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Evaluating the Reform Proposals of Police Reform Commission 2024: A Step Towards Accountable Policing in Dhaka, Bangladesh

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Abstract:

Police reform in Bangladesh has been constrained by colonial legacies, authoritarian practices, and political patronage, weakening institutional autonomy and public trust. The Police Reform Commission (PRC) 2024, established by the interim government, proposed 108 measures to modernize the police and enhance accountability. This study evaluates these proposals using a convergent mixed-methods approach, combining surveys of 350 citizens and 50 police personnel with key informant interviews and document analysis. Findings indicate limited awareness only 36–45% of respondents demonstrated detailed knowledge but strong support for structural reforms, including an independent police commission (63% of citizens; 94% of police). The study confirms H1, showing that political interference, organizational inertia, and weak monitoring constrain implementation, while validating H2, as stakeholders perceive the reforms as relevant, necessary, and potentially impactful. Factor analysis identified four dimensions Structural Reform & Modernization, Structural Independence, Legal Accountability, and Institutional Challenges highlighting that technical reforms are more attainable than those requiring shifts in political power. The study concludes that meaningful change requires both institutional restructuring and a cultural shift to achieve accountable, democratic policing in Bangladesh.

Keywords: Police Reform; Accountability; Independent Police Commission; Institutional Challenges; Dhaka; Postcolonial Policing.

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INTRODUCTION

Police reform has become a central governance priority in transitional and post-authoritarian contexts, where law enforcement agencies often struggle with political interference, centralized command structures, and weak accountability. In Bangladesh, these challenges stem from the colonial Police Act of 1861 and decades of politicization, which have eroded institutional autonomy and public trust. The political transition of 2024 renewed attention to these structural issues and led to the formation of the Police Reform Commission (2024), tasked with diagnosing systemic weaknesses and proposing a comprehensive reform roadmap.

Despite an ambitious set of 108 reform proposals, early implementation remains uncertain. Past initiatives in Bangladesh have been hindered by fragmented execution, resource gaps, and shifting political priorities. This raises a critical question: does the 2024 reform agenda mark a genuine break from historical failures, or is it likely to follow the same pattern of uneven change?

This study addresses that gap by examining how the PRC 2024 proposals are understood, perceived, and enacted by key stakeholders in Dhaka. The main research question is: To what extent are the reform proposals of the Police Reform Commission (2024) recognized, deemed feasible, and implemented by police personnel and citizens?

The study tests two hypotheses:

H1: Awareness and implementation remain limited due to institutional inertia, political interference, and weak internal communication.

H2: Both citizens and police personnel view reform as necessary, but feasibility assessments differ with professional background and institutional exposure.

This study uniquely provides an early empirical assessment of the PRC 2024, integrating perceptions from both police personnel and citizens, which has not been done in previous literature. Using surveys (350 citizens, 50 police personnel), key informant interviews, and document analysis, the research offers a diagnostic view of reform feasibility. This mixed-methods approach illuminates early-stage dynamics, highlights gaps between policy and practice, and provides actionable insights for building a more autonomous, accountable, and citizen-centered policing system in Bangladesh.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. Police Reform and Accountability in Postcolonial Contexts

The need for effective police reform in postcolonial states has been emphasized across contemporary scholarship, particularly regarding accountability and human rights. Research on policing in South Asia reveals that colonial administrative legacies continue to influence institutional behavior, organizational culture, and public-police relations (Ullah, 2024; Waseem, 2024). Kabir (2024) highlights persistent structural weaknesses in safeguarding human rights within Bangladesh's policing system, stressing gaps in institutional readiness and reform ownership. Similarly, Roberts and Hartley (2025) argue that the political interface of police leadership substantially shapes reform implementation, affecting organizational responsiveness and accountability.

1.2. Governance and Institutional Challenges in Bangladesh

Bangladesh exhibits governance challenges that directly influence the feasibility of police reform. Hoque (2017) notes that administrative reform efforts in South Asia have struggled to overcome bureaucratic inertia and colonial-era practices. Khair (2021) emphasizes the importance of performance-based civil service mechanisms as a foundation for improved governance outcomes. Recent scholarship on the interim government (Banik, 2024; Ahmed T., 2024) documents political instability, legal ambiguities, and administrative constraints factors that shape reform outcomes in sensitive institutions such as the police.

1.3. Operational and Leadership Issues in Policing

Effective policing depends heavily on operational capacity and leadership quality. Shaulin and Faeique (2023) show that Dhaka's traffic police face resource shortages, coordination problems, and significant operational bottlenecks, illustrating systemic inefficiencies. Singh (2022) identifies structural drivers of police corruption in conflict-prone contexts, such as low oversight, patronage, and inadequate training challenges also relevant for Bangladesh. Mérieau (2023) and Muntingh et al. (2021) provide theoretical perspectives on democratic policing and authoritarian tendencies, offering lenses through which Bangladesh's reform initiatives can be assessed.

1.4. Urban Challenges and Community–Police Interactions

Urbanization and migration dynamics in Bangladesh pose significant challenges for policing, particularly in informal settlements. Faeique (2024) demonstrates how rural-to-urban migration pressures in Baganbari Slum influence community police relations and increase the need for locally grounded policing strategies. Additionally, Uddin (2018) documents the prevalence of enforced disappearances and abductions, emphasizing how such practices erode public trust and demand transparent, accountable policing mechanisms. These dynamics highlight the necessity of the Police Reform Commission's community-oriented recommendations.

1.5. Human Rights, Social Unrest and Policing

Recent political unrest in Bangladesh has intensified discussions about police accountability. Reports of police violence, including torture allegations during mass protests, were documented by Ahmed and Ellis-Petersen (2024) and the OHCHR (2025). Analyses from the International Crisis Group (2024) and Jack (2024) describe the political implications of widespread protests, revealing deep institutional weaknesses. Rahman (2024, 2025) underscores the colonial basis of current policing challenges and provides historical analysis of reform commissions, showing recurring issues of implementation failure.

1.6. Global Perspectives on Policing Reforms

International experiences offer lessons for Bangladesh's reform trajectory. The UNDP (2015, 2024) stresses comprehensive police transformation as essential for improved service delivery and public trust. The International Republican Institute (2023) presents conflict-sensitive approaches to reforming security institutions during political transitions. Comparative models from Pacific Small Island Developing States such as plural policing approaches documented by Watson et al. (2025) highlight inclusive, community-centered policing strategies that may be adaptable to Bangladesh's urban and rural settings.

1.7. Research GAP

Existing literature consistently shows that postcolonial policing systems face interlinked structural, political, and operational barriers that hinder accountability and reform. Bangladesh's policing system exemplifies this pattern: it is shaped by colonial laws, bureaucratic inertia, operational deficiencies, and fluctuating political priorities. Although studies have examined administrative reforms (Hoque, 2017), traffic policing (Shaulin & Faeique, 2023), and urban governance (Faeique, 2024), no research has yet evaluated the specific reform proposals of the Police Reform Commission 2024 or their early-stage feasibility. This study addresses that gap by providing an empirical assessment of awareness, perceived feasibility, and institutional challenges surrounding the PRC's 108 reform proposals.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a convergent mixed-methods design integrating quantitative surveys, a key informant interview, and document analysis to assess the reform proposals of the Police Reform Commission (2024). Quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously, analyzed separately, and merged to generate a comprehensive understanding of public perceptions, institutional realities, and reform feasibility.

2.1. Research Design

The convergent approach allowed triangulation between survey responses, interview insights, and official policy documents. Survey findings provided broad public and institutional perceptions, while qualitative data contextualized the operational and political challenges of reform.

2.2. Sampling and Participants

A total of 350 citizens in Dhaka were surveyed through convenience sampling due to political restrictions and accessibility constraints during the 2024 transition. Participants were eligible if they were 18 years or older, resided in Dhaka during the period, demonstrated basic awareness of governance issues, and provided voluntary consent. The sample reflected diverse occupational and socioeconomic backgrounds.

To capture institutional perspectives, 50 police officers from the Dhaka Metropolitan Police were selected using purposive sampling. Eligible officers were actively serving between July 2024 and January 2025, represented multiple ranks, had at least one year of field experience, and consented to participate.

Additionally, a semi-structured key informant interview was conducted with an Additional Deputy Commissioner, selected for their seniority, reform-related responsibilities, and policy experience. This provided insider perspectives on feasibility, institutional resistance, and attitudes toward establishing an Independent Police Commission.

2.3. Data Collection

Two structured questionnaires one for citizens and one for police—were used to collect quantitative data on awareness, perceived feasibility, political interference, institutional capacity, and views on the proposed Independent Police Commission. The key informant interview explored operational constraints, political influences, and institutional readiness for reform.

2.4. Ethical Considerations

All participants were informed about the study's purpose, confidentiality, and voluntary nature. Informed consent was obtained, and no identifying information was recorded. The study followed standard ethical protocols for social research, and the key informant interview was conducted with explicit permission and anonymization assurances.

2.5. Data Analysis

Survey data were analyzed using SPSS (version 25) through descriptive statistics, chi-square tests, reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha), and Exploratory Factor Analysis with PCA and Varimax rotation. KMO and Bartlett's tests confirmed sampling adequacy. Qualitative data from the interview were coded thematically to identify recurrent themes related to reform feasibility and institutional challenges, which were then compared with quantitative patterns.

2.6. Limitations

The use of non-probability sampling limits generalizability, and reliance on a single key informant restricts the depth of institutional insights. Political sensitivity during the transition may have influenced response openness, particularly among police personnel. Nonetheless, methodological triangulation enhances the credibility of the findings.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical foundation of this study draws on multiple frameworks to explain the challenges and opportunities of police reform in Bangladesh. Governance theory emphasizes the centrality of accountability, transparency, and citizen trust in enhancing institutional effectiveness (Kooiman, 2003). The Bureaucratic Politics Model sheds light on the competing interests and power struggles between political authorities and organizational actors, which often shape reform outcomes (Allison, 1971). Finally, Accountability Theory provides a comprehensive lens to understand vertical, horizontal, and internal mechanisms of oversight in public institutions, as discussed by Bovens (2007) and UNDP (2024). Together, these frameworks offer a robust analytical lens to examine the feasibility, implementation, and perceptions of the Police Reform Commission (2024) proposals in Dhaka.

4. RESULTS

The survey was conducted in Dhaka city. It aimed at evaluate the effectiveness and implications of the Police Reform Commission's proposals related to estimated implementation level, impact and challenges. Two sets of questionnaires were used to make the survey on general people, police personals respectively.

4.1. Perception of General People

Total number of respondents were 350. Information about the respondents and the insights of the survey result is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic profile of the respondents (General People)

Gender	Age	Occupation
Male=182 Female= 168	18 to 24= 259 25 to 34=64 35 to 44=18 45 to 54=09	Student= 270 Private Sector Employee=38 Government Employee=21 Business Owner=16 Unemployed=5

Source: Author, 2025

Table 2. Awareness among general people

Statement	Response Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
I am aware of the recommendations made by the Police Reform Commission	Strongly Agree	46	13.1
	Agree	112	32
	Neutral	110	31.4
	Disagree	36	10.3
	Strongly Disagree	46	13.1
	Total	350	100.0
The reform proposals align with the current needs of the police force	Strongly Agree	22	6.3
	Agree	139	39.7
	Neutral	134	38.3
	Disagree	17	4.9
	Strongly Disagree	38	10.9
	Total	350	100.0
The reform proposals are relevant for modern-day policing	Strongly Agree	32	9.1
	Agree	118	33.7
	Neutral	135	38.6
	Disagree	26	7.4
	Strongly Disagree	39	11.1
	Total	350	100.0
The Police Reform Commission considered public opinions when making the proposals	Strongly Agree	23	6.6
	Agree	77	22.0
	Neutral	143	40.9
	Disagree	69	19.7
	Strongly Disagree	38	10.9
	Total	350	100.0

Source: Author, 2025

Table 2 shows that, the respondents assessed the overall reform recommendations as follows. Among total respondents, 45% respondent agree that they are well aware of commission's proposal. A significant 31.4% are neutral and 23.4% are unaware about the reform proposals. 42.8% believe that reforms are relevant for modern day policing. 40.9% neutral about public opinion consideration indicates that many are unsure if reform reflects public concern or modern need.

Table 3. Estimated level of Implementation and Feasibility of the Reform Proposals

Statement	Response Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
To what extent do you think the reform proposals have been implemented?	Not Implemented at All	77	22.0
	Minimally Implemented	140	40.0
	Partially Implemented	126	36.0
	Mostly Implemented	7	2.0
	Total	350	100.0
Establishing an independent police commission.	Not Possible	42	12.0
	Slightly Possible	91	26.0
	Moderately Possible	124	35.4
	Very Possible	52	14.9
	Completely Possible	41	11.7

Evaluating the Reform Proposals of Police Reform Commission 2024: A Step Towards Accountable Policing in Dhaka, Bangladesh

	Total	350	100.0
Updating outdated police laws to meet modern standards	Not Possible	12	3.4
	Slightly Possible	47	13.4
	Moderately Possible	143	40.9
	Very Possible	102	29.1
	Completely Possible	46	13.1
	Total	350	100.0
Introducing community policing initiatives.	Not Possible	14	4.0
	Slightly Possible	55	15.7
	Moderately Possible	127	36.3
	Very Possible	91	26.0
	Completely Possible	63	18.0
	Total	350	100.0
Implementing modern technologies in police work.	Not Possible	17	4.9
	Slightly Possible	38	10.9
	Moderately Possible	129	36.9
	Very Possible	98	28.0
	Completely Possible	68	19.4
	Total	350	100.0
Providing regular and professional training to police officers.	Not Possible	13	3.7
	Slightly Possible	53	15.1
	Moderately Possible	98	28.0
	Very Possible	82	23.4
	Completely Possible	104	29.7
	Total	350	100.0

Source: Author, 2025

Table 3 shows that 62% of total respondent believe that reforms have been minimally or only partially implemented. In terms of feasibility of proposed area- 42.2% see it as very or completely possible to update police law, then 44% believe that it's highly feasible to establish community policing. 47.4% find it quite possible to integration of advanced technology in policing and 53.1% completely possible to ensure professional training of police.

Table 4. General people's view on the impact of the implementation of proposed proposal

Statement	Response Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Reforms will reduce abuse of power by police personnel	Strongly Disagree	17	4.9
	Disagree	25	7.1
	Neutral	139	39.7
	Agree	131	37.4
	Strongly Agree	38	10.9
	Total	350	100.0
Citizens will see the police as more accountable.	Strongly Disagree	16	4.6
	Disagree	30	8.6
	Neutral	137	39.1
	Agree	134	38.3
	Strongly Agree	33	9.4
	Total	350	100.0
Internal discipline and ethical behavior will improve.	Strongly Disagree	21	6.0
	Disagree	21	6.0
	Neutral	122	34.9
	Agree	151	43.1
	Strongly Agree	35	10.0
	Total	350	100.0

Evaluating the Reform Proposals of Police Reform Commission 2024: A Step Towards Accountable Policing in Dhaka, Bangladesh

These reforms will improve police-public relations.	Strongly Disagree	21	6.0
	Disagree	25	7.1
	Neutral	115	32.9
	Agree	146	41.7
	Strongly Agree	43	12.3
	Total	350	100.0
If fully implemented, reforms would significantly restore public trust in the police.	Strongly Disagree	25	7.1
	Disagree	17	4.9
	Neutral	126	36.0
	Agree	139	39.7
	Strongly Agree	43	12.3
	Total	350	100.0

Source: Author, 2025

Table 4 shows that 48.3% of total respondents believe that the implementation of propose proposal can reduce abuse of power, then 47.7% of total respondents believe that reforms will improve accountability, 53.1% of total respondents believe that it will improve internal discipline and there were positive responses (52%) in restoring public trust through effective reformation of police commission.

Table 5. General people's view on establishment of Independent Police Commission

Questions	Response	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Do you support the formation of an independent commission to oversee police conduct?	Strongly Oppose	13	3.7
	Oppose	20	5.7
	Neutral	96	27.4
	Support	105	30.0
	Strongly Support	116	33.1
	Total	350	100.0
Do you think the rejection of the independent police commission proposal by the Home Ministry is justified.	Strongly Support	17	4.9
	Support	39	11.1
	Neutral	47	13.4
	Oppose	184	52.6
	Strongly Oppose	63	18.0
	Total	350	100.0
Should the Home Ministry give some of its control to an independent police commission?	Yes	182	52.0
	No	35	10.0
	Neutral	133	38.0
	Total	350	100.0

Source: Author, 2025

Table 5 shows that 63.1% of total respondents support or strongly support in the establishment of independent police Commission indicating clear public demand for independent commission. Most of the respondents (70%) oppose the decision of rejection of the independent police Commission proposal by the Home Ministry. 52.0% of total responding belief that Home Ministry should give some of its control to an Independent Police Commission it indicates that there is a clear preference among the public for an independent commission.

Chi-Square test

Chi-Square test was performed to explore the association between occupational background and opinions on whether the Home Ministry should delegate part of its control to an independent police commission. The test result was also statistically significant ($P=.000<0.05$), demonstrating that views on independent police commission significantly differ across occupational groups.

Table 6. Analysis of chi-square association between occupational background and opinions

Hypothesis	Value of P
H ₀ : Has no association between occupational background and opinions on whether the Home Ministry should delegate part of its control to an independent police commission.	0.000
H ₁ : Has association between occupational background and opinions on whether the Home Ministry should delegate part of its control to an independent police commission.	

Source: Author, 2025

4.2. Perception of Police Personnel

Total number of respondents were 50. Information about the respondents and the insights of the survey result is given in Table 7.

Table 7. Demographic Profile of the respondents (Police Personnel)

Gender	Rank in Police Force	Years of Service
Male= 47 Female= 3	Sub-Inspector (SI) = 21 Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) = 10 Nayek = 8 Constable = 11	0–5 years = 8 6–10 years = 22 11–20 years = 5 21 years and above = 5

Source: Author, 2025

Table 8. Awareness and Relevance of the Reform Proposals

Statement	Response	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
I am well aware of the recommendations made by the Police Reform Commission	Strongly Agree	11	22.0
	Agree	7	14.0
	Neutral	10	20.0
	Disagree	13	26.0
	Strongly Disagree	9	18.0
	Total	50	100.0
Reform proposals match the current needs of the police force	Strongly Agree	20	40.0
	Agree	8	16.0
	Neutral	2	4.0
	Disagree	11	22.0
	Strongly Disagree	9	18.0
	Total	50	100.0

Source: Author, 2025

Table 8 shows that only 36.0% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they are aware of the Police Reform Commission's recommendations, while 44.0% disagreed or strongly disagreed. In terms of relevance, 56.0% agreed or strongly agreed that the reform proposals match the current needs of the police force, whereas 40.0% disagreed or strongly disagreed, reflecting mixed perceptions of both awareness and relevance.

Table 9. Implementation and Feasibility of the Reform Proposals

Reform Area / Question	Response	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
To what extent do you think the reform proposals have been implemented?	Partially Implemented	26	52.0
	Mostly Implemented	4	8.0
	Fully Implemented	20	40.0
	Total	50	100.0
Taking legal action against police officers responsible for violence during the July–August mass uprising	Completely Possible	10	20.0
	Mostly Possible	25	50.0
	Neutral	6	12.0
	Slightly Possible	7	14.0

Evaluating the Reform Proposals of Police Reform Commission 2024: A Step Towards Accountable Policing in Dhaka, Bangladesh

	Not Possible	2	4.0
	Total	50	100.0
Updating outdated police laws and regulations to fit modern standards	Completely Possible	16	32.0
	Mostly Possible	23	46.0
	Neutral	5	10.0
	Slightly Possible	2	4.0
	Not Possible	4	8.0
	Total	50	100.0
Introducing modern technology	Completely Possible	19	38.0
	Mostly Possible	28	56.0
	Neutral	1	2.0
	Slightly Possible	2	4.0
	Not Possible	0	0.0
	Total	50	100.0
Providing regular and professional training	Completely Possible	22	44.0
	Mostly Possible	24	48.0
	Neutral	3	6.0
	Slightly Possible	0	0
	Not Possible	1	2.0
	Total	50	100.0

Source: Author, 2025

Table 9 presents respondents' views on the implementation and feasibility of the reform proposals. 52.0% of respondents considered the reforms partially implemented, while 40.0% believed they were fully implemented. In terms of feasibility, 50.0% saw the reforms as mostly possible, with 20.0% believing they were completely possible. Specific reforms like updating laws (44.0% possible) and providing regular training (56.0% mostly possible) garnered substantial support for future implementation.

Table 10. Police's Views on an Independent Police Commission

Question	Response	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Do you support the formation of an independent commission to oversee police conduct and accountability?	Strongly Support	29	58.0
	Support	20	40.0
	Neutral	1	2.0
	Oppose	0	0.0
	Strongly Oppose	0	0.0
	Total	50	100.0
The Home Ministry's rejection of the independent police commission proposal is justified	Strongly Support	2	4.0
	Support	3	6.0
	Neutral	9	18.0
	Oppose	21	42.0
	Strongly Oppose	15	30.0
	Total	50	100.0
Do you think the Home Ministry should give some of its control to an independent police commission?	Yes	47	94.0
	No	0	0.0
	Neutral	3	6.0
	Total	50	100.0

Source: Author, 2025

Table 10 represents respondents' opinions on establishing an independent commission for police accountability, the Home Ministry's rejection of this proposal, and the possibility of transferring some ministerial control to such a commission. Findings show that 58.0% strongly support the creation of an independent commission. Views on the Home Ministry's rejection are mixed, with 42.0% opposing and 30.0% strongly opposing, while smaller proportions support (6.0%) or strongly support (4.0%) the decision. Notably, 94.0% agree that the Home Ministry should relinquish some control to an

independent commission, indicating strong public backing for greater oversight and accountability mechanisms.

Table 11. Expected Impact of the Reforms on Policing Practices

Statement	Response Category	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Internal discipline and ethical behavior will improve	Strongly Agree	20	40.0
	Agree	0	0.0
	Neutral	5	10.0
	Disagree	7	14.0
	Strongly Disagree	18	36.0
	Total	50	100.0
Police-public relationships will improve due to reforms	Strongly Agree	24	48.0
	Agree	0	0.0
	Neutral	7	14.0
	Disagree	12	24.0
	Strongly Disagree	7	14.0
	Total	50	100.0
These reforms will increase my professional satisfaction and morale	Strongly Agree	23	46.0
	Agree	0	0.0
	Neutral	9	18.0
	Disagree	11	22.0
	Strongly Disagree	7	14.0
	Total	50	100.0

Source: Author, 2025

Table 11 shows that 40.0% of respondents expect improved internal discipline, while 36.0% disagree. 48.0% believe police-public relationships will improve, and 46.0% expect better professional satisfaction.

Table 12. Challenges in Reform Implementation

Challenges	Response Category	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Lack of proper training and orientation	Not Significant	6	12.0
	Slightly Significant	9	18.0
	Moderately Significant	9	18.0
	Significant	16	32.0
	Very Significant	10	20.0
	Total	50	100.0
Resistance from senior officers	Not Significant	12	24.0
	Slightly Significant	10	20.0
	Moderately Significant	10	20.0
	Significant	11	22.0
	Very Significant	7	14.0
	Total	50	100.0
Political interference	Not Significant	14	28.0
	Slightly Significant	7	14.0
	Moderately Significant	11	22.0
	Significant	11	22.0
	Very Significant	7	14.0
	Total	50	100.0
Weak institutional monitoring mechanisms	Not Significant	17	34.0
	Slightly Significant	12	24.0
	Moderately Significant	8	16.0
	Significant	6	12.0
	Very Significant	7	14.0
	Total	50	100.0

Source: Author, 2025

Table 12 identifies key barriers to reform implementation. 32.0% consider the lack of proper training as significant, and 20.0% see it as very significant. Resistance from senior officers is seen as moderately significant by 20.0%, while 22.0% find political interference significant. Finally, weak institutional monitoring mechanisms are considered moderately significant by 22.0%, with 14.0% viewing them as very significant.

Test of Reliability

The internal consistency of the study's constructs is measured by reliability. If a construct's Alpha (α) value is greater than .60, it is considered reliable. Cronbach's Alpha has been used in this study to evaluate construct reliability. The findings indicated the reliability of the eight-variable police reform items ($\alpha = .69$).

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy were used to assess the suitability of factor analysis. The sample was sufficient for factor analysis, as indicated by the KMO value of 0.613, which is higher than the minimal acceptable level of 0.60 (Hair et al., 2009). The correlation matrix was not an identity matrix, according to the significant results of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($p = .000$).

Investigative Factor Analysis

Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax Rotation was used to perform an exploratory factor analysis. To find significant item contributions to the factors, a minimum factor loading cutoff of 0.50 was applied. Based on Eigenvalues greater than 1, four components were identified, which collectively account for a sizable amount of the variance.

Table 13. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA)

Item	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3	Component 4
Updating Outdated Police Laws	0.755			
Community Policing	0.733			
Introducing Modern Technology	0.742			
Providing Regular Training	0.724			
Establishing an Independent Police Commission		-0.788		
Taking Legal Action Against Officers			0.617	
Lack of Proper Training and Orientation				0.746
Political Interference				0.725

Source: Author, 2025

The study included eight items relating to effective implementation of proposals recommended by Police Reform Commission and barriers in effective implementation for factor analysis using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax Rotation. The value of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of adequacy is 0.613, which is above the recommended value of .60. Bartlett's test of Sphericity was significant, as the p-value is determined ($.000 < .05$). The Eigenvalue > 1 determines that the analysis is fit for four factors explaining a total of 83.319% of the variance of the data.

Factor 1 is labelled Structural Reform & Modernization due to high loadings in the following items: Updating outdated police laws, Community policing, introducing modern technology, and providing regular training. Factor 1 explains 25.617% of the variance after rotation.

Factor 2 is labelled Structural Independence due to high loadings "Establishing an independent police commission" (negatively loaded). Factor 2 explains 24.922% of the variance after rotation.

Factor 3 is labelled Legal Accountability due to high loading on Taking legal action against officers. Factor 3 explains 17.29% of the variation after rotation.

Factor 4 is labelled institutional challenges due to high loadings in the following items: Lack of proper training and orientation and Political interference, Factor 4 explains 15.48% of the variation after rotation.

Key Informant Interview (KII) with an Additional Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police

In an interview with an Additional Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police regarding the *Police Reform Commission 2024*, the respondent expressed a notably pessimistic outlook on the implementation of the proposed reforms. When asked whether the recommendations of the commission could realistically be implemented, he stated:

"It is not possible in any way because the next government will again use the police for their own purposes."

When questioned about the proposal for establishing an independent police commission, which the current government has not adopted, the respondent remarked:

"They will never accept it because it would reduce their control over the police."

Finally, when asked whether he had reviewed the commission's recommendations, the respondent replied:

"Why should I waste time reviewing something that will never be implemented?"

The insights from this interview highlight a critical barrier to police reform in Bangladesh. The respondent's skepticism regarding the implementation of reforms reflects a prevalent belief within the police that reform commissions are largely symbolic, lacking the political will necessary for execution. His outright dismissal of reviewing the proposals further suggests a culture of disengagement among senior officers when reform initiatives are perceived as politically infeasible. These factors, along with the institutional reluctance to embrace structural changes that may limit governmental control and the deeply ingrained politicization of law enforcement, are consistent with general scholarly findings that meaningful reform in Bangladesh's policing system is frequently undermined by partisan interests and an absence of autonomy for law enforcement agencies.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide empirical insights into the feasibility, awareness, and perceived impact of the Police Reform Commission (PRC) 2024 proposals, contextualized within Bangladesh's postcolonial policing landscape. The discussion integrates the literature review, theoretical framework, and study results to elucidate the interplay between institutional structures, governance challenges, and operational realities in shaping reform outcomes.

The survey results indicate that 45% of the general public are aware of the PRC's recommendations, while 31.4% remain neutral and 23.4% are unaware. This aligns with prior research emphasizing limited public engagement in postcolonial policing reforms (Kabir, 2024; Roberts & Hartley, 2025). The moderate awareness levels suggest that despite widespread discourse on police accountability, the translation of reform proposals into accessible public knowledge remains weak. Governance theory underscores that citizen trust and institutional legitimacy depend on transparency and participatory mechanisms (Kooiman, 2003), and the observed neutral responses indicate a gap in both public communication and consultative processes.

Interestingly, both citizens and police personnel expressed conditional optimism regarding the relevance of reforms for modern policing, with 42.8% of citizens and 56% of police personnel acknowledging alignment with operational needs. This corroborates Mérieau (2023) and Muntingh et al. (2021), who argue that modern police reforms must balance structural modernization with contextual operational demands, particularly in politically sensitive environments like Bangladesh.

Results show that 62% of citizens perceive the reforms as minimally or partially implemented, while police personnel report slightly higher implementation perception, with 52% considering reforms

partially implemented and 40% fully implemented. These findings echo the structural and bureaucratic barriers documented by Hoque (2017) and Shaulin and Faeique (2023), who highlight bureaucratic inertia, resource limitations, and operational bottlenecks as key obstacles.

Factor analysis further clarifies the multidimensional nature of reform challenges. The identification of four factors Structural Reform & Modernization, Structural Independence, Legal Accountability, and Institutional Challenges corresponds with Accountability Theory (Bovens, 2007) and the Bureaucratic Politics Model (Allison, 1971). While modernization measures, such as technology adoption and professional training, are perceived as feasible, structural independence, particularly the establishment of an independent police commission, remains contentious. Negative loadings on the independence factor and skepticism in key informant interviews highlight the entrenched political control over policing a finding consistent with prior analyses of South Asian postcolonial police institutions (Ullah, 2024; Waseem, 2024).

Both citizen (63.1% support) and police (98% support) data indicate strong backing for an independent police commission. Chi-square results demonstrate that occupational background significantly shapes opinions, suggesting that professional and socio-economic contexts influence expectations of accountability. This aligns with global perspectives on plural and community-centered policing (UNDP, 2024; Watson et al., 2025), where inclusive oversight mechanisms enhance both legitimacy and operational effectiveness. Nevertheless, political interference remains a critical barrier, as evidenced by both survey and key informant responses. This reinforces Roberts and Hartley (2025) and Rahman (2024), who note that reform efforts are often undermined by partisan interests and institutional disengagement.

Survey findings indicate that reforms are expected to improve internal discipline, ethical conduct, police-public relations, and trust. About 48–53% of citizens foresee positive impacts, while police personnel anticipate similar benefits, particularly in professional satisfaction and operational efficiency. These perceptions resonate with the normative expectations of governance theory (Kooiman, 2003) and accountability frameworks, which posit that transparent, structured reforms can foster institutional credibility and social trust. However, mixed responses and notable skepticism particularly among senior police officers highlight persistent structural and political constraints that may limit the realization of these benefits.

The study's theoretical frameworks anticipated that structural modernization, independent oversight, and accountability mechanisms would collectively enhance reform feasibility and public trust. Empirically, modernization measures such as technology adoption and professional training are indeed viewed as feasible, consistent with governance theory predictions. Conversely, structural independence remains highly constrained, reflecting the limitations of the Bureaucratic Politics Model in contexts where political actors retain dominant influence. Accountability Theory explains the partial alignment between public expectations and institutional implementation: while internal disciplinary mechanisms may improve, the absence of fully autonomous oversight structures hampers the full realization of accountable policing.

The findings underscore that while the PRC 2024 proposals are broadly relevant and potentially impactful, their implementation is constrained by political interference, institutional inertia, and resource limitations. Effective reform requires a dual approach: first, operational modernization through training, technology, and community policing; second, structural independence that empowers police institutions while balancing democratic accountability. Public and police support for an independent commission demonstrates both demand and legitimacy for such reforms, highlighting opportunities for phased, politically feasible interventions.

6. PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND POINTS FOR PRACTITIONERS

This study offers a set of actionable recommendations grounded in empirical findings and institutional governance theories. The proposals focus on establishing a feasible model for an Independent Police Commission (IPC) and outlining practical steps to advance the PRC 2024 reform agenda.

6.1. Recommended Model for an Independent Police Commission

A functional IPC for Bangladesh should operate as a semi-autonomous statutory body with dedicated units for oversight, professional standards, reform monitoring, internal affairs coordination, and community engagement. Such a structure would enable independent investigation of misconduct, review of senior appointments, monitoring of reform implementation, and the publication of annual performance reports. To ensure autonomy, the Commission must be established through parliamentary legislation, supported by fixed-term appointments and a budget directly approved by Parliament. Merit-based recruitment and judicial oversight will further safeguard the institution from political interference. Accountability would be strengthened through annual audits, parliamentary hearings, public disclosure of investigation results, and a transparent digital complaint management system. Reducing political influence in policing also requires transparent recruitment and promotion systems, protection against arbitrary transfers, and strict separation between political authority and operational command.

6.2. Actionable Policy Recommendations

The reform process should begin with the depoliticization of policing through legislation restricting political directives and the introduction of digital, criteria-based systems for transfers and postings. Professional capacity can be enhanced through mandatory induction training on democratic policing, continuous skill development in specialized fields, and leadership programs to address hierarchical rigidity. Internal accountability mechanisms need strengthening by expanding the authority of Internal Affairs, digitizing records of arrests and complaints, and introducing technologies such as body-worn cameras and CCTV monitoring. For sustained improvement, a robust monitoring and evaluation framework is essential, including quarterly dashboards, independent annual reviews, station-level performance scorecards, and regular citizen satisfaction surveys.

7. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the Police Reform Commission (2024) provides a significant framework for strengthening policing in Dhaka, yet its early implementation remains constrained by long-standing political, structural, and institutional barriers. The results clearly support hypothesis (H1), showing that political interference, centralized authority, and weak accountability continue to undermine the feasibility of meaningful police reform in Bangladesh, consistent with governance and postcolonial policing literature.

At the same time, the findings validate hypothesis (H2), as both citizens and police personnel express strong agreement that the proposed reforms particularly updated laws, community policing, enhanced training, and technological modernization are relevant, necessary, and likely to improve policing outcomes. Although support for establishing an Independent Police Commission is high, concerns about political resistance underscore ongoing challenges to institutional autonomy.

The factor analysis identified four core dimensions: modernization, structural independence, legal accountability, and institutional challenges indicating that technical reforms are more attainable than reforms that require shifts in political power and organizational culture. Overall, while the PRC 2024 marks a constructive step toward accountable and citizen-responsive policing, its success will depend

on sustained political commitment, strengthened oversight, and deliberate efforts to reduce political influence over the police. This study contributes an early empirical assessment of the PRC and highlights the need for long-term, institutionally grounded strategies to advance meaningful police reform in Bangladesh.

AUTHORS CONTRIBUTIONS

The author/authors listed have made a substantial, direct and intellectual contribution to the work, and approved it for publication.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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Evaluating the Reform Proposals of Police Reform Commission 2024: A Step Towards Accountable Policing in Dhaka, Bangladesh

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