-revolutionary France the word '*Parlement*' was applied to courts of justice which were not representative bodies at all. The word itself is derived from the Latin '*parliamentum*' and the French word '*parler*' and originally meant a talk. Parliaments are the central institutions of many systems of government. The modern parliamentary politics in this subcontinent commenced during the British colonial regime. Bangladesh has an experience of the parliamentary politics of hundred and fifty years.

Parliamentary accountability is the core of good governance in a democratic polity. It is the responsibility of the elected representatives to keep vigil on the activities of the government to ensure whether it is responsive to the needs of the citizens, answerable for tax payers' money and addresses the real concerns of the electorate. Transparency and openness are essential for sensitizing the citizens and also making the government more accountable. Parliamentary Committees are effective tools for ensuring proper functioning of Government machinery. In many democratic countries, some of the powerful committees like Public Accounts Committee (PAC), Finance Committee are chaired by the opposition on the basis of their proportionate share in the Parliament in order to strengthen the oversight function of the Legislature. But in Bangladesh, this system is not practiced at all. Rather ruling party members in most cases occupy the chairs. This reinforces the supremacy of the executive branch. In this context, strengthening of Parliamentary standing committees is necessary not only to improve legislation, but also to make it an effective and enforceable instrument to cater to public needs and grievances and to curb the excessive power exercised by the government.