



Publisher homepage: www.universepg.com, eISSN: 2663-7782

British Journal of Arts and Humanities

Journal homepage: www.universepg.com/journal/bjah



OPEN ACCESS | Research Article



Introducing a Bicameral Parliamentary System in Bangladesh: Prospects and Challenges

Shibbir Ahammed* 

Department of Public Administration and Governance Studies, Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University, Bangladesh

*Correspondence: shibbir1993@gmail.com (Shibbir Ahammed, Department of Public Administration and Governance Studies, Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University, Mymensingh, Bangladesh).

Received Date: 18 February 2026

Accepted Date: 15 March 2026

Published Date: 22 March 2026

Abstract

Scenario of introducing bicameral parliamentary in Bangladesh. The (latter) Republic's 1972 Constitution created a unicameral legislature and though that remains the case today, calls for institutional reform with a focus on the legislature also been growing around fears of executive hegemony, limited legislative oversight and political polarization. Building on modern comparative scholarship (2020-2024), this research models bicameralism through a unified theoretical framework merging Veto Player Theory, Deliberative Democracy Theory and Representation Theory. Utilizing qualitative thematic content analysis and comparative institutional data, the paper examines how second chambers function in selected parliamentary democracies and assesses their possible relevance to Bangladesh. These findings imply that when bicameralism is purposely designed to include institutional asymmetry and differentiated membership composition it fortifies legislative oversight, enhances the deliberation of policy, facilitates representation, and encourages stability. Systematic evidence that outlines the differences between parliamentary systems with asymmetric upper chambers vide suspensive veto powers and distinct modes of selection, compared to symmetric models which risk legislative deadlock, suggests that the former is more efficacious. But there remain significant challenges ahead, from the need for constitutional amendments to potential financial costs and risks of redundancy and bureaucratic antipathy. In Bangladesh's context of, highly systematized party power; tight organizational discipline and also considerable authority of the leaders, a second house yet would work only if designed with proper checks; thus, it was an independent and functionally differentiated institution. In summary, bicameralism is a reform option that we consider theoretically plausible but politically contingent. A successful advance would mean serious constitutional engineering clear selection mechanisms, though it always meant its democratic legitimacy and institutional sustainability largely relies on the political consensus of a clientelist establishment.

Keywords: Bicameralism, Parliamentary reform, Democratic governance, and Bangladesh political system.

1. Introduction

Bangladesh has operated under a unicameral parliamentary system since enactment of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh after indepen-

dence from Pakistan in 1971. Article 65 provides for a unicameral legislature, the Jatiya Sangsad the highest authority in law-making. While arguably designed for ease, efficiency and centralized decision-making in a

post-war setting, such an institutional arrangement raises questions about its ability to keep up with contemporary discourses on legislative scrutiny, executive overreach and inclusive representation within Bangladesh's evolving politico-institutional landscape (Haque & Ahmed, 2022; Karim, 2023).

Recent studies on democratic working in South Asia suggest that Bangladesh still faces the same old problem of executive overreach and impotent parliamentary oversight (Riaz, 2023; Alam, 2022). Research has shown that strong party discipline, when combined with the super majoritarian rule of the ruling party in one chamber of a legislature, typically limits serious debate and undermines the ability of parliament to effectively oversee the executive (Hassan, 2024). In these contexts, institutional reform discussions increasingly began to advocate for a bicameral solution as a way of providing both greater horizontal accountability and better deliberate quality (Alam, 2022).

Broadly defined, bicameralism is a system of governance in which the legislature comprises two interlinked chambers that check each other internally during lawmaking (Lijphart, 2012). Historically in the literature, on which this piece builds (and bears a resemblance), bicameralism was viewed to be associated with federal systems, while recent comparative work revealed that several unitary states also turned to bicameral design to bolster legislative scrutiny and minority inclusion (Massicotte, 2022; Russell & Gover, 2023). The empirical studies on democracies in both Europe and Asia showed that upper chambers do add to legislative scrutiny, they help citizens keep the government from acting reflexively and they provide a platform of territorial or functional representation (Mezey, 2022; Heitshusen, 2023).

India's experience offers an example of how a bicameral system can work within a parliamentary democracy to accommodate subnational interests while also ensuring centralized authority. Reforms in the United Kingdom have also restored the revising role of the House of Lords and improved legislative scrutiny without undermining parliamentary sovereignty (Russell & Gover, 2023). These examples in comparison show that bicameralism is not necessarily

a feature of federalism and it can be deployable as an institutional vehicle for democratic consolidation (Adeney & Wyatt, 2004).

The context of polarized party competition, electoral boycotts and perennially dysfunctional governance has defined much of Bangladesh's politics (Riaz, 2023). Recent analyses contend that legislative centralization has not facilitated meaningful involvement and zealous participation. Considering the diverse demographic composition of Bangladesh, which includes ethnic minorities, regional disparities and socio-economic stratification, a second chamber, might provide formal representation to these under-represented groups and checkpoints for participatory governance (Alam, 2022).

The constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh has set provisions for amending that will require a wide parliamentary consensus to be changed and may be difficult to achieve in an environment shaped by political polarization (Haque & Ahmed, 2022). Moreover, critics warn that in the absence of clearly defined powers and selection processes an upper chamber will simply be redundant or politically captured, with more costs but no gains in accountability (Massicotte, 2022).

Recent cross-institutional research noting that three key design factors affect the success and effectiveness of bicameral systems: (a) Type of selection processes used (direct election versus indirect election versus appointment); (b) Chambers' legislative powers and which powers are reserved to each, respectively; and (c) Partisanship asymmetry in each chamber's makeup independent from each other's membership structure (Russell & Gover, 2023; Heitshusen, 2023). Hence, any bicameral reform proposal in Bangladesh must consider these institutional variables *Vis a vis* the existing political realities (Bagehot, 2001).

Against this backdrop, the objective of this paper is to critically analyze pros and cons of implementing bicameral parliamentary system in Bangladesh. This paper will address the linkages between party coalitions and intra-party democracy through a lens of Bangladesh, building on previous comparative poli-

tical scholarship (2022–2024), but also discussing directly the constitutional and political context – making an important contribution to contemporary debates around legislative reform, democratic consolidation and institutional redesign in South Asia.

2. Review of Literature

Conceptual Evolution of Bicameralism

Three are the main reasons historically given for bicameralism: (1) representation of territorial units; (2) elite or expert review; and (3) internal checks within the legislature itself (Lijphart, 2012). Today, however, the dominant view in the relevant scholarship is that bicameralism also can be thought of as a kind of institutional redundancy designed to enhance deliberative quality and policy stability (Massicotte, 2022). Modern second chambers are, thus, assigned complementary roles that do not mimic substantive legislative activities constitutional scrutiny, minority defense and long-term policy oversight (Carey, 2021).

Tsebelis' veto player theory has been reconsidered in new empirical studies that demonstrate how bicameralism renders more countervailing institutional veto points available, slowing the velocity of policy change and facilitating stability (Heitshusen, 2023). While excessive veto points contribute to legislative inertia, some inter-chamber asymmetries have been credited with enhancing legislative quality (Russell & Gover, 2023). Accordingly, it is not only the presence per se of bicameralism that works but rather the allocation of power among chambers (Haque & Ahmed, 2022).

Approximately 41% of jurisdictions are bicameral according to recent comparative datasets (Inter-Parliamentary Union [IPU], 2023), but there is great variation in the strength and composition of upper chambers. Several unitarily organized parliamentary democracies meaningfully retain second chambers with revising powers not territorial representation in view, refuting the enduring idea that bicameralism is inherently of federal political orders (Hassan, 2024).

Bicameralism and Legislative Oversight

One of the most persuasive arguments for bicameralism in modern times involves legislative oversight capacity. Earlier work in parliamentary studies has shown, for example, that unicameral legislatures under

dominant-party systems produce weaker scrutiny and less amendment activity (Hassan, 2024). In contrast, bicameral systems demonstrate statistically increased amendment rates and more extended periods of deliberation (Heitshusen, 2023).

Russell and Gover, (2023) in a comparative analysis of second chambers across Europe, contend that upper houses often serve as “policy correctives,” especially where lower houses are tightly controlled by the executive. Their results show that this can push governments to negotiate amendments without causing systemic deadlock (Heitshusen, 2023).

To illustrate, executive centralization and rigid party discipline have been outlined as structural barriers to parliamentary autonomy in Bangladesh (Haque & Ahmed, 2022; Riaz, 2023). Even though the committee system in Bangladesh provides for oversight mechanisms formally, recent analysis indicates that committees are often not provided with adequate autonomy and resources needed to conduct diligent scrutiny (Alam, 2022). Comparative literature suggests that a second chamber, if endowed with revising authority, can strengthen oversight by institutionalizing a second stage of review (Heller, 2020).

Representation, Inclusion, and Minority Protection

Just recently scholarship has shown that intra governmental inclusiveness is traced back to bicameralism. Most upper chambers are designed to represent historically marginalized groups, professional associations, or territory-based minorities (Massicotte, 2022). In India, for example, this role is played by the Rajya Sabha as a state representation and federal mediation mechanism. For example, in the United Kingdom (UK) members of its House of Lords are appointed for their competence list in science, law and civil society including academics and heads of civil society organizations to bring deliberative competencies into its work (Russell & Gover, 2023).

Although unitary by definition based on the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, the socio-regional characteristics of Bangladesh reflect considerable differences between and among ethnic minorities in Chittagong Hill Tracts and economically deprived regions (Karim, 2023). These critiques

resonate with current discussions around governance, commonly characterized by ongoing worry for inclusive representation and equitable development (Riaz, 2023).

Comparative evidence supports the idea that upper chambers can serve as platforms for minority voices, without some fundamental change to a country's overall parliamentary structure. Research also warns that appointed second chambers risk lacking legitimacy, unless the processes by which they are appointed is seen to be transparent and meritocratic (Russell & Gover, 2023).

Political Stability and Institutional Balance

A second concern that appears in the recent literature is what we come to know as bicameralism its relationship to political stability. Research on democratic backsliding in hybrid regimes shows how the aggregation of legislative power into a single chamber can foster executive encroachment (Hassan, 2024). Moreover, bicameral systems especially when designed with asymmetric power relations might generate institutional friction discouraging rapid constitutional changes or the dominance of majority rule (Massicotte, 2022).

But bicameralism is not generally stabilizing. In strongly polarized political contexts symmetric bicameral systems lead to legislative deadlock (Heitshusen 2023) and in parliamentary democracies accordingly, it is widely advised to erect institutional asymmetries where the upper chamber holds suspensive rather than absolute veto power (Inter-Parliamentary Union [IPU] 2023).

Drawing from the political history of Bangladesh, which has witnessed bouts of election boycott and enmity in opposition behaviors; it is questionable whether a second chamber would serve as a moderating or mirroring institution (Riaz, 2023). It would depend on the balance of power between the chambers and their independence mechanism, according to the literature (Karim, 2023)

Financial and Institutional Costs

Debates over reform these days also include the economic cost of bicameralism. A second chamber carries administrative infrastructure, expenses for

member salaries and high procedural costs (IPU, 2023). In fiscally constrained developing democracies, such reforms must restore cost-benefit outcomes (Massicotte, 2022).

According to Heitshusen, (2023)" in most cases, this marginal increase in financial outlay is trivial compared to national budgets" abounding that bicameral legislature can but do cost more. And so, the calculus generally moves from pure cost to institutional value-added. Bangladesh, on the other hand would have to weigh its fiscal concerns against potential improvements in the quality of legislation and representation to minorities (Lijphart, 2012).

Research Gap

Although there is a substantial corpus of literature on bicameralism as well as its institutionally influencing tendency across the world, there are very few scholarly articles that find an implementation of bicameralism relevant to the Constitution of Bangladesh. While power politics in Bangladesh is the topic of almost all studies on Bangladesh (especially regarding electoral integrity, party politics and executive dominance (Riaz, 2023; Hassan, 2024)), weak structural legislative reform has received little attention. Certainly, discussions on second-chamber institutional design rarely compare Bangladesh with other parliamentary democracies (Longley & Oleszek, 2020). The study of more complex examples remains, however, a largely missing framework in contemporary bicameral literature tailored to the particular governance challenges that capture Bangladesh. This study contributes in this regard by contextualizing current bicameralism with its potential implications for legislative reform (Dunleavy *et al.* 2006) in Bangladesh by exploring the constitutional, political and fiscal limitations on analysis (Massicotte, 2022).

3. Methodology

Research Design

The study adopts a qualitative comparative institutional research design to explain the potentials and constraints of a bicameral parliamentary system in Bangladesh. Since bicameral reform in Bangladesh is inherently a policy and constitutional proposition, not an institutional change, the study offers a qualitative analysis which attempts to capture what institutional

feasibility means, how proposed designs have fared against contextual constraints. Legislature and constitution mismatch studies often employ a comparative institutional research design to assess the effects of alternative institutional arrangements on accountability, deliberation, representation, and policy stability (Massicotte, 2022; Russell & Gover, 2023). In the same vein, this study weaves together constitutional doctrine and comparative insights from other parliamentary democracies, followed by a lexicographical evaluation of whether such institutional morals are suitable to the political and legal context in Bangladesh (Mezey, 2021).

Research Approach

It adopts an exploratory - explanatory approach to the research. It is preliminary, since scholarship on bicameralism related to Bangladesh has remained limited and fragmented with most studies of governance emphasizing elections, party politics or executive dominance over architectural forms of legislatures (Riaz, 2023). It is explanatory because it aims to explain how the structure of the legislature unicameral versus bicameral influences governance outcomes including oversight capacity, participation of minorities, and legislative quality. Modern comparative scholarship has shown that second chambers can serve to enhance scrutiny and stabilize the legislature when their powers are asymmetric and complementary, rather than equal and competitive (Heitshusen, 2023; Russell & Gover, 2023). Consequently, this study does not seek to statistically "prove" an outcome but rather presents opportunities for establishing credible institutional effects drawing on established comparative findings and contextual reasoning.

Data Sources

In this analysis, we leverage established qualitative data using robust sources. Firstly, it reviews recent (primarily 2020–2024) peer-reviewed journal literature on bicameralism, the second-chamber performance of parliamentary oversight and democratic resilience. second, it also contains comparative institutional reports or global legislative profiles produced by organizations similar to Inter-Parliamentary Union which provide standardized records on legislative organization and reform in the world (Inter-Parliamentary Union [IPU], 2023) Third, by building on Universe PG | www.universepg.com

governance scholarship on Bangladesh with an emphasis on executive–legislative relations, parliamentary weakness and institutional fragility as the only contingencies that would determine the practical need for and feasibility of a second chamber (Haque & Ahmed, 2022; Riaz, 2023), it addresses these gaps in literature. It is on these lines that the constitutional provisions of Bangladesh serve as foundational data, applicable to measures concurring with and amending laws specifically when it concerns the formation, composition and operation of a legislature constituted by the Constitution.

Case Selection Strategy

The study uses a most-similar systems logic that helps to extract significant comparative insights in the absence of like political environments, and is confined to parliamentary or semi-parliamentary cases with design-relevant variation of upper-chamber form and function. We include India, a South Asian electoral system in which the upper house does have a constitutional role to play in respect of representation and legislative review as part of our regionally relevant counterfactual. This includes the UK as a unitary parliamentary system with a powerful revising chamber so far as its largely expertise-driven scrutiny and legislative amendment displays how the second chamber may operate moreover free of charge of federalism (Russell and Gover, 2023). France is mentioned as an example of a bicameral review mechanism, and institutional balance in mixed executive - legislative regime, brings out how the institution of bicameralism operates with respect to executive authority. None of these are being used to “copy” models but derive design lessons particularly in optimal selection methods, veto strength and legitimacy which can add value to Bangladeshi specific debate.

Analytical Framework

The analysis is structured around three interlinked axes drawn from the modern comparative bicameralism literature. The first dimension pertains to institutional design variables, and specifically the methods for selecting upper-chamber agents; distributions of legislative authority between chambers; and around inter-chamber relationships (symmetrical versus hierarchical). Recent research indicates that

outcomes are highly contingent on whether the upper chamber has an absolute veto, a suspensive veto or mere consultative authority, and whether partisan control is consistent across chambers (Heitshusen, 2023). The second dimension is focused on the governance process: legislative oversight, deliberative quality, minority and regional inclusion, policy stability. Comparative research suggests that second-chamber powers are often most valuable when deadlock is unlikely and negotiation is encouraged, as the revising body provides a more nuanced account of

interests at stake (Russell & Gover, 2023; Massicotte, 2022). The third dimension addresses contextual hurdles in Bangladesh, particularly the demands of constitutional amendment; political polarization; party hegemony; and fiscal–administrative costs to establish a second chamber (Haque & Ahmed, 2022; IPU, 2023). Interlocking these three dimensions, the study will stitch out desirability (in theory and practical viability as well as institutional sustainability) of bicameralism from a Bangladesh context.



Fig. 1: Analytical Framework.

As shown in the diagram, this is a sequential but interrelated model. The variables of institutional design indeed exert influences on governance outcomes, but these outcomes are mediated contextually through the constraints of Bangladesh. Bicameralism may theoretically be more conducive to oversight or representation, but its sustainability requires compatibility with the constitution and acceptance of the bicameral design by politicians and citizens, as well as logistical feasibility. Thus, feasibility is understood as the manifestation of structural design in the context of reality.

Method of Analysis

The study applies thematic content analysis to synthesize findings from academic literature, comparative case evidence and Bangladesh-centric governance studies. Theme identification through thematic Universe PG | www.universepg.com

analysis assists the research longitudinally to identify the recurring themes executive dominance, waning oversight, legislative speed vs deliberation, representational gaps and institutional legitimacy and contextualize those modes of explanation into an explanatory narrative. These comparative findings are then triangulated with Bangladesh’s political and constitutional realities so as not to draw overly deterministic conclusions. Such triangulation is therefore a critical necessity as top-down moves to reform institutions fail dismally when lessons on design are abstracted without thinking about local-level political incentives and capacity for implementation (Massicotte, 2022).

Validity and Reliability

To enhance validity, the study employs source triangulation by incorporating peer-reviewed research

with institutional reports and constitutional materials. It also gives precedence to more recent academic work that speaks to contemporary comparative debates over democratic backsliding, legislative effectiveness and the role of second chambers in modern democracies (Russell & Gover, 2023; Hassan, 2024). The reliability of the study was ensured through explicit logic for the selection of sources and cases, consistent coded criteria based on themes, as well as compliance with APA 7 all in text citation and referencing standards. These steps help to mitigate the risk of cherry-picking and enhance the transparency of the analysis.

Limitations

This study has its limitations to consider. It does not incorporate primary data including interviews with lawmakers, constitutional experts and civil society actors that would provide greater insight into political feasibility and the preferences of key stakeholders. Lastly, this approach does not apply quantitative models to investigate relationships between bicameralism and performance indicators since the research aim here is assessment regarding feasibility and institutional design rather than causal estimation. Last but not least, comparative evidence is limited and scope-narrowing given the different behavior of second chambers across contexts; far from setting a definitive prediction, this study considers the cross-national findings purely as analytical guidance (Heitshusen, 2023; Russell & Gover, 2023).

Ethical Considerations

The study uses only publicly accessible documents and academic literature, and no human subjects are involved. Ethical integrity is maintained by accurately representing sources, avoiding plagiarism, and providing full APA 7 citations for all referenced ideas and evidence.

Theoretical Framework

Veto Player Theory

The Veto Player Theory, whose initial formulation came from Tsebelis and then a wider in scope comparison of institutions, argues that the stability or change of policy through time is determined, essentially both by how many veto players are present in a political system but also their ideological distance to each other. In legislative systems, additional

chambers can function as veto players, increasing the number of actors whose agreement is necessary to achieve policy change (Heitshusen, 2023).

Bicameral systems with moderate asymmetry, particularly in majoritarian parliamentary systems, seem to produce policy stability by deferring sudden legislative changes (Massicotte, 2022) recent comparative evidence supports this version of the argument. At the same time, upper chambers endowed with suspensive veto powers rather than absolute veto authority can help negotiation and compromise engendered rather than muzzling (Russell & Gover, 2023).

This assumes that Bangladesh is no different, where executive dominance and a hard line on the part of parties against any form of dissent tends to effectively stifle legislative opposition (Haque & Ahmed, 2022) even a second chamber would provide an extra institutional veto point. It could make deliberation and oversight better by requiring broader consensus before bills become set in stone. But if partisanship resembles that of the lower house, the additional veto point may turn out to be superfluous. So the theory emphasizes not only that there's a second chamber but also that it's independent and ideologically distinct.

Deliberative Democracy Theory

The deliberative democracy theory focuses on rational debate and inclusivity in democratic institutions and legislation. That means representation in elections is for legitimate behind legislation but also deliberation, and public or civil reasoning. Recent parliamentary scholarship also offers the claim that second chambers provide a net positive to deliberative quality overall though extended debate, more professional input and amendment (Russell & Gover, 2023). This is crucial in the context of systems with lower houses operating under strict party discipline since upper chambers provide an opportunity for more independent, less adversarial debate (Massicotte, 2022).

Bangladesh's parliamentary culture has been defined by adversarial politics and limited opposition engagement (Riaz, 2023). In such a context, bicameralism could in theory serve to enhance deliberative capacity if the upper chamber were structured to accommodate expertise, minority voices or regional representation.

But deliberative democracy theory also warns that institutional attempts will not, by themselves, yield better discourse; the political culture and modalities with which we communicate with one another need to also take root in improvement (Norton, 2020).

Institutional Balance and Separation of Powers

Bangladesh is, of course, a parliamentary democracy and the relevance of this idea of institutional balance applies here just as much. And the institutional balance thesis tells us that it is a recipe for majoritarian overreach and poor accountability if too much power gets placed into a single controlling body (Massicotte, 2022). In parliamentary systems with a single chamber, legislative and executive power often clash against each other, particularly if the party in government has a significant majority. In some situations, comparative research suggests that bicameralism can also bridge the gap from weak horizontal checks by inducing internal mechanisms of legislative review (Heitshusen, 2023). All the benefits of upper chambers: constitutional amendments can be proposed only with a certain delay, controversial legislation needs to be reviewed or reconciliation is required and the interests of minorities can be protected while not compromising parliamentary sovereignty (Patterson & Mughan, 2021).

The Jatiya Sangsad (National Parliament) is the sole legislative body created by the Constitution of the

People’s Republic of Bangladesh. Perhaps bicameralism can redistribute legislative authority internally and thus deliver greater institutional balance, especially given executive–legislative imbalance (Haque & Ahmed, 2022). However, the extent of this rebalancing would depend on the second chamber's constitution (Riaz, 2016).

Representation Theory and Minority Inclusion

Representation theory separates majoritarian representation from plural or functional representation. Bicameral systems with upper chambers commonly include elements of pluralistic representation, by the inclusion in those chambers of territorial units, occupational groups or minority communities. Comparative examples like India show a means for upper chambers to represent states in a parliamentary context. By contrast, the United Kingdom exemplifies appointed members' ability to contribute expertise and civil society perspectives (Russell & Gover, 2023). Bangladesh's socio-political framework comprises striking regional divergences and ethnic minority communities. Representation theory indicates that a well-structured upper chamber could help institutionalize minority inclusion without undermining the parliamentary model. Yet, if selection mechanisms are politically captured, representational gains may not occur (Riaz, 2023).

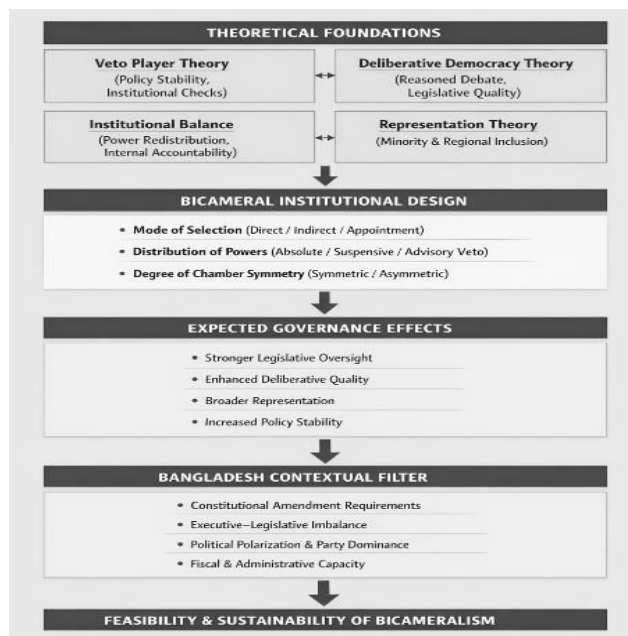


Fig. 2: Theoretical Model.

Integrated Theoretical Model

By combining these theoretical perspectives, the study conceptualizes bicameralism as an institutional reform that potentially:

- Increases veto points (Veto Player Theory)
- Enhances deliberative quality (Deliberative Democracy Theory)
- Improves internal legislative balance (Institutional Balance Theory)
- Broadens representation (Representation Theory)

But all theoretic advantages depend on the design of the institution and political context. Therefore, the theoretical framework does not assume that bicameralism is inherently better than unicameralism. Instead, the book provides an analytic framework for assessing whether bicameral reform would have good prospects to enhance or undermine the prospective shape of democratic governance in Bangladesh both internally and externally given the domestic constitutional terrain and political context.

Prospects of Introducing Bicameralism in Bangladesh

Strengthening Legislative Oversight

The first major theme to emerge throughout the literature is that of legislative oversight. As comparative scholarship has long signaled, second chambers are generally revising and scrutinizing bodies that contribute to better-quality legislation (Russell & Gover, 2023; Heitshusen, 2023). Codes for “executive dominance,” “weak committee independence” and “majoritarian concentration” emerged again and again in studies of single-chamber parliamentary systems.

From a governance studies perspective, a thematic analysis flagged similar issues of executive–legislative imbalance and strong party discipline in addressing the context of Bangladesh (Haque & Ahmed, 2022; Riaz, 2023). These limitations in structure may undermine the capacity of the lower house to function independently between executive overreach. By instituting a second stage of review with suspensive veto powers it would raise the question how more ‘controversial’ or constitutionally sensitive bills need to be re-evaluated (Russell, 2021).

Thematic synthesis reveals that the asymmetry of upper chamber structure and differentiated membership composition leads to strong oversight benefits. This would indicate that, were it to be adopted, a second chamber in Bangladesh needs to take an effective interest in having some sort of supervening authority (which has to be clearly different from the legislative power if it is not to merely duplicate) if it is credibly going to concern itself with scrutiny (Russell & Gover, 2023).

Enhancing Representation

A second major theme emerging from the analysis relates to plural and functional representation. Bicameralism is more commonly associated with general logics of representation (separation, hierarchy) that forgo the unrestricted electoral application available in population-based systems (Massicotte 2022). Terms of art, such as “territorial representation,” “expert inclusion” and “regional voice,” cropped up repeatedly in the literature. From the experience elsewhere India institutes state based representation in its upper chamber, and United Kingdom opts for appointed experts and civil society actors (Russell & Gover, 2023). These models demonstrate that bicameralism can expand the participation of a wider array of interest groups in legislative processes while maintaining parliamentary sovereignty.

Though Bangladesh is a unitary State, we can see regional disparity and socio-economic inequality in the country. Going by thematic interpretation, a second chamber can provide representation on divisions, local government bodies or professional sectors. Both reducing perceptions of centralization and increasing responsiveness in lawmaking. Nevertheless, thematic coding exposes apprehensions regarding the legitimacy of appointment mechanisms when they lack transparency. Thus, representation gains would have been moderated by procedural legitimacy and balanced selection methods (Shugart & Carey 1992).

Promoting Political Stability

A third important theme was political stability. Recent research links bicameralism to more stable policy through additional institutional veto points (Heitshusen, 2023). Terms like “consensus-building,” “deliberative delay” and “constitutional safeguarding”

appeared again and again in comparative assessments. If Bangladesh's political history is marked by electoral boycotts and muscular partisan competition as well as constitutional wrangling (Riaz, 2023), then these recent elections stand out even by those standards. The thematic analysis suggests that bicameralism creates negotiated structures, particularly when upper-chamber representatives have staggered terms. This could be staggered continuity (in the terms of this page) which could smooth the way electoral transitions whose sudden switches usher in abrupt shifts in policies tend to cause (Tsebelis, 2002). However, the literature warns that stability gains rely on moderate asymmetries across chambers (Massicotte, 2022). The wrong amount of symmetry could lead to legislative gridlock; the wrong kind of weak upper chamber may hardly matter. Therefore, thematic findings indicate that increasing stability involves calibrating both veto authority and inter-chamber dynamics.

Protecting Minority Interests

A fourth overarching theme is that of minority protection and inclusive governance. The large comparative literature on upper chambers tends to emphasize their normative role in securing minority rights and representation of diverse interests (Massicotte, 2022; Heitshusen, 2023). "We noted that phrases-wordings such as "constitutional guardian," "rights review" and "inclusive representation" were scattered in this thematic review.

Bangladesh is comprised of many ethnic communities and socio-economically vulnerable sections. The lower house at least has reserved seats for women; other ethnic minorities have had little voice in a strictly majoritarian electoral system. In accordance with the ideological pluralism view a second university may have enshrined minority participation through reserved representation or consultative power over rights-based legislation (Tsebelis & Cash, 1997). But it comes with a strong caveat, given comparative scholarship that highlights the need for minority protection to be insulated from partisan bias (Russell & Gover, 2023). If upper chamber appointments reflect ruling-party supremacy, with majority-rule aims prioritized over minority-protective ones the fledgling republic will not provide what protects minorities. Thematic synthesis indicated protection of minorities requires both

constitutional clarity and political neutrality during design.

Challenges of Implementing Bicameralism

Constitutional Amendment

Constitutional rigidity is identified as one of the most dominant themes in the literature. Comparative institutional research suggests that establishing a second legislative chamber entails significant institutional overhaul not only at the linguistic level (i.e., federally and/or bicameral) but beyond the pull of parliamentary systems built to operate as unicameral (Massicotte, 2022). Terms like "constitutional redesign," "legal restructuring" and "institutional reconfiguration" became frequent references in reform-oriented scholarship. In Bangladesh, Article 66 of the Constitution declares Jatiya Sangsad as unicameral legislature and therefore, is the only authority to make laws. It would thus require substantial amendments to ancient constitutional provisions if bicameralism were introduced. Thematic analysis of studies on Bangladesh affirms that constitutional amendments have been politically contentious and are frequently associated with partisan contestation (Haque & Ahmed, 2022; Riaz, 2023).

Also, you need a parliamentary supermajority to approve amending procedures, making it unlikely that this could happen in such a polarized political environment. It is well established in the literature that structural reforms work only if there is cross-party consensus and a long-term vision for institutions. In the absence of broad political consensus, efforts at constitutional redesign may worsen division rather than help reform (Weingast 2020). Therefore, thematic findings suggest constitutional legitimacy as the most fundamental impediment for bicameral enactment in Bangladesh.

Financial Costs

The second major theme that emerged from the thematic content analysis related to fiscal and administrative costs. This would create an upper chamber, which has huge institutional overhead in the form of a new building or renovation of any existing infrastructure, administrative secretariat and staff (research, committee), security detail etc. not to mention ICT systems and payments for members. There is evidence

that inter-parliamentary comparative data reveal that bicameral systems tend to be more expensive in terms of aggregate operational expenditure compared to unicameral legislatures, owing to redundancy in administrative structures and support (Inter-Parliamentary Union [IPU], 2023). You would find, across studies focusing on reforms, codes such as institutional expenditure, budgetary burden, administrative growth and operational maintenance.

But comparative evidence indicates that legislative budgets usually only account for a small fraction of total national spending. The spending of parliaments in bicameral systems accounts for at most 1–2% of government budgets (IPU, 2023). In fact, as Massicotte, (2022) discusses at length financial objections are generally more symbolic than substantive since the costs of institutions per capita are negligible compared to total public expenditure. However, in newly emerging democracies perceptions of growing public

spending can be counterproductive led to socio economic demands with no immediate end in sight. This is an old story for those in Bangladesh: In Bangladesh fiscal priorities ‘tilt’ towards progressive expenditure on health, education, social protection and infrastructure. There will have to be some cost justification for a second chamber. Besides salary costs of members, expenses would include legislative research services, administrative staffing and office maintenance and allowances as well as committee operations. And upfront capital expenses such as constructing or retrofitting chambers would impose lumpy, one-off costs. **Table 1** provides a comparative overview of legislative budget shares across selected parliamentary democracies to help frame the potential order of expenditure. The data is showed as an approximate estimate for the most recent years based on publicly available parliamentary reports and IPU compilations.

Table 1: Comparative Legislative Expenditure in Selected Parliamentary Democracies.

Country	Legislature Type	Estimated Annual Legislative Budget (USD, approx.)	% of Total Government Expenditure	Notes on Upper Chamber Role
India	Bicameral	\$1.5–1.8 billion	~0.3%	Rajya Sabha shares legislative review and committee work
United Kingdom	Bicameral	\$900 million–1 billion	~0.2%	House of Lords primarily revising chamber
France	Bicameral	\$850–900 million	~0.25%	Senate exercises legislative review
Bangladesh	Unicameral	\$120–150 million	~0.2%	Single chamber (Jatiya Sangsad)

Source: Compiled from national parliamentary budget reports and IPU (2023).

These comparative data render legislative spending as a proportion of total state expenditures low even in bicameral systems. If Bangladesh added a moderate second chamber (50–80 members) then total parliamentary costs would increase, although probably not to greater than 0.4–0.5% of total government outlay (once more assuming proportional scaling). Thus, from a pure macro-fiscal view point, bicameralism would not represent an outrageous structural financial burden. But the thematic findings also underscore that fiscal feasibility is not just about absolute cost. Political acceptability is equally important. Institutional expansion might also be regarded with skepticism in contexts where citizens believe they get little return on their political investment. So reform proposals would have to demonstrate order-of-

magnitude governance improvements like increased amendment rates, more effective oversight or enhanced minority representation. The other financial factor has to do with administrative effectiveness. Expertise and best practices on use of resources have also not been shared with each other to enable greater efficiency. Practice in comparative contexts shows that the problem can be reduced via common research services, joint committee mechanisms and integrated parliamentary secretariats (Massicotte, 2022). Therefore, financial sustainability would depend primarily on choices around institutional design. The key point is that the financial costs of bicameralism in Bangladesh are not prohibitively high from a macroeconomic perspective, but they do constitute a politically sensitive issue. The thematic synthesis yields that cost

issues do not concern affordability, though the public legitimacy and justification of costs–benefits. Such a proposal for reform of the bicameral system would therefore also have to incorporate transparent budgets, incremental implementation and the demonstrated improvements in legislative performance.

Risk of Redundancy

A third major theme in the literature is that of institutional redundancy. Comparative scholarship regularly cautions us that bicameralism does not deliver better governance; ill-designed upper chambers can, and often do, replicate the legislative process without real added value (Russell & Gover, 2023). A typology of codes such as “symbolic chamber,” “legislative duplication” and “limited impact” appeared with striking frequency in empirical studies of weaker second chambers. Data with authority

differentiation, independent member composition or functioning with veto powers allows observation of when upper chambers are unnecessary (Heitshusen, 2023). In systems where partisan control of the upper house reflects that of the lower, any further scrutiny is likely to be simply a reflection of majority preferences without giving anything real in terms of oversight. Given the particular political framework of Bangladesh with its deep-rooted party discipline and centralized mode of political leadership, however, this would lead to a second chamber potentially also coming under the sway of a ruling majority and compromising functional differentiation. Thematic interpretation warned that such redundancy might be excessive unless institutional design and independence (asymmetry amongst actors) had been reconciled within the matrix of a reformed constitution.

Table 2: Comparative Indicators of Redundancy Risk in Selected Bicameral Systems.

Country	Chamber Symmetry	Upper Chamber Veto Type	Partisan Differentiation	Amendment Influence Level	Estimated Redundancy Risk
India	Moderate Asymmetry	Suspensive (limited on money bills)	Moderate (indirect election)	Medium–High	Low–Moderate
United Kingdom	High Asymmetry	Suspensive	High (appointed, crossbench presence)	High	Low
France	Moderate Asymmetry	Suspensive	Moderate	Medium	Moderate
Italy (pre-reform context)	Symmetric	Absolute (in many cases)	High partisan overlap	Medium	Higher gridlock risk
Hypothetical Bangladesh (if symmetric & partisan-aligned)	Symmetric	Weak or symbolic	High partisan overlap	Low	High

Source: Adapted conceptually from Russell & Gover (2023); Heitshusen (2023); IPU (2023).

Thus, the literature underscores that design quality is critical; without meaningful differentiation, bicameralism may add procedural complexity without enhancing democratic performance.

Political Resistance

In thematic content analysis, the second identified theme was actually political resistance. Does this then mean that reforms in such areas are at variance with existing power arrangements and therefore generate resistance from the strongest political actors, (Masicotte, 2022). Codes such as “elite resistance,” “party dominance” and “power retention” regularly hung-over comparative reform disputes. Overwhelmingly,

intense partisan competition and executive–legislative centralization are prevailing characteristics of Bangladesh’s political system (Riaz 2023). A second chamber could redistribute legislative power, limiting majority control to reduce ruling parties’ incentives to advance reform. Similarly, opposition parties could fear institutional manipulation in the hands of successors of the upper chamber. The comparative literature suggests that the most successful bicameral reforms have emerged as part of broad-based constitutional movements, rather than through partisan design (Russell and Gover, 2023). Proposals for political reform in deeply polarized political contexts will be

interpreted as more likely being tactical approaches than moves to promote democracy itself. Thematic findings hence indicate that bicameral adoption stems primarily from political events aimed at consensus-building. Absent bipartisan collaboration and a public trust in these reforms, efforts are likely to stall or be used as fodder for political attacks.

Comparative Insights

Models of Bicameral Design: Symmetric vs. Asymmetric

In comparative literature, symmetric bicameralism (both chambers almost equipotent) and asymmetric bicameralism (when the upper chamber has limited or suspensive powers) are distinguished. Comparing the two hypotheses, empirical findings suggest that symmetry is more prevalent in federal states with upper chambers representing territorial units endowed

with the weakest between weaknesses. Thus, in contrast to consensus democracies (parliamentary) many parliamentary democracies seek out asymmetric models that avoid legislative deadlocks (Heitshusen, 2023). India, for example, operates a quasi-symmetric bicameral system under which the Rajya Sabha may delay and amend legislation but not have final say on money bills. That compromise balances both state representation and parliamentary effectiveness. In contrast, the United Kingdom has a highly asymmetrical form of this type where the House of Lords exercises a suspensory veto and operates essentially as a revising assembly. Intriguingly, it is this asymmetry that allows much amendment activity to occur without incurring constitutional deadlock (Russell & Gover, 2023).

Table 3: Comparative Models of Bicameral Design: Symmetric vs. Asymmetric Systems.

Country	Legislature Type	Symmetry Level	Upper Chamber Veto Power	Control Over Money Bills	Practical Impact on Legislation	Observed Governance Effect
India	Bicameral	Moderate Symmetry	Suspensive (limited on financial bills)	Lower House Primacy	Moderate amendment influence	Balanced review, limited gridlock
United Kingdom	Bicameral	High Asymmetry	Suspensive veto only	No veto on money bills	High amendment rate	Strong revising function, minimal obstruction
France	Bicameral	Moderate Asymmetry	Suspensive/ joint committee resolution	Shared but lower house dominance	Moderate influence	Policy refinement role
Italy (pre-constitutional reform)	Bicameral	High Symmetry	Strong veto authority	Shared	High legislative negotiation burden	Risk of deadlock
Germany	Bicameral (Federal)	Strong Symmetry (on federal matters)	Absolute veto on state-related laws	Shared depending on type	High influence on federal legislation	Strong territorial representation
Bangladesh (Current)	Unicameral	N/A	N/A	Single chamber control	No second review	Faster legislation, limited internal check

Source: Synthesized from Massicotte (2022); Russell & Gover (2023); Heitshusen (2023); IPU (2023).

Asymmetric bicameralism is especially useful in unitary parliamentary systems where there is a desire for scrutiny rather than territorial veto power (Massicotte, 2022) according to comparative evidence. A symmetric model for Bangladesh could induce unnecessary friction while an asymmetric revising

chamber (i.e., a second chamber) would help refine legislation without disturbing executive governance.

Composition and Selection Mechanisms

The selection of upper chamber members is closely related to the legitimacy and performance of those

chambers. Comparative analysis reveals three general models: direct election, indirect election, and appointment. In India, indirect election of Rajya Sabha members through state legislative assemblies sustains federal representation and political linkage with subnational governments. French senators are elected by an electoral college, but one that is weighted heavily towards local government representatives and so enhances territorial representation. On the other hand, the United Kingdom focuses on a predominantly

appointed system, valuing professional expertise and crossbench independence (Russell & Gover, 2023).

Evidence indicates that indirect election regimes fix territorial legitimacy, while those based in appointments tend to increase functional oversight while possibly creating issues of democratic accountability (Massicotte, 2022). Models of direct election may enhance democratic legitimacy, but would run the risk of replicating partisan dynamics at the lower house level.

Table 4: Comparative Models of Upper Chamber Composition and Selection.

Country	Selection Method	Electoral Base	Level of Partisan Differentiation	Perceived Legitimacy	Amendment Influence Level
India	Indirect election (state legislatures)	Territorial/state	Moderate	High (federal representation)	Medium–High
United Kingdom	Appointment (life peers, experts)	Professional/civil society	High (crossbench presence)	Moderate–High	High
France	Indirect election (local government electoral college)	Territorial/local	Moderate	High (territorial linkage)	Medium
Germany	Delegation from state governments	Federal/state	High differentiation	High (constitutional federal role)	High (on federal matters)
Italy (pre-reform)	Direct election	National electorate	Low differentiation	High	Medium
Bangladesh (current)	N/A (unicameral)	National electorate	N/A	High electoral legitimacy	No second review

Source: Synthesized from Massicotte, (2022); Russell & Gover, (2023); Heitshusen, (2023); IPU, (2023).

For Bangladesh, comparative evidence indicates that duplicating the lower house’s direct electoral model would likely reduce differentiation. A hybrid approach combining indirect election through local government institutions and limited appointment of experts may offer stronger institutional distinctiveness.

Legislative Performance and Amendment Rates

Indeed, recent empirical research illustrates that we can tease apart differences between unicameral and bicameral systems in terms of the extent of their foreignness to amendments as well as deliberation times (Heitshusen, 2023). Upper chambers typically amend between 30%-60% of all legislation, particularly in the areas of constitutional law, civil rights and regulatory policy (Russell & Gover, 2023), as noted in several parliamentary democracies. This reorients to what we have found among individual examples across Europe: the House of Lords in the

United Kingdom is often described as an effective revising chamber because it has a high amendment rate and operates under a non-partisan deliberative culture. Nominally, India’s Rajya Sabha has played a moderating role in contentious amendments to the Constitution. Indeed, comparative evidence suggests that amendment activity correlates with differentiated representational composition and suspensive veto leverage. Where upper chambers have no meaningful independence from, or significant authority over, lower chambers, amendment rates are far more insipid (Massicotte, 2022).

Amendment activity reflects proportion of bills modified or revised during upper chamber consideration. Data synthesized from parliamentary reports and comparative analyses (Russell and Gover, 2023; Heitshusen, 2023; IPU, 2023). For Bangladesh, such evidence implies that legislative performance gains

would depend on ensuring that an upper chamber has clear authority to review and propose amendments rather than merely endorsing lower-house decisions.

Table 5: Comparative Legislative Performance Indicators in Selected Bicameral Systems.

Country	Legislature Type	Upper Chamber Amendment Activity	% of Bills Amended by Upper Chamber (approx.)	Acceptance/Negotiation Rate	Overall Revising Influence
United Kingdom	Asymmetric Bicameral	High	40–60%	High (many amendments accepted or negotiated)	Strong revising role
India	Moderate Symmetry	Moderate–High	30–50%	Moderate	Significant in non-money bills
France	Moderate Asymmetry	Moderate	25–40%	Moderate	Policy refinement function
Germany	Federal Bicameral	High (on federal matters)	40–50% (state-related bills)	High	Strong territorial veto power
Italy (pre-reform)	Symmetric	Moderate	30–40%	Variable	High negotiation burden
Bangladesh (Current)	Unicameral	N/A	N/A	N/A	Single-stage review

Political Culture and Party Systems

It is also wrong to ignore the role of political culture and party dynamics in determining performance; institutional design matters, but it’s far from everything. Compared to the previous scholarship, comparative studies note their bicameral systems are more effective where political actors honor institutionalism and partisan control exerts divergence between chambers (Heitshusen, 2023).

Under conditions of high polarization, bicameralism can either dampen or heighten conflict depending on the character of relations between the two chambers. Research shows that in those systems with less partisan, more expertise-driven upper chambers, they moderate polarization (Russell & Gover, 2023).

If both chambers are controlled by the same dominant party, however, oversight benefits decline. Bangladesh’s political landscape is mired by iron party discipline and executive control (Riaz, 2023), so whether a second chamber would act independently would be cause for concern. Comparative lessons also imply that institutional safeguards whether in the form of staggered terms or proportional representation can help guarantee partial differentiation and mitigate partisan capture.

Bicameralism in Unitary States

One is a crucial comparative insight around became-ralism in non-federal systems. Although historically associated with federal states, the recent research reveals that the revising power of second chambers is successfully maintained by numerous unitary democ-racies (Massicotte, 2022).

The UK and France demonstrate that bicameralism can function well in concentrated political systems when calibrated for clearly defined functional roles. This finding has particular implications for Bangla-desh, which is still unitary on paper. There is comparative evidence that federalism can exist without bicameralism. The operational justification that increases scrutiny and representation can be enough.

Implications for Bangladesh

Synthesizing these comparative dimensions yields several nuanced insights:

- Design Matters More Than Structure: Asym-metry and differentiation are key to avoiding redundancy.
- Legitimacy is Central: Transparent and bala-nced selection mechanisms enhance public trust.

- Political Context Conditions Outcomes: Institutional reforms must align with party incentives and democratic norms.
- Incremental Reform May Be Preferable: Some countries introduced bicameral reforms gradually rather than through abrupt constitutional overhaul.

For Bangladesh, comparative evidence does not prescribe a single model but suggests that bicameral reform should be tailored, incremental, and design-sensitive. Thematic findings reinforce that institutional transplantation without contextual adaptation risks inefficiency or politicization.

4. Discussion

The ground of the discussion is built on thematic content analysis and comparative insights, which synthesizes the theory part in order to commence a more rigorous inquiry if bicameralism would still stand as an effective institutional remedy for Bangladesh. Instead of making a value judgment on bicameralism as good or bad, the analysis illustrates how the proposal sits alongside Bangladesh's constitutional architecture under the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and in its politics more generally. The lesson to draw from this composite exploration then is that bicameralism in Bangladesh has the potential for dividends, but only when institutional design and political calculations are on the same page with constitutional pragmatism.

Theoretically, on the basis of Veto Player Theory adding another legislative chamber will be added to increase number of players that if cooperated can promote policy change accumulation vetoes and stabilize policies degrade sharp legislative turns (Heitshusen, 2023). When executive dominance and strong party discipline prevent scrutiny, a second chamber can serve as an internal check that slows and refines decision-making. Executive-legislative imbalance, in otherwise low-level oversight capacity (Haque & Ahmed, 2022; Riaz, 2023), is a recurrent theme in governance scholarship on Bangladesh, so the theoretical logic of adding an institutional veto point makes superficial sense. But the conversation cannot stop there: It instead must interrogate whether political realities would actually allow that veto point to operate

on its own. Even the theoretical oversight power would face significant depletion if the membership of upper-chamber were aligned politically with a ruling majority. Institutional differentiation, rather than mere structural addition, is what will deliver theoretical gains." Both the theory of deliberative democracy and the philosophical supports for bicameralism strongly connect to one another because they require some degree of deliberation and inclusion in political dialogue process. Evidence to the contrary exists, however, with many second chambers being correlated with longer deliberative periods, more positive amendment and mechanisms for expert scrutiny (Russell & Gover 2023; Massicotte, 2022). However, one should keep in mind that Bangladesh parliamentary proceedings have had historically (in recent decades) some periods of extremely low opposing party participation and direct hostilities from party to party (Riaz, 2023). One that incorporates professional expertise or regional representation - a second chamber could give us a less adversarial and more policy-oriented deliberative floor. Deliberation, however, is not just a function of institutional design; it is also conditioned by political norms. As a corollary, if Congress's adversarial political culture were reproduced in another prospective chamber, there may be limited positive deliberative effects. So, as the discussion illustrates, bicameralism can create institutional opportunities for deliberative debate but does not it ensure that such opportunities will be realized; that task sounds to political culture.

The other part of the debate is representation. Bangladesh's unicameral system relies heavily on population-based electoral representation. While this model is consistent with majority democratic principles, it may result in a lack of representativeness for pluralistic or territorial interests. In fact, the institutionalized state based (may be social or minority representation) or professional representation of second chambers without a basic transformation in parliamentary sovereignty; come close between Indian and United Kingdom cases here (Russell & Gover, 2023). Based on the thematic analysis, it suggests establishing an upper house in Bangladesh based either upon regional or provincial divisions of the country, or as representation of elected local government represent-

atives or experts to be appointed. Such diversification can contribute to enhancing the representational inclusiveness of legislation as well as boost confidence in the functioning of parliament amongst the public. Yet, legitimacy concerns loom large. Sweeping appointment or indirect systems protected by the functional over-holding of the ruling party could cripple democracy-bicameralism-representational intent. So, gains in representation are structurally feasible, but politically contingent.

Political stability is, hence, both a window of opportunity and an impact. Comparative analyses of governments point out that bicameralism reduces rapid policy oscillation and contentious constitutional changes via mutual expansion of coalition in both chambers (Heitshusen, 2023; Massicotte, 2022). In a context like Bangladesh's, where constitutional amendments can be politically volatile and constitute another means for the ruling party to retain power over time, a second chamber could establish procedural protections against domination by any single party as well as encourage negotiation across parties. But the debate must acknowledge the opposing threat of legislative paralysis. In highly polarized systems, however, bicameralism may escalate conflict when the chambers turn into arenas of partisan competition. Thus, the bicameralism contribution for stability to this concept needs critical reappraisal as an option that depend heavily upon asymmetrical equilibrium of power with a time lag and differences in composition. In the absence of such safeguards, the second chamber could exacerbate rather than soothe political tensions.

The single most serious practical barrier is constitutional. The bicameral legislature would be a huge constitutional change and require broad parliamentary consensus. Bangladesh's constitutional history is politically contentious and contested when it comes to major amendments (Haque & Ahmed, 2022). Comparative experiences with reform indicate that durable changes to institutions emerge from inclusive constitutional processes, not unilateral legislative measures (Russell & Gover, 2023). Therefore, bicameral reform in Bangladesh must be envisaged as a long-term project of democratic consolidation and not simply as a short-term partisan agenda. Reform proposals could prove politically untenable without

cross-party consensus. Financial and administrative matters also deserve attention. Although comparative data shows legislative budget relatively small compared to national expenditure (Inter-Parliamentary Union [IPU], 2023), feeling of climbing up political spending might causing skepticism. For bicameralism to be accepted by the public there must be some language that can articulate its distributive value in institutional terms and make evident that it is a factor contributing to improved governance outcome. On its own, cost is not likely to be a prohibitive barrier however it may well become legitimacy poison cost without visible benefit.

Consequently, an integrated assessment concludes that bicameralism in Bangladesh is neither a cure-all for governance challenges nor a proposition inherently outside of the realm of realism. Whether it is thus desired depends on careful constitutional engineering and institutional asymmetry, transparent selection processes, and political consensus. This discussion reinforces a broader lesson from the comparative literature: institutional reforms are much more likely to be sustainable if they align with both normative democratic goals and political incentive structures. And, for Bangladesh, bicameralism will need to be built out not as a mirror image of its existing legislature just as a separate entity but more in the form of some sort functionally differentiated institution with defined powers to review legislation including substantive diversity of representation and aligned checklists that guard against procedural coup.

But the case for bicameralism is really a larger question of democratization in Bangladesh. This question leads to a range of styles and approaches for legislative reform, should it prioritize speed and centralization or deliberation and decentralization? Comparative evidence does not provide a one-size-fits-all, but it does offer warning signs: structural reform that ignores context will be ineffective; contextual consciousness combined with failure to innovate in terms of structure will lead nowhere.

Accordingly, the sustainability of bicameralism in Bangladesh is reliant on achieving a proper balance between theoretical aspirations and political realities.

5. Conclusion

This paper looks both at the pros and cons of a bicameral parliament for Bangladesh. The analysis, drawing on thematic content-analysis and institutional theory, as well as innovative recent comparative scholarship (2020–2024), demonstrates that bicameralism is not an actionable solution to governance problems, nor is it uniquely hopeless as reform. Instead, its potential effectiveness will depend on this constitutional context, the political incentives and contextual flexibility embedded in Bangladesh's parliamentary structure provided by The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. These findings uncover multiple theoretically justified benefits of bicameralism. This institutional leg of a second chamber derives from Veto Player Theory, which was ready-made for looking at coordination and governance by system-level players over voters (Heitshusen, 2023). Consensus-building is more necessary as new organs (chambers) are added to a legislature, which gives more weight to compatible preferences across actors and/or organizations. Though the benefit of an upper chamber is both contested and debated, especially on a national level, Deliberative Democracy Theory would argue that it improves the quality of parliamentary debate, allows for expertise to be included in decision making, and deepens scrutiny in legislating (Russell & Gover, 2023). According to the Representation Theory, bicameralism represents a second chamber that follows territorial or functional representation along with majoritarian electoral logic, which introduces bicameralism as an additional premise that overlays on top of the traditional one (Massicotte, 2022). These theories may suggest that the transition from the current one Chamber system to a two-chamber design can contribute to containing president induced hegemony, structured guided democracy and course of good scrutiny and representatively possibly existing in Bangladesh's one Chamber system. This study adds to the literature in placing Bangladesh within current debates on second-chamber reform and institutional balance in the global contemporary. It provides a reminder that any discussion of constitutional redesign should integrate theory with both comparative evidence and contextual analysis. Future research could incorporate this inquiry through interviews with policymakers, quantitative

performance comparisons, and modeling institutions on the basis of potential scenarios for further feasibility assessments.

6. Acknowledgment

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to his teacher Md. Azizur Rahman (Associate Professor) and Md. Wali Ullah (Assistant Professor), Department of Public Administration and Governance Studies, Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University, Trishal, Mymensingh, Bangladesh, who provided valuable suggestions during the preparation of this research. The authors also want to give a special thanks to his father, mother, sister and beloved wife Tonni Akter (MSS at Public Administration and Governance Studies) for continuous support. No external funding was received for this study.

7. Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

8. References

- Alam, M. S. (2022). Parliamentary accountability and democratic governance in Bangladesh. *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics*, 7(4), 612–628.
- Adeney, K., & Wyatt, A. (2004). Democracy in South Asia: Getting beyond the structure–agency dichotomy. *Political Studies*, 52(1), 1–18.
- Bagehot, W. (2001). *The English constitution* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press. (Original work published 1867)
- Bradbury, J., & Mitchell, J. (2020). Bicameralism and democratic governance: Reforming second chambers. *Representation*, 56(3), 321–336.
- Carey, J. M. (2021). Legislative organization and institutional design in comparative perspective. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 24, 1–19.
- Haque, M. S., & Ahmed, N. (2022). Executive–legislative relations in Bangladesh: Institutional imbalance and reform prospects. *Contemporary South Asia*, 30(3), 395–410.
- Hassan, T. (2024). Party dominance and parliamentary decline in South Asian democracies. *Journal of Legislative Studies*, 30(1), 55–72.

- Hasan N. (2021). Political modernization in the developing countries: challenges and prospects, *Asian J. Soc. Sci. Leg. Stud.*, 3(3), 41-48. <https://doi.org/10.34104/ajssls.021.041048>
- Heitshusen, V. (2023). Upper chambers and legislative performance: New evidence from comparative democracies. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 48(2), 215–238.
- Heller, W. B. (2020). Bicameralism and coalition politics in parliamentary democracies. *Comparative Political Studies*, 53(12), 1895–1923.
- Inter-Parliamentary Union. (2023). Global parliamentary report 2023: The power of parliaments in a time of crisis. *IPU*.
- Karim, S. (2023). Democratic consolidation and constitutional reform debates in Bangladesh. *J. of Asian and African Studies*, 58(5), 987–1003.
- Lijphart, A. (2012). Patterns of democracy: Government forms and performance in thirty-six countries (2nd ed.). *Yale University Press*.
- Longley, L. D., & Oleszek, W. J. (2020). Bicameralism and legislative process in comparative perspective. *Parliamentary Affairs*, 73(2), 255–273.
- Massicotte, L. (2022). Bicameralism in comparative perspective: Functions, reform, and democratic resilience. *Parliamentary Affairs*, 75(2), 345–362.
- Mezey, M. L. (2021). Comparative legislatures (2nd ed.). *Duke University Press*.
- Norton, P. (2020). Reform of second chambers: The UK House of Lords in comparative perspective. *J. of Legislative Studies*, 26(4), 543–560.
- Patterson, S. C., & Mughan, A. (2021). Senates and representation in democratic systems. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 46(3), 411–430.
- Riaz, A. (2016). Bangladesh: A political history since independence. I.B. Tauris.
- Riaz, A. (2023). The state of democracy in Bangladesh: Institutional fragility and political polarization. *Asian Survey*, 63(4), 587–606.
- Rumi MH, Rashid MH, Makhdum N, and Nahid NU. (2020). Fourth industrial revolution in Bangladesh: prospects and challenges, *Asian J. Soc. Sci. Leg. Stud.*, 2(5), 104-114. <https://doi.org/10.34104/ajssls.020.01040114>
- Russell, M. (2021). The policy impact of second chambers in parliamentary democracies. *European Political Science Review*, 13(3), 345–362.
- Russell, M., & Gover, D. (2023). The contemporary role of second chambers in parliamentary democracies. *Journal of Legislative Studies*, 29(3), 289–307.
- Shugart, M. S., & Carey, J. M. (1992). Presidents and assemblies: Constitutional design and electoral dynamics. *Cambridge University Press*.
- Tsebelis, G. (2002). Veto players: How political institutions work. *Princeton University Press*.
- Tsebelis, G., & Money, J. (1997). *Bicameralism*. Cambridge University Press.

Citation: Ahammed S. (2026). Introducing a bicameral parliamentary system in Bangladesh: prospects and challenges, *Br. J. Arts Humanit.*, 8(2), 697-715. <https://doi.org/10.34104/bjah.02606970715>

Copyright: © The Author(s), 2026. Published by the UniversePG. This is an **Open Access** article, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, and provided the original work is properly cited. 