

Challenges and Prospect of Women Empowerment In Local Government (Union Parishad)



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Session: 2009-2010

M.Phil

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Date of Submission: 28th February, 2018

Declaration

I, Md. Saiful Islam, declare that the M. Phil, thesis entitled 'Women Empowerment' Strengthening Local Government System: A Study on elected members at the Union Parishad Level' is no more than 36,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references and footnotes. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Any previously published material that has been used in this thesis to the best of my knowledge has been duly acknowledged. Except where otherwise indicated this thesis is indeed my own work.

(Md. Saiful Islam)

Date: 28.02.2018

Abstract

Union Parishad (UP) is the only one local government body that has been operating for decades with regular elections. The elected representatives at the union parishad level effectively remain subservient to the central government officials at the upazila level. Union parishad is called the closest institution of rural local people. The central government whether stays in power or not it depends on the success or failure of these institutions. This study has found a noteworthy number of hindrances and these are responsible less empowerment of local government system. The result of this study has been described in three phases. Firstly, The leadership quality does not perfect for the strengthening of Union Parishad. Secondly, Institutional and individual less empowerment of UP is also liable before mentioned conditions. Thirdly, Unwillingness of Political Government have been carrying out this condition of UP since the inception of independence of Bangladesh. This study conducted by using the mixed approaches (quantitative and qualitative) and it could not reflect the real scenario by using either quantitative or qualitative approach. Used mixed method for bringing out the real scene of the research area. Findings of the study describes that strengthening of union parishad is required effective role of leadership, individual & institutional empowerment as well as effective people's representative participation. Strengthening of Union Parishad means adequate allocation of resources and freedom of expenses of it, skilled and efficient administration; empowered UP members as well as parishad as an institution; performance of leadership required with effectiveness, competence and commitment to the village citizens.



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To Whom It May Concern

This is to certify that Md. Saiful Islam has been working as a M. Phil. Researcher under my supervision for about two years. The title of his thesis is 'Women Empowerment' Strengthening Local Government System: A study on elected members at the Union Parishad Level'. His Registration Number is 166, Session: 2009-2010.

The thesis contains the results of Md. Saiful Islam researches. The findings of his study is hoped to contribute to the policy framework of strengthening of local government system in general and Bangladesh in Particular.

I wish his success in every sphere of life.


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Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge my gratefulness to some people and organizations who have contributed to development and completion of my M. Phil. Thesis from their respective capacities.

I would like to owe a deep sense of gratitude to my respected teacher and supervisor Mr. **Mahbubur Rahman**, Professor of the Department of Public Administration, the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh for his invaluable guidance, thoughtful suggestions and enlightened discussion during the entire phase of the study without which it was impossible to complete the thesis.

I would like to express my profound gratefulness to my honorable teachers of the Department for their advice and inspiration. I am also wanted to thank my all friends and elder brothers for their co-operation and encouragement at various stages.

I gratefully acknowledge and honor my dearly beloved parents and loving younger sister for their continuous encouragement to me with a view conducting the study.

None of the above, however, bears any responsibility for the interpretation of events presented in this study. I must shoulder upon any such error.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTORY DISCUSSION

1.1 Introduction

The history of local government in our country dates back to 1870 (Khan, M.M. 2010). Since then it has gone through various stages and experimentation. At present, we are still looking for the appropriate structure of the local government system in Bangladesh. Much discussion and debate is going on regarding the structure, activities, accountability and transparency. Moreover, politicization of these local institutions as well as their management structure is another concern issue regarding local government system in Bangladesh. Civil societies, researchers and academicians as well as donor agencies have been suggesting the government to bring overall efficiency of the local government in Bangladesh. Few of them are trying to take change in policy level while others are creating awareness among the citizens through traditional methods like seminars, symposiums and workshops. There have been discussions on decentralization and vesting proper authority to the local government to carry out their functions but it seems that slight change is taking place here (Majumder; 2003).

Local government institutions are very much significant part of the central government for development activities. It is the icon of decentralization of power for delivering government service to the door of citizen. However, the present scenario of local government in Bangladesh cannot fulfill the expectation of local citizens (Rahman, S. 2011). There are so many reasons behind this failure which make it as a motionless organization. Existing local government structure has different tiers such as Zila Parishad at district level, Upazila Parishad at Upzila level, and Union Parishad. Zila Parishad is the least active institution among these institutions. Upazila Parishad functions irregularly. However, Union Parishad works more actively than other local government institutions.

In Bangladesh, Union Parishad has been tracing its destiny through various experiments and has not found its desire objectives yet. Many reform commissions were formed to strength this institution and various recommendations were suggested by these commissions but unfortunately most of them were not executed. Moreover in different times, different Military ruler used these institutions for their own purposes. Furthermore, democratic government also failed to strength

them. The existing literature refers that the pre-requisites of strengthen local governments are effective role of local leadership, empowerment of Union Parishad, and active participation of people's representatives. This study tries to explore the necessity of those terms in order to strengthen Union Parishad as a local self-government institution in Bangladesh. From this point it has been tried to explore the real obstacles which are responsible for less effective Union Parishad as a local self-government unit in Bangladesh.

1.2 Background of the study

Local government in Bangladesh has a long history. As described in the historical background of local government above, Bangladesh was colonized for a long period of time by the British East India Company and British Crown. Foreign domination continued under Pakistani rule. None of these foreign rulers made efforts to make local government institutions decentralized and delegate authority to the rural level (Huque, 1988). Local government in Bangladesh has traditionally been dependent on central government for most of its activities (Noor, 1996). The tradition of local government system in Bangladesh has a long history in its present form its origin can be traced to the demand for self government in British India¹. Initially, Local government was developed by the British to maintain law and order situation in the rural areas with the help of local elite's backed by local police. The local elites were nominated in the local government system from among those who were confidence by the colonial authority and the village police (the chowkidars) was paid by taxing the villagers (through the local government of the village punchayets in the 1870s (Khan 2010) and the union and District Boards after 1885). More than one hundred and thirty years have passed since the creation of the act and local government at union level through the year has changes its name, area, function, power from time to time. Subsequently as the demand for the self government increased among the Indians, more functions, were given to the local government institutions notably feeder roads, basic health services and primary education but with limited access to development funds and as such the service and development function of these institutions remained marginal. A more important development that followed subsequently was the gradual concession made to Indians for selecting their local government representatives through election in place of nominations. By the time the British had to leave India (1947) both the tiers of local government (the union and the

District Boards) had become fully elective (Hussain, 2003). In retrospect, this can be said to be a significant achievement of the British particularly in undivided Bengal. No less significant was the fact that in British Bengal several union Board chairman got elected at a later stage to the District Boards, some even to the Bengal legislature showing how the local government institutions could play an important role in training people's representatives for higher political responsibilities.

Unfortunately, during the Pakistan period (1947-71) this dynamic trend of the growth of representative institutions was significant lost particularly under the Martial law administration of the Ayub Khan (1947-69). In 1959, Ayub introduced his particular variety of local government institutions known as the 'Basic Democracies³' under which the local government representatives known as the 'Basic Democrats' became the Electoral College for election of the President. It was alleged that the government in power under this system of controlled democracy, tried to win the votes of the basic democrats through questionable means allotment of 'Food for Works' wheat under PL 480. It could be argued that there was an economic rationale for giving such funds to the local government institutions but the people in general interpreted this motive differently. In 1969, during the period of anti-Ayub movement the institution of basic democracies came under sever attack.

After Independence of Bangladesh, it was expected that the above distortion of the development of local government institution would be corrected. Indeed the constitution of Bangladesh (effective from March 1973) provided in article 59 (GOB, 1990) that Local Governments in every administrative unit of the Republic is entrusted to bodies composed of person in accordance with law. Everybody such as is referred to in clause (i) shall subject to this constitution and in other law, perform with in the appropriate administrative unit, such functions shall be prescribed by Act of Parliament which may include functions relating to administration and work of public officers, maintenance of public order, the preparation and implementation of plans relating to public services and economic development. In article 60 the constitution provided that for the purpose of giving full effect to the provision of Article 59 the shall by law confer power to the local government bodies referred to in the article including power to impose taxes for local purpose to prepare their budgets and maintain funds (GOB, 1990).

Therefore, as far as the constitution of the country was concerned, it showed considerable insight in the task of development of viable self-government institutions in this country. However as far as the implementation of the objective was concerned, the achievement was far from satisfactory. The reasons for failure of the local government institutions to grow as self-governing institutions as envisaged in the constitution were both (i) structural and (ii) functional.

1.3 Justification of the research

Local government is an extended part of central government. Main objective of local government is to assist the central government to achieve its goal in Local level. Historically, the local government system of this country has been developed in different regimes in different ways. These local institutions are conducted by locally elected representatives. In practical, this system has been used infavour of ruling party's interest. Therefore, Local Government system has failed to prove its competence for non-cooperation of major political parties. The local government system is not strong enough due to the existing problems of Local Government such as lack of women's member in elected body, weak administrative capacity, a limited financial ability, inefficient personnel and little people's participation etc. For these reasons, this study has relevance about women empowerment strengthening local government system. Ensuring good governance will not be sustained if people's participation, empowerment and effective role of leadership are absent there.

1.4. Significance of the study:

Twenty first century is guiding in an era of new hopes and aspirations for the good governance, as the citizen of Bangladesh can now look forward with pride and hope for having some outstanding and significant moments that have taken place in the last two decades for their all out development as well as ensure women empowerment. We require both our hands to pray to our creator. So the active cooperation between men and women is a must for real development for developing country like Bangladesh. Such study will provide equal treatment to deliver government services to the citizens. But these services provided by central government to the local people through local people's institution. Hence, there is an urgent need to explore what

reasons are the responsible for strengthening of local government system. There are some vital different issues especially on empowerment, participation, and leadership can promote strengthening to local government system. By which local inhabitant would be increase their awareness and they can motivate themselves and it will make easy access to public institutions and political parties in national and local government.

1.5. Objectives of the study:

The broad objective of the study is to envisage empowerment, participation, leadership in strengthening local government system. The study has required some specific objectives by which broad objective would be perform. More specific objectives of this study are as follows-

- To review the role of women empowerment strengthening a Union Parishad.
- To measure the pre-requisite empowerment for strengthen a Union Parishad.
- To assess the role of Union Parishad as a primary tier of local government as well as rural institution.
- To examine the women empowerment and participation condition of the UP chairmen and members in development projects and plans.

1.6. Research Questions:

The study aims to explore the following research questions:

- Are the leadership, empowering process of women and people's representative participation related with the existing strengthening concept of local government system?
- What extent of leadership performances related with effective local governance?
- How much institutional & individual women empowerment related with the strengthening of Local Government?
- How do the functional bodies of UP work?
- What are the main barriers in existing UP standing committee system?

1.7. Variables of the study:

It reveals from the research objectives as well as research questions that leadership, empowerment and participation of the people's representatives are main components of this study. So, these components are acting here as the independent variables. Besides

this, there is another variable, which is strengthening of local government. It is called dependent variable because it varies by the performance of above mention variables.

1.8. Operational Definition

1.8.1. Women Empowerment:

Women Empowerment is a process of awareness and capacity building leading to greater participation to greater decision making power and control, and to transformative action (Karl 1995, 14). Empowerment denotes enhancing the capacity to influence state institutions, political & social process and public policies. The term is used to imply many things such as good governance, creativity in a private sector, transformation of economics, promotion of community development, process enabling collective decision making and collective action, access to resources and options etc. Here, it denotes that empowering of individuals as well as union parishad in the study area.

1.8.2. Women Empowerment Strengthening of local government system:

Local government is basically an organized social entity with a feeling of oneness. By definition, local government means an intra-sovereign governmental unit within the sovereign state dealing mainly with local affairs, administered by local authorities and subordinate to the state government (Jahan 1997). The strength and development of local government depends on various factors like people's participation, women empowerment and effective leadership etc. Some factors have been presented here. If those factors work together then local government institution might be strengthened.

1.9. Methodology:

What you have done is important arena in research, but *how have you done* is more than important' (Cresswell, 2003) the process to conduct a study is marked as methodology. Different approaches and methods have been used here according to the research objectives and research questions. These are described below:

1.9.1. Design of the Study

This study is conducted by using multiple research methods such as Survey, Interview, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), and Case Studies. *Case-Study Method*

The term 'case study' usually refers to a fairly intensive examination of a single unit such as person, a small group of people or indeed a single organization. The case study

method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life events such as individual life cycles, organizational processes, neighborhood change, international relations, and the maturation of industries. According to Yin '...case studies are the preferred strategy when 'how' or 'why' are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real life context'(Yin:2003). As the study mentioned earlier that the main concern is 'how' Union Parishads (UPs) are strengthened in the local government system so that it could provide better services to the citizens. That means the study has been described the current situation that whether it strengthened or not and has explored about its hindrance of strengthening if it has. As it is a contemporary phenomenon and it is a part of real life so case study design will appropriate for the study. This study takes Rashidabad Union Parishad as case study. The purpose of this study has highly been served by using case study method.

Survey Method

The contribution of local government system in the socio-economic and political development of rural people is enormous. Survey method has been used survey method to collect data from the selected number of UP members and chairmen. Structured questionnaire is used here to collect from elected people's representatives in rural local government in Bangladesh.

Interview Method

It is the most significant method to get direct and accurate data from primary data sources. In this method, the interviewer asks each respondent in a face to face situation and over phone with a list of predetermined questions and records the replies of the respondents in the space provided in the questionnaire. In this study, selective cases have been interviewed for primary data collection following both the structure and unstructured questionnaire.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

This study has been arranged FGD in Binnati and Boulai UP to collect in-depth knowledge on the subject of strengthening of the system of local government in Bangladesh. A focus group study can be simply defined as a discussion in which a small number (usually six to twelve) of respondents, under the guidance of a researcher/

moderator, talk about topics that are believed to be of special importance to the investigation (Folch-Lyon and Trost, 1981).

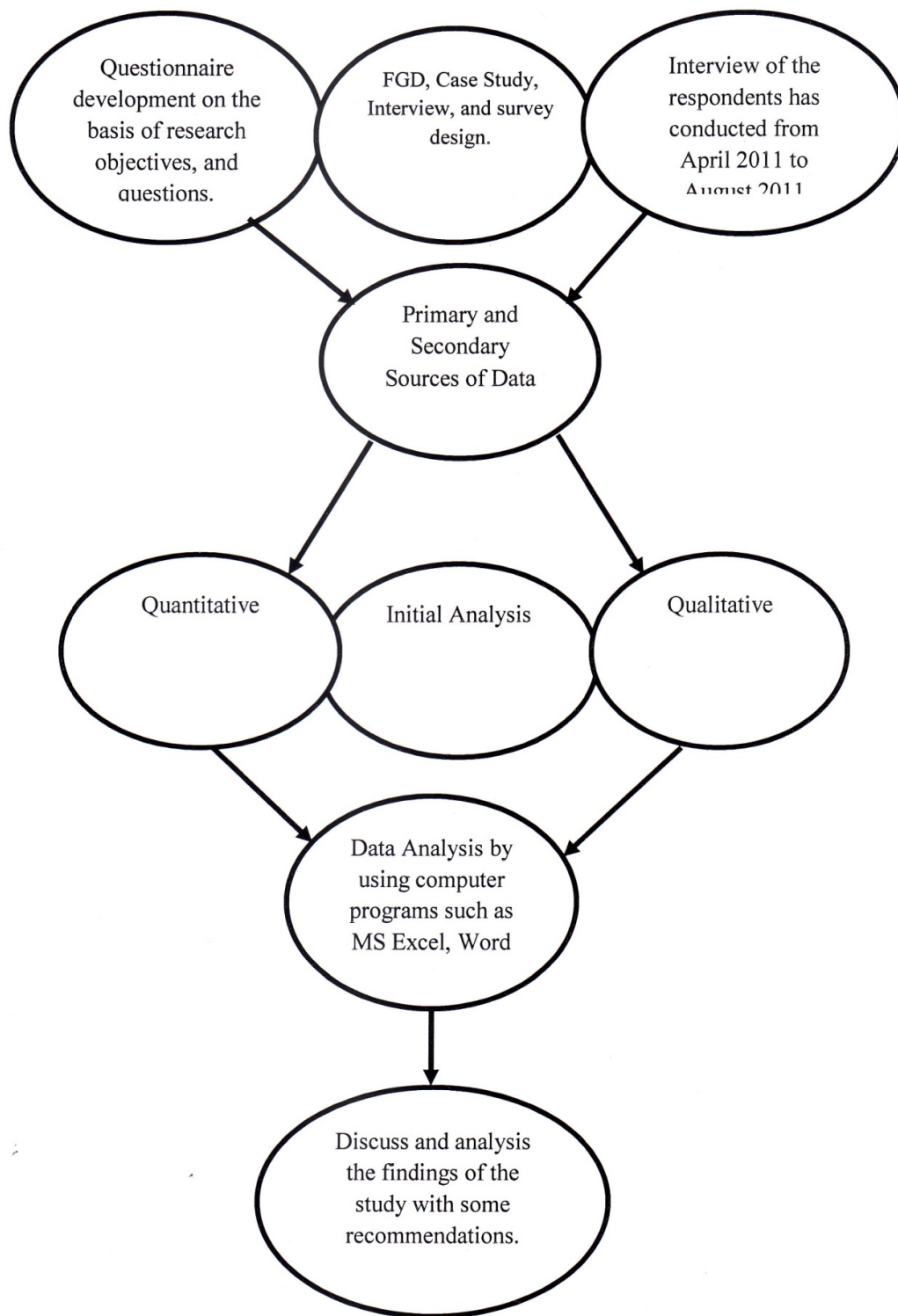


Figure-1: Design of the study

1.9.2. Types of Data and Sources

Both primary and secondary data have been used in this study and primary and secondary sources were used to collect data.

Primary Sources:

As the key focus of this study is the strengthening of local government system and to identify the factors affecting on the strengthening process. So the researcher's key respondents are the elected chairmen and members for interview. Three Chairmen of different Union Parishads have also interviewed. To compare the role of men and women members they were specially interviewed.

Secondary Sources:

Data has collected from relevant secondary sources such as from the general administration of Union Parishad, various articles, books, news papers, study reports, research monographs and internet. The researcher has also used varieties of documents, reports, official notes so that the researcher can get the real and valid information about how far Women Empowerment strengthening Union Parishad in local government system.

1.9.3. Method of Data Collection

Four trained and skilled field assistants were employed for field level data collection. The questionnaire was prepared in Bengali for easy understanding. The questionnaire was pre-tested for measuring validity and applicability before its final use. The primary data was collected through FGD⁴ and Individual Interviews. Data were also collated from selected published research materials and reports of various local government commissions/committees. Data were collected from 10 May 2016 to 15 August 2016.

1.9.4. Approach of the Study

This study has conducted Mixed Method Approach. It is one in which the researcher tends to base knowledge claims on pragmatic grounds (e.g., consequence- oriented, problem-centered, and pluralistic). It employs strategies of inquiry that involve collecting data either simultaneously or sequentially to best understand research problems. The data collection also involves gathering both numeric information (e.g., on instruments) as well text information (e.g., on interviews) so that the final database represent both

qualitative and quantitative information. Open-ended and close ended both types of questionnaire were used in this study. Two types of questions required to explore understanding how UPs could be strengthened in the study area. Moreover, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was used for qualitative data collection regarding this study. FGD study has provided in-depth knowledge about the women empowerment strengthening local government system.

1.9.5. Rationale of Mixed Method

Mixed method is mainly a combination of qualitative and quantitative method. 'A qualitative research seeks to establish the meaning of a phenomenon from the views of participants'. The researcher has also examined the term strengthening of local government system as per chairmen, male and women members' view. It is clear from the evidence that participation of UP members (male & female) has been increasing but not satisfactory level. What are the factors affecting it to be strengthened properly; this study has described the process of all of these that involve various factors of Women Empowerment (individual and institutional empowerment), Participation (elected representatives) and Leadership.

Through qualitative study the researcher tried to analyze the term 'strengthening of local government' from both chairmen and members view. Researcher is also tried to sketch the formal position of women Councilor by collecting information from them. The researcher's effort has been also given to find out some suggestion from their opinions to strengthen Union Parishad as a local government body in this context. And the reason of choosing quantitative approach is that this study has tried to find out the answer of the research questions from numerical point perspective. As the researcher took a big number of respondents and also used structured and semi structured questioner, quantitative method helped to get perfect result.

This study has been conducted by using both the qualitative and quantitative approach of research. Based on the research questions and objective, qualitative approach was chosen because the elected members and concern citizens have had a natural setting. And the reason of choosing quantitative approach is that this study has tried to find out the answer of the research questions from numerical point perspective.

The qualitative method is preferred because the actual findings of the study are beyond anticipation of the researcher. This research is expected to be exploratory and inductive in nature and it focuses on the existing problems of recognizing the members of Union Parishad. Qualitative research deals more with theory building rather than testing and researcher proceeds toward the study with some conceptual notions regarding probable theory in advance may be used in the study. Theories have been raised from the analysis of data or existing theory can be applied to innovating new theory by linking with findings of the study. There is flexibility in qualitative study where the researcher enjoys freedom in using theories and hypothesis to change as event unfold. In the qualitative study all phases like, enlarging and restructuring of research questions, data collection, data analysis, conceptual framework building and modifying go on almost simultaneously and interact with each others. According to Maxwell (1996) this method is the best suited for some specific purpose ; understanding meaning , context, identifying unanticipated phenomena and influences, generating new theories and understanding the process by which actions take place and developing causal explanations (Maxwell; 1996, 19-20). In this study, the qualitative approach will help researcher to look into what importance of empowerment, participation (male & female) and leadership in the local government for improving strength of it. And to identify the factors which influence strengthening of local government system.

For this study, the reason for choosing the qualitative approach is to collect in-depth information from the field. Therefore, the case study and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) method have been chosen so that it would helpful for explanatory studies and allows studying a problem in detail. The advantage of the FGD method is that it allows examining contemporary events with real life context and using multiple sources of evidence. The disadvantage of the FGD method is that it generally lacks rigor and allows biased views to influence the conclusions. The study is an empirical in the sense that it has several independent and dependent variables i. e. effective leadership, empowerment and people's participation and strengthening of local government system by which applying theoretical assumptions to justify the real scenario with the help of data collected from the field.

1.9.6. Population and Unit of Analysis

Palashbari Upzila is constituted with 03 Union Parishad. All the elected representatives of these Union Parishads have been constituted as the population of this study. Chairmen, general male and members of reserved seats are considered as a unit of analysis in this study. This study area has been selected due to represent all features of Union Parishads in Bangladesh. They have covered area of Union Parishad, a number of residents who have been living permanently. Moreover, there were free access to information, previously known it, and representation of all UPs.

1.9.7. Sampling and sample size

Sampling is the process of selecting a subject of individuals from a larger group of individuals. The selection is done to draw inference about the larger group. In this research, data were collected from 39 elected representatives at the union parishad level (11 for female representatives, 28 for male representatives). The respondents of local elected representatives comprised of chairman, women members for reserved seats, members for general seats. Sample size is 39 and has selected purposively on the basis of objective of this study.

Table -1: union parishad, palashbari upazila of Gaibandha district

Name of the union parishad	Name of members (female)	Number of members (male)
Palashbari	1. Mrs. Jayda begum 2. Mrs. Morshada akter 3. Mrs. Kohinur begum (all are reserved seats)	10
Betcapa	1. Mrs. Rozifa begum (elected chairman) 2. Mrs. Dulali begum 3. Mrs. Mollika banu 4. Mrs. Rohima akter	9
pobnapur	1. Mrs. Sahanaz parvin (elected chairman) 2. Mrs. Shabana akter 3. Mrs. Masuma begum 4. Mrs. Lipi rani sarker	9

1.9.8. Data processing and Analysis:

This study has followed in analyzing collected data which found from the field study. The study has organized and prepared data for transcribing interviews, typing field notes and sectioning data based on the sources of information. Then effort has given to obtain general sense about improving strength of local Self-government. The image of UPs have categorized and coded. Afterwards, data is described the themes which has found about improving strength of local self-government to be interconnected. Then researcher has tried to present the description in figures and tables.

The quantitative aspect of data has analyzed by using the factors of the leadership and the respondents reply. The total respondents have brought to percentage and then analyzed the outcome of the result. Then an analytical generalization is made to get to know the necessity of empowerment, participation and leadership will make stronger of local government system. In a word, collected data were characteristically classified and simple percentage was applied for analysis and presentation of data.

1.9.9. Study Area

The study area included 3 unions covering Palashbari Upazila in Gaibandha preliminary stage, one union was selected from that Upazila, and then 3 unions were selected from same Upazila purposively considering easy access, availability of leading local representatives and some other conveniences into consideration. Gaibandha with an area of 190.67 sq km.



Map-1: Gaibandha District Map

1.10. Limitation of the study

The respondents were not much aware about the duties and functions of the Union Parishad. So they suggested some reform agenda for the strengthening of local government system based on particularly how they see the UP at present. It would be better if they had some idea about the rules and regulations of the UP. The focus of this study was the strengthening of the Union Parishad, but the members of the Union Parishad are more interested in project implementation than the duties of his or her own committee. The members and Chowkidars do not attend the UP office regularly because they have to do something to feed their family. So it was difficult to make sure all the members and employees of the UP are presented in office for FGD. Local leaders have many complaints against the central government but they had no constructive suggestion on how to make sure strengthening of UP, more accelerate and what reforms are needed for the overcoming existing situation of local government system.

1.11. Structure of the thesis

This thesis is composed of seven chapters, each of which contains short discussions here.

Chapter One: Introductory Discussion

Introductory discussion an overview of the discussion that deals with research problem, significance of the study, research objectives, research questions, scope of the study, unit of analysis, and structure of the thesis. The methodology is an attempt to employ various methodological approaches used in this study. Why various methodological approaches used were appropriate for this study, how such usages were justified over others, and how these were incorporated in this study are also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter Two: Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

This chapter discusses dependent and independent variables and their relationship. It also talks about theoretical and conceptual framework for this study. The relationship between dependent and independent variables is also presented in this chapter.

Chapter Three: Review of Literature

This chapter incorporates different literatures regarding the study from three aspects such as the contribution of Women Empowerment to strengthen Local Government System, Participation of elected Local people's representatives is mandatory for strengthening of

Local Government System and the role of effective Leadership in strengthening Local Government System.

Chapter Four: Union Parishad in Bangladesh

Union Parishad in Bangladesh provides a brief historical background and the present status of Union Parishad as well as a short discussion about the system of local government in Bangladesh.

Chapter Five: Analysis of the study findings and Conclusion

This chapter discusses the possible remedy and thereafter the conclusion. In this connection, the issues on the objectives of this study, what theories and methodology were used, what was found and which theories were most relevant how and to what extent can findings be generalized, what conclusion can be made on the basis of such findings and how this study can be implicated for further research are highlighted in this chapter.

1.12. Conclusion

The Local Government system of Bangladesh has emerged by different rulers who from British and Pakistan directly. From this historical context, it is said that they have introduced various tiers of local government bodies in Bangladesh with the concern for exploiting rural poor people. For that reasons, it has not been working for the common people. After independence of Bangladesh has different government been trying to bring effectiveness and efficiency in these local institutions through various reforms committees and commissions but no government has take proper steps to implement reforms programs. The intellectual community thought government is not cordial to do strengthen of its local authorities but no government could succeed without better performance by local self-government bodies. So, government should focus women empowerment strengthening in local government from different perspectives namely empowerment, participation and leadership.

Chapter Two

The Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

2.1 Introduction

The overall development of a country depends upon the maximum utilization of her people, both men and women. In Bangladesh women comprise nearly half of the total population. But the status of women is much lower than that of men in every sphere of life. Women are identified with domestic life while politics is viewed as a male-dominated public activity that is typically masculine in nature. With the advancement of time, the fact has now been recognized that without ensuring women development. The national development cannot be achieved.

Women's equal participation in political life plays a pivotal role in the general process of the advancement of women. It is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into account. Without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women's perspective at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved. (FWCW.1995:1)

Systematic integration of women augments the democratic basis, the efficiency and the quality of the activities of local government. If local government is to meet the needs of both women and men, it must build on the experiences of both women and men, through an equal representation at all levels and in all fields of decision-making, covering the wide range of responsibilities of local governments.

Women's role in decision-making is one of the most important questions for consideration in the movement for their empowerment. Keeping in mind, the importance of women's participation in decision-making, like the other government in the world, the government of Bangladesh has initiated efforts to widen the scope of women for participation in the development process. The Local Government (Union Parishad) Second Amendment Act 1997 of Bangladesh is a mile stone towards ensuring women's equal access and increased participation in political power structures. This amendment provided for direct elections to reserved seats for women in local level elections. As a

strategy of affirmative action for providing the structural framework for women's participation in political decision-making and provided an opportunity to bring women to the center of local development and develop new grass –roots level leadership.

This paper is an attempt to explore the status of women's participation and how their participation in local government lead to empowerment in local government in Bangladesh particularly the Union Parishad and will identify the factors that hinder women's participation. At the same time this paper will suggest some remedial measures to uplift this situation.

2.2 Operational Definition

Women

A women is an adult female human being, as contrasted to men, an adult male, and a girl, a female child. The term woman (irregular plural: women) is used to indicate biological sex distinctions, cultural gender role distinctions, or both (Wikimedia, 2005:1)

Women constitute about half of the total population of the country. Apart from the household activities, they are contributing substantially to the national economy. Bangladesh is one of the first developing countries to establish a Ministry of Women's Affairs in 1978, three years after the first World Conference on Women in Mexico. The government has already prepared a National Policy for Advancement of women and made some noteworthy progress in implementing the National Action plan, prepared in response to the Beijing Platform for Action.

In spite of these achievements, the majority of women in Bangladesh have yet to be empowered to participate actively in the social, cultural, economic and political life of the country. Gender discrimination is widespread in all spheres and at all levels albeit, the Constitution of Bangladesh [Article 27,28(1),28(2),28(3), and 65(3)] guarantees equal rights to all citizens clearly incorporated provisions for equal status of women.

The policies and programs of the Government, NGOs, and other institutions do not sufficiently address the need for women's empowerment (ADB, 2001:1).

2.3 Women Empowerment

Empowerment is a process, though the result of the process may also be termed empowerment. But more specifically, the outcome of empowerment should manifest itself as a redistribution of power between individuals, genders, groups, classes, castes, races, ethnic groups or nations, empowerment means the transformation of structures of subordination, through radical changes in law, property rights, control over women's labor and bodies, and the institutions that reinforce and perpetuate male domination (Batliwala, 1993:5).

Empowerment of women is now a global issue. Although this term is usually used for improving women's condition, in real sense it may be applied to any disadvantaged group of society for bringing them to the same level of advanced section.

The Copenhagen Declaration of the World Summit on Social Development (WSSD) called for the recognition that empowering people, particularly women, to strengthen their own capacities is a main objective of development, and that empowerment requires the full participation of people in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of decisions determining the functioning and well-being of societies. The Report of the UN Fourth World Conference on Women called its Platform for Action 'an agenda for women's empowerment' meaning has the principle of shared power and responsibility should be established between women and men at home, in the workplace and in the wider national and international Communities (Oxaal, and Baden, 1997:3).

Vanessa Griffin (1987:117-18) identifies, some components to illustrate what the term empowerment indicates:

- a. Having control or gaining further control;
- b. Having a say and being listened to;
- c. Being able to define and create from women's perspective;
- d. Being able to influence social choices and decision affecting the whole society;
- e. Being recognized and respected as equal citizens in human beings with a contribution to make.

So it can be said that empowerment means a process to establish control over resources and also means to acquire ability and opportunity to participate in decision-making process and its implementation.

2.4 Local government

Local government is basically an organized social entity with a feeling of oneness. By definition, local government means an intra-sovereign governmental unit within the sovereign state dealing mainly with local affairs, administered by local authorities and subordinate to the state government (Jahan, 1997:92).

In political terms, it is concerned with the governance of a specific local area, constituting a political sub-division of a nation, state or other major political unit. In the performance of its functions, it acts as the agent of the state. In other words, the local government is an integral part of the political mechanism for governance in a country. Then, as body corporate with juristic person, it represents a legal concept (Muttalib and Khan, 1983:2).

According to the article 59(1) of the Constitution of the People's Republic Bangladesh, "Local Government in every administrative unit of the Republic shall be entrusted to bodies, composed of persons elected in accordance with law" (GOB, 1993:43).

2.5 Union Parishad

Union parishad is the lowest tier of administrative unit in Bangladesh. And Union Parishad is the second tier of rural local government from below. As per the statutes at present Bangladesh contains a four-tier local government structure. But in compliance to the constitutional provision an elected local government body exists only at the union level. According to LG (UP) ordinance, 1983, 'union' means 'a rural area' declared to be a union under section -3(Declaration of union and alteration of limits there of)[(GOB, 1990:2-3)]. It is entrusted with forty functions. The main functions include public welfare, maintenance of law and order, revenue collection, development and adjudication. Its source of income includes grants, taxes, rates, fees etc. the Union parishad consists of a chairman, nine members, and three women members, the voters of the Union Parishad directly elect all.

Chapter Three

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There are a number of literatures available where intellectuals and researchers discussed about the activities and shortcomings of the Union Parishad of Bangladesh, based on those findings a brief review is presented.

3.1. The Contribution of Empowerment to Strengthen Local Government System

Professor Mahbubur Rahman (2001) has mentioned in his article entitled *“Local Government in Bangladesh: A study on Institutional Restructuring”* that Local government institutions are non-sovereign community having the legal right and the necessary organization to regulate its own affairs. The history of local government in Bangladesh dates from ancient times. With the change of government, the policy on local government it was also kept changing. Such changes were generally dictated by the imperative of legitimizing and broadening the narrow base of the power-holders in the national government. Throughout the ages, changes have taken place through restructuring and the institutions we inherit today are the result of those restructuring. But still there is a wide gap between what is called ideal and real. But it must be admitted that local government institutions contributed immensely for the improvement of the country. Local government at the rural level in Bangladesh is mainly limited to Union Parishad. With the installation of the previous caretaker government, the authorities have constituted a Local government Commission to find the ways and means to get the benefit of the local government institutions. The commission suggested that local government institution should be strengthened to provide better services to the citizen or people. Therefore, this study inspired further study empowerment, participation and leadership in strengthening local government system: a study on elected members at union parishad level.

Yukl & Becker (2006) mentioned in their article, *“Effective Empowerment in Organizations”* that Psychological empowerment is the perception that workers can help determine their own work roles, accomplish meaningful work, and influence important decisions. Empowerment has been studied from different perspectives, including employee perceptions, leadership behaviors, and management programs. Despite positive rhetoric, programs designed to increase empowerment seldom achieve the benefits

promised. Inconclusive and seemingly contradictory outcomes stem from the fact that few companies give employees significant control and access to management information. A half century of research suggests that empowerment strategies can offer real benefits. The study outlines facilitating conditions for effective empowerment, including characteristics of organizations, leaders, employees, and the work itself. It has contributed to know indicators of empowerment in organization and also assisted for the development of conceptual framework of mentioned study.

Ullah, Md. Anwar and Ponguquan, Dr. Soparth (2010) stated in their article 'Financial Resources Mobilization Performance of Rural Local Government: Case Study of old rural local government in Bangladesh' that Union Parishads (councils) being the century old rural local government in Bangladesh are yet ot fulfill the expectations of rural citizen which is mainly due to own resources constraints including miserable local resources mobilization. This paper focuses on Union Parishads recent revenue trend and performance from five years secondary data (2003-2007) and primary data collected from Parishad representatives, local people, government officials and national experts. Finding of the study shows that dspite revenue potentials, weak revenue administration, inadequate adjustments and assignments of local revenue sources including lack of union functionaries training become impediments on local revenue enhancement. Other finding of the study suggests that in the absence of valuation based tax assessment system, households housing pattern and literacy rate can be significant determinants in ascertaining annual average holding tax revenue while per capita household holding tax, remittances, agricultural land ownership, households having electricity connections can be used as significant variables to determine the taxpayers ability to pay holding tax.

Ullah, Md. Anwar and Ponguquan, Dr. Soparth (2011) mentioned in their article entitled '***Revenue Mobilisation Performance of Union Parishad in Bangladesh: Is It Convergence of Central-Local Relations***' that Despite several local revenue sources Union Parishads (Councils) in Bangladesh are yet to perform optimal local revenue mobilization. This paper evaluates Unions revenue trend and performance, budget and planning practices, effect of central grants on local revenue in the backdrop of central government recent initiative for Unions capacity building. Analysis includes three representative Unions in a comparative perspective and uses secondary and primary data (from parishad functionaries, local citizen, government officials and national experts).

Findings show that open budget discussion, discretionary and performance grants have positive impact on local revenue collection while this study raises question about sustainability of the revenue augmentation due to de-concentrated allocations system and feeble local democratic governance. Study recommends making adjustments in local revenue shares, increase discretionary grants, and validation of local participatory governance. This study has implications for local revenue mobilization through convergence of central-local policy and strategy, especially for developing countries having similar local socio-economic and revenue source footings.

3.2. Participation of Elected Local People Representatives is required for Strengthening of Local Government System

Mustafizur Rahman Khan and Rardaus Ara (2006) stated in their article '*Women, Participation and Empowerment in Local Government: Bangladesh Union Parishad Perspectives*' that mainstreaming women through gender specific policies is and acknowledged precondition for achieving meaningful development in any developing country like Bangladesh. Yet it is only recently that this issue has been recognized as such in the context of policy reforms in both administrative and local government arenas. Recent local government reform in Bangladesh has led to creation of quota for women in grassroots democratic institutions. In the context of local government, women's concerns had surfaced intermittently and were highlighted in the government reform agenda as evident in the last Local Government Reform of 1997 was promulgated. It provides 3 directly elected women members in the Union Parishad from 3 reserved seats. However, there are serious lacunas in gender balancing both in terms of governance policy and reform agenda. Union Parishad is most popular democratic institution at the grassroots level. Therefore, the state of women's participation at this level is crucial and deserves special attention to empower them as participation and empowerment are closely related.

A.B.M.S. Zahur (2011) stated in his writing '*Meaningful Local Governments*' that what is needed is creating a system of vibrant local democracy through elected local government at each administrative unit. These bodies must be autonomous, transparent, responsive, inclusive and accountable to the people. This study has mentioned what to do for meaningful local government but there is no explanation how it could be achieved. This is actual gap between meaningful local governments and enduring study.

Mohammed Asaduzzaman (2009) wrote in his article *'Development Role of Local Governance Institutions in Bangladesh'* that Local governance institutions are widely recognized as the best reality that exists around them. Local government is also always, in all circumstances, considered as the important vehicle and only the means to provide state benefits and services to the local inhabitants. This paper attempts to analyze the performance of local governance institutions (public, non-profit and private) in Bangladesh in a critical and a comparative manner. It is found that, despite frequent reform measures, the public institutions have failed to become people-oriented democratic units due to strong intervention of formal and informal actors. As a result, corruption has burgeoned and pervaded every sector of the country as fatal disease, and has become an inevitable part of the daily life in Bangladesh. The findings of this paper indicate that the public institution is structurally stronger than the non-profit and private institutions but functionally weaker. The paper also suggests that strong public institutions cannot work effectively and efficiently given their various malfunctioning practices, while comparatively weak institutional structures (NGOs) are able to work efficiently due to their good practices of poor governance, the partnership form of local governance system might be the best possible solution in aid recipient countries like Bangladesh.

Bishawjit Mallick (2004) showed in his book namely *'Local government: Local people's institution'* that it is exploring the importance and changing pattern of local government in Bangladesh. With strong information base, this addresses the tier approaches of local government, power structure and role of different stakeholders in local government planning. He also demonstrates the shortcomings of local government and proposals for reframing the local government structures. It has already given basic concepts about local government structures, functions, power structure and role of different stakeholders in the local level planning by which mentioned study would be helpful.

Eminent economist Dr. Hussain Zillur Rahman (2003) said that the latest trend in the emerging democratic and developing countries is to strengthen the local government system. But in our country the local government is the weakest among the government organs in terms of both power and independence. Everyone is stressing the need of a strengthened local government but it is being materialized. Even the Ngo could not take

the initiatives or a firm stance to this end because the local government bodies see them as their rival. So without a few exceptions they could not do any work in collaboration.

3.3. The Role of Effective Leadership in Strengthening Local Government system

Ahmed Shafiqul Huque (2007) stated in his article *'Local Leadership: Development, Problems and Potential in Bangladesh'* that Local government institutions in developing countries are expected to perform a number of functions, including the development of elected leadership. In Bangladesh, the expansion of the decentralized local government system has facilitated the entry of an increasing number of participants into the system. Successive regimes have undertaken a number of local government reforms over the past four decades. New institutions have been created to replace the old, with the stated aims being to improve the delivery of services and extend participation at the local level. But the outcome remains unclear as the volatile political situation in Bangladesh has had an impact on the development of leadership from all sources, including local institutions. Based on research and observations extending over a period of two decades, this article examines the background and evolution of local government institutions as well as their structure and mode of operation to identify problems relating to local leadership development. Key findings are that there has been a persistent tendency to retain control by the central government and a centralized bureaucracy has negated the prospect of developing a pool of capable and effective elected leaders in the localities. There is an absence of specific strategies and facilities for local leadership development. Thus the family, non-government organizations and the political parties emerge as the main agents involved in leadership development for elected Local Government institutions although their performance in this respect is far from satisfactory. This study has already focused on development of leadership in the local level. The strengthening of local government system is required effective role of leadership. It has identified some problems, absence of specific strategies and facilities for Local Leadership development. This knowledge has assisted for the carrying out this study.

Sazeda Akther (2004) in her Article *'Women's empowerment, participation and leadership in local Self-Government System in Bangladesh: A study on elected UP women members'* stated that in Bangladesh, although women constituted half of the population, women are victims of inequality, abuse, suppression and exploitation.

Women's access to political office is hampered historically by the belief that women cannot hold a difficult job. The concept of women empowerment in Bangladesh got a new twist when the Union Parishad (second amendment) Act 1997 was promulgated and the provision were made for reservation of three seats for the women in each union parishad and municipality and direct election on those. Since then this is considered as the main means for the political empowerment of the women especially for the rural women. In this context, if any institutions want institutionalize then it must be ensure male and female participation in local self Government for improving strengthens of it. But after reviewing this article it has focused on women's empowerment, participation, leadership in local self-government system but mentioned study has been conducted wider range than that with general aspects which would increase stronger of existing system.

Sidorenko, Alexandre (2006) focused on Empowerment and participation is closely inter-related. In a sense, these two notions in social policy are indivisible: empowering people means promoting opportunities for their participation, while participation requires empowering people to enable them to exercise this human right. Both empowerment and participation can be economic, social, or political. They both are applicable at different levels; from individual to family to community to national and up to global level. People are empowered through participation. Therefore, the study has inspired to mention study.

UN ESCAP (2003) has conducted a *Comparative Study on Local Government in Asia and the Pacific* and published an article. In this article, UN ESCAP describes that Local Government bodies in Bangladesh are managed by a combination of elected people and appointed personnel. The Chairman and members of the Zila Parishad, including women, are all elected by direct vote. In addition, elected Chairmen of Upazilas and Municipalities would also become members of the parishads, without voting rights. The District Commissioner (or Chief Civil Administrator) would serve as Executive Officer of the parishad while the MPs elected for the Zila would be available as Advisers to the Parishad. In the case of the appointed people, for such levels as the Thana/ Upazila Parishad, Zila Parishads and urban local governments (Pourashavas and City Corporation), there is both staff directly recruited by the local body as well some sent on deputation from the central government. Appointments at Gram and Union Parishad are all locally done and the people selected are also generally from within the locality.

Zarina Rahman Khan (1999) has explored in her article 'NGOs and Local Government Reform in Bangladesh' that today it is an accepted fact among concerned parties in Bangladesh that an effectively strong local government system is one of the essential preconditions for ensuring good governance. Again, economic progress and development requires good governance with accountability delivery mechanisms as much as it needs sound and pragmatic development policies. Adequately empowered and accountable local government institutions are essential vehicles for ensuring formulation and implementation of such policies.

3.4. Decentralization for Strengthening of Local Government System

M.M. Khan (2009) refers in his book '*Decentralization in Bangladesh Myth or Reality*' that decentralization is not an easy process. Decentralization efforts need to be nurtured by constant, gradual and careful experimentation over many years. He attempts to critically analyze decentralization efforts in Bangladesh. Special emphasis has been placed on major decentralization efforts and their impact on the country's local government system. The author includes discussion on the last caretaker government's endeavor to recognize the local government system. The concepts of local government have generated from the concepts of decentralization. The central government has delegated its power, functions to local level. It has been possibly done by using decentralization idea. Accordingly the study has been assisted to conduct this study.

Nizam Ahmed(1988) mentioned in his article *Experiment in Local Government Reform in Bangladesh* that since it assumed power in March 1982 the government of General Ershad has under taken a number of measures to reform local government and administration in Bangladesh. The measures were introduced on the recommendations (june 1982) of the committee for administrative Reorganization/ Reform (RARR) and provide, inter alia, for abolishing the sub-division as a tier of administration, democratizing the rural local government, devolving adequate authority and responsibility to various local councils and enhancing popular and political control over the local bureaucracy. To the protagonists of reform, these represent a big leap toward designing a new governmental system in rural Bangladesh. The main objective of this article is to examine the important features of the Ershad government reforms and to assess their politico- administrative implications, focusing upon three issues. First, the

article identifies the areas in which the new measures differ from local government reforms carried out in the past. Second, it elaborates some of the major problem that cropped up during the process of implementation of reforms, and third, it identifies a number of drawbacks that are likely to limit the potential of the reforms.

Pranab Kumar Panday (2011) stated in his article *Local Government System in Bangladesh: How Far is it Decentralised?* That this paper aims to provide a better understanding of the power decentralization process at the local level in Bangladesh. More specifically, this paper intends to explore whether or not the much needed autonomy has been built into the decentralization process. The paper is basically based on the review of secondary materials. However, efforts have been made to consult all the available local government commission reports. The study findings suggest that despite having Constitutional recognition of the establishment of a strong and independent local government system, the political leadership of Bangladesh has initiated different reforms to bring changes to the structure of the Local Government Institutions (LGIs) in the name of decentralization. However, the main intentions behind most of the reforms have been to strengthen their political base in the particular area. As a result, these institutions could not be established as a focal point of development where people would have the power to monitor and control their constituencies.

Rahman (2006) has written that Union Parishad has twenty two functions and these can be classified into some categories—civic functions, police, defense, revenue and administrative functions, development activities and judicial functions. Union Parishad ensures all these activities by means of six committees—discipline committee, health and family planning committee, agriculture, health and environment committee, fishery and livestock committee and other committees. Local self-government is a must for the promotion and development of democracy and it helps to solve local problems using local resources.

Kazi Zahid Hossain in his article *'Upazilla System is essential for increasing strength of local government in Bangladesh'* acknowledged that Local Self-government in different level of administration is important for effectiveness and strength for the aim of importance of domestic process and create the spirit of democracy among people. It is more important to give more power to local self-government institutions for increasing

people's participation in development activities in the different countries in the present world (develop & developing countries). The principles of elected government have described in every level of administration in the Bangladesh constitution and have explained it with specifically about role & functions of local government. The state shall encourage local government institutions composed of representatives of the areas concerned and in such institutions special representation shall be given, as far as possible shall be a democracy in which fundamental human rights and freedoms and respect for dignity and worth of the human person shall be guaranteed (Article-11).

Talukdar (2009) stated in his books '*Rural Local Government in Bangladesh*' that understanding the local government in Bangladesh is indeed difficult without tracing its historical legacy. He attempts to make a review of such evolutionary background with particular focus to the rural local government in Bangladesh. Basically this book holds a tailor made approach to the development of the rural local government in Bangladesh. It has stressed back to the concern of absence of the local government commission, national decentralization policy and sub-national borrowing authority in Bangladesh. Firstly he explained a general overview of the rural local government in Bangladesh including its institutional, managerial and structural arrangements. It also provides a chronological glimpse of the ordinances including the significant changes being made by the recent past military backed caretaker government in Bangladesh. He assesses the legislative inconsistencies of the local government in Bangladesh, and unleashes the political perspective of the local government development. It also presents the context of fiscal decentralization and issue of rural local governance in Bangladesh. Actually the study has selected union parishad which is the lowest tier of local government and it has located in the rural area. Therefore, this study is closely associated with the mentioned study regarding local government system.

Kamal Siddiqui, (1995) in his book *Local Government in Bangladesh* mention that Local Governments have been carrying out some drawbacks especially organizational weakness. Local government may degenerate in to varrow minded, weak, possessive and ignorant institutions promoting separatism and inertia. Strength, weaknesses and problems of Local Government are obviously generalizations which need to be tested in a specific context. Firstly, there may be for perfectly valid reasons a substantial divergence between de jure and de facto local government, in a given country. Secondly,

the actual quality and character of local government is determined by host of factors such as national and local traditions, customary defense patterns, political pressures, party influence and discipline, bureaucratic professionalism, economic resource controls social organization and beliefs, geographical realities, and finally the nature of the central state. It goes without saying that the relatives influences of these factors on local government will vary from country to country. And yet, the point to underscore here is that the efficacy and effectiveness of a local government system cannot be isolated from the universe in which it is located. To sum up, local government perhaps has no substitute. If it has weaknesses and problems, these are often the product of extraneous circumstances as described above, and these are not beyond correction in a long term perspective.

CHAPTER FOUR

UNION PARISHAD IN BANGLADESH

4.1. Introduction

Local government of Bangladesh is in a limbo. As a political institution to ensure public participation in development activities, local government is yet to take proper shape in Bangladesh. Since independence 1971 successive governments have tried to use the local government system for their own political interest. No regime demonstrated its interest in reducing central control over rural local institutions. The party or regime in power has wanted to make the local government representatives their power base and manipulated the system to this end (Dr. Rahman 2006). The present local government system has three tiers. Union Parishad is the lowest tier among them and it is called mass people's institution among others. However, Union Parishad the century old institution has been serving people within its limited resources and authority. The institution directly and indirectly controlled by the central government from its inception. Historically Union Parishad failed to follow a unique standard of governing system because of fragile and inconsistency practice of democracy in the country. Union Parishads are struggling for image crisis because of suffering from scarcity of resources, little control over jurisdiction, political interference to meet its local need.

4.2. Evolution of Union Parishad in Bangladesh

There is a long and traditional history of local government in Bangladesh. Existence of local government may be found since very long time in this subcontinent. During the ancient, medieval, British, Pakistan and Bangladesh periods initiatives were taken to enable Local Government to function properly.

Panchayet System was an old local government institution in this region. The term Panchayet' implies an assembly of five or more persons. The term was in vogue in Bengal, as in the rest of northern India, since time immemorial. During the ancient period this village assembly or panchayet which was either nominated by the king or elected by the people of the village, was left undisturbed in the overall management of the administration of the village.

The composition of the panchayets was such that they represented different classes and castes. The panchayets distributed land among the villagers, collected tax from them and

paid to the government its due share. Kautilya's Arthashastra mentioned the gramavrdhas (village elders) who were the esteemed members of the village assembly and whose duty was to assist the government officials in deciding petty disputes in the villages⁵.

The present structure of local government in Bangladesh had its origin in British colonial period. The first attempt at establishing local government institution was made during the latter part of the nineteenth century. The structure, functions and financial management of local government institutions have undergone many changes from the British colonial period to the present day.

It is recorded in history that the villages were self reliant before the colonial rule. Every village had its own community based organization known as Panchayet. All the adult members of the village society constituted it. Apart from taking decisions in social matters adjudication in disputes and maintenance of law and order were among its responsibilities. The Panchayers used to mobilize resources for the discharge of their traditional functions. The Panchayet evolved naturally out of the social needs and was based on public opinion. There was no legal basis or authority behind them.

During the British rule the Bengal village Chowkidari Act was passed in 1870 with administrative, economic and political objectives. This paved the way for setting up local government body under the law. Under this Act several villages were organized into a Union and Chowkidari Panchayet (Organization) was set up in each Union. The Chowkidari Panchayet had five members who were appointed by the government for three years. The Panchayets were responsible for appointment of Chowkidars (village police) for maintenance of law and order. The village police were paid through collection of Chowkidari tax from the villagers.

Under the Chowkidari system members were considered as government functionaries rather than representative of the villagers. The Panchayets were used mainly to assist the administration in maintaining law and order and for collection of tax. They had no role and function in respect of development activities. For these reasons the need for local government bodies with greater responsibility was felt replacing the Chowkidari Panchayet, A major step in this direction was

5 See for details 'the National Encyclopaedia of Bangladesh', Published by the Asiatic Society of marked by the passing of the Bengal Local Self Government Act in 1885. Under these Act Union Committees, Local Government Boards and District Boards were set up respectively.

The Bengal Village Self- Government Act of 1919 abolished Chowkidari Panchayet and Union Committee and in their place set up Union Board and District Board. Two third of the members of Union Board were elected and one third nominated. The system of nomination was abolished in 1946. The main function of Union Board was maintenance of law and order. Roads and bridges, provision of health care, charitable dispensaries and primary school water supply and assistance to the District Board. The Union Board could dispose of minor criminal cases and was given the authority to levy Union rate.

During Pakistan period under the Basic Democracy Order of 1959 Local Government bodies were set up at four tires viz. Union Council at Union level. Thana Council at Thana level, and District Council at District level and Divisional Council at Divisional level_ On average a Union comprised an area with 10,000 inhabitants and the Union Council was constituted with 10 to15 members. Two third of the members were elected by voters and one third was nominated by the government. The system of nomination was abolished after the introduction of the constitution. The members used to elect a chairman and one vice chairman among them. In addition the Union Council was given 37 functions among which agriculture development, water supply and education, communications, and socials welfare were included. The Union Council was also given the authority to set up conciliation court and the members were given judicial power under the Muslim Family and Marriage Ordinance of 1961.Under the Basic Democracies Ordinance. The Union Council was authorized to impose taxes on property and other sources to build its own fund in addition to existing Chowkidari fund.

Government grant was given for rural works programme and for constitution of Union Parishad office. The present local government system in Bangladesh had its origin in British colonial period. The self-governing local Panchayets that functioned at village level eradually became weak and disappeared soon after the colonial rulers established their authority over the length and breadth of the country. Local government institution

was introduced by the colonial rulers at village level in Bengal in 1870 to further their administrative control and on economic and political considerations. In 1885 Union Committees were formed at the village level. Local Boards at the Sub- Divisional level and District Boards at the District level under the Bengal

Local Self Government Act. The members of these bodies were both nominated and elected. The local bodies had no autonomy, though the names of local government bodies were changed during Pakistan period their status remained almost the same with very little increase in autonomy. After Bangladesh became independent decision was taken to strengthen local Government institutions at three levels and to make provision for women members. In 1982 Upazila Parishad was established as an elected local government body at Thana level. Earlier efforts at forming Gram Sarkar and Palli Parishad at village level did not succeed. The Upazila system introduced in 1982 was abolished in 1991. Since inception the local government institutions were given the responsibilities for maintenance of law and order infrastructures development and their maintenance, health, education etc. within their area.

4.3. Legal Basis of the Union Parishad

The Union Parishad owes its existence to the constitution of Bangladesh. Article 59 of the Constitution of Bangladesh states:

1. Local government in every administrative unit of the Republic shall be entrusted to bodies composed of persons elected in accordance with the law.
2. Everybody such as is referred to in Clause (i) shall, subject to this Constitution and any other law, perform within the appropriate administrative unit, such functions as shall be prescribed by Acts of Parliament, which may include functions relating to:
 - a. administration and the work of public offices
 - b. the maintenance of public order; and
 - c. the preparation and implementation of plans relating to public services and economic development.

Article 60 states: For the purpose of giving full effect to the provision of Article 59, Parliament shall by law confer powers on the local government bodies referred to in that Article, including

This system is not actually directly elected body but it has been performing to the immediate past four party alliances government in Bangladesh. This was working for rural peoples. See for details Official website of Local Government Division, Ministry of LGRD & C, power to impose taxes for local purposes, to prepare their budgets and to maintain funds. However, under the Fourth Amendment of the constitution in 1975, this provision was abolished. In Chapter II of the Constitution, corrected up to 28 February, 1979, there is only one sentence on local government, in Clause 9:

“The state shall encourage local government bodies composed of representatives from relevant areas and in these bodies, there shall be as far as possible, special representation of peasants, workers and women.”

Under the Twelfth Amendment of the Constitution in 1991, it has been stated:

'Local government in every administrative unit of the Republic shall be entrusted to bodies composed of persons elected in accordance with law. Every local body shall perform within the appropriate administrative unit such functions as shall be prescribed by Acts of Parliament, which may include functions relating to:

- d. administration and the work of public offices
- e. the maintenance of public order; and
- f. the preparation and implementation of plans relating to public services and economic development.

In 1992, the Local Government Structure Review Commission recommended major changes in the structure, composition, functions and finances of rural local government bodies in Bangladesh in order to facilitate local government activities and also to ensure people's participation in them. Accordingly the Jatiya Sangsad (National Parliament) passed the Local Government (Union Parishad) (Amendment) Act 1993. According to this law, a union was divided into nine wards, in each UP it reserved 3 seats exclusively for women member, provision for forming standing committees were introduced. Provision for direct election of the 3 women members of the reserved seat of the UP was introduced in the Local Government (Union Parishad) (Second Amendment) Act, 1997.

4.4. Union Parishad at Present:

In order to understand the functions of the UP Standing Committee, which is our focal point of this research, we need to know about the present Union Parishad. UPs are governed by the Local Government (Union Parishads) Ordinance 1983. In 1988, 1993 and 1997 major changes occurred with respect to the structure and composition of UPs. However, these amendments have been incorporated in the 1983 Local Government (Union Parishads) Ordinance (as modified till date). The structure and composition of the UP are based on these amendments. It may be mentioned that a UP is known by a local name assigned by the DC.

The structure, power and functions of the Union Parishad in Bangladesh have been changed many times since its inception in the ancient period. The present structure of the UP came through the demand of the people and the thoughts of the political leaders. The present UP has its legal basis in the constitution.

At present in Bangladesh, the Union Parishad is constituted under the legal basis of the constitution of Bangladesh. In section 9, 10, 11, 59 and 60 of the constitution the formation, responsibility and functions of the local government institutions has been described. Based on those sections the Union Parishad operates according to The Local Government (Union Parishads) Ordinance 1983 and its elections are held according to the Union Parishad (Election) Rules 1983.

The Union Parishad is constituted of 1 Chairman and 12 members. Among the 12 members, 3 seats are reserved for women. Each Union is divided into 9 wards and each ward has 1 member elected directly by people's votes. Every 3 ward's voters will elect 1 women members for the reserved seats. But any women voter of the Union can be elected a members for any of the 9 wards besides the reserved 3 seats. The chairman will be elected by direct vote of the voters of his or her Union. The term of a Union Parishad will be from its first meeting 5 years. But it will continue to work until the first meeting of the next Union Parishad holds its first meeting even if it exceeds the 5 year limit. The functions of the Union Parishad are of 5 types. These are

- a. Civic functions,
- b. Police and Security,
- c. Revenue and Administration,
- d. Development and Poverty Alleviation,
- e. Judicial functions.

The government pays the remuneration of the chairman and members of the UP. The income sources of the UP are very limited and the duties and functions are enormous.

4.5. Issues of Union Parishad

Since inception the local government institutions were given the responsibilities for maintenance of law and order, infrastructures development and their maintenance, health, education etc. within their area. Though they had sources of own, revenue income foremost of their activities they mainly relied on various grants from the government. At present only Union Parishad in an elected local government body. There is no elected body at the Thana level and though Zilla Parishad is a local government at District level there is no elected body for their management.

4.6. Structure of the UP

According to the latest amendments of the Local Government (Union Parishads) Ordinance 1983 a union is divided into nine wards. Each UP consists of a Chairman and nine members in the general seats—one for each ward. In addition, three seats have been exclusively reserved for women members, who are elected by the voters of the concerned three wards. The voters of the entire union directly elect the UP Chairman, and the voters of the concerned ward on the basis of adult franchise elect the nine members in the general seats. The chairman is considered a member of the Parishad and both Chairman and members are paid an honorarium by the government.

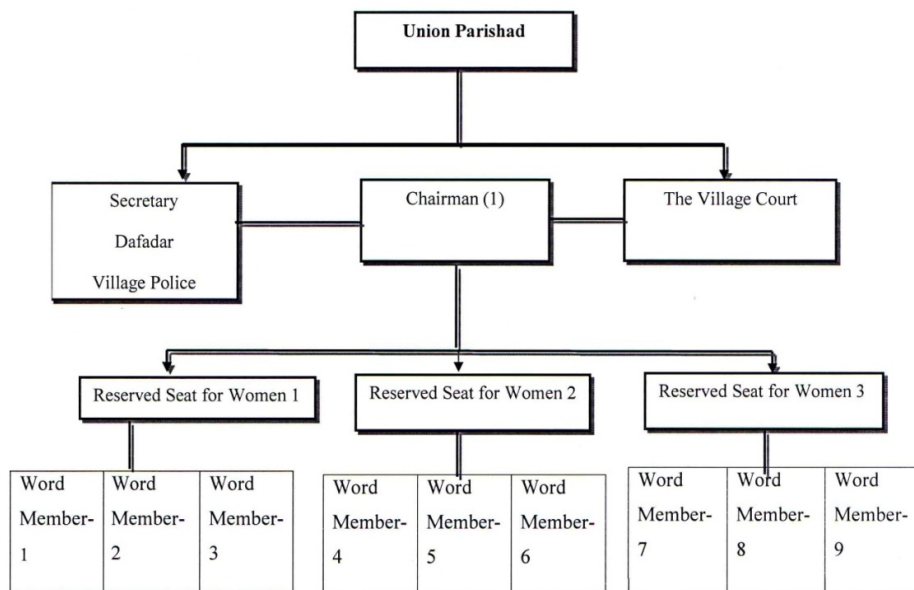


Figure-6: The Administrative Structure of Union Parishad

4.7. Term of Union Parishads

The term of a Union parishad shall be a period of five years commencing on the day of its first meeting after its constitution 1°Provided that, notwithstanding the expiration of its term, a Union Parishad shall continue to function until the first meeting of the Parishad constituted to succeed it. A Union Parishad shall, after its constitution, hold its first meeting on such date, not later than.

8. The words and comma “Term of Union Parishads, etc.” were substituted for the words “Term of Union Parishads” by section 2 of the Local Government (Union Parishads) (Amendment) Act, 1992 (Act No. X of 1992).

9. The word “five” was substituted for the word “three” by section 2 of the Local Government (Union Parishads) (Amendment) Act, 1992 (Act No. X of 1992).

10. The proviso was substituted by section 4 of the Local Government (Union Parishads) (Amendment) Act, 1993 (Act No. XX of 1993).

Thirty days from the day on which the names of its Chairman and elected members are notified in the official Gazette, as may be appointed by the Government”.

4.8. Personnel Systems of Union Parishad

Local government bodies in Bangladesh are managed by a combination of elected people and appointed personnel. The Chairman and members of the Union Parishads including women, are all elected by direct vote. Appointments at Union Parishads are all locally done and the people selected are also generally from within the locality. Union Parishad have a full time Secretary, 9 Mahalladars (Neighbourhood Workers) and I (Caretaker). There are having a Tax Collector and an Assistant Secretary, who has also been working as an accountant. The Chairman of the Union Parishad is the Chief Executive.

4.9. Responsibilities of the Union Parishad

The responsibilities of the Union Parishad are determined by law. According to sub-section 2 of section 30 of The Local Government (Union Parishads) Ordinance 1983 the Union Parishad has 10 compulsory responsibilities. These are:

1. Maintenance of law and order and rendering of assistance to the administration in the maintenance of law and order
2. Adoption of measures for preventing disorder and smuggling

3. Adoption and implementation of development schemes in the fields of agriculture, forestry, fisheries, livestock, education, health, cottage industries, communications, irrigation and flood protection, with a view to improving the economic and social condition of the people
4. Promotion of family planning
5. Development and use of local resources
6. Protection and maintenance of public property, such as roads, bridges, canals, embankments.
6. Telephones and electricity lines The Local Government (Union Parishads) Ordinance, 1983
7. Review of development activities undertaken by different agencies at the union level, and submission of recommendations to the Upazila Parishad with regard to the activities of those agencies
8. Motivation and persuasion of the people to install sanitary latrine.
9. Registration of births, deaths, blind people, beggars and destitute people.
10. Conducting censuses of all kinds.

Besides those compulsory responsibilities, UP has more 38 optional responsibilities described in Part-1 of the Schedule of The Local Government (Union Parishads) Ordinance 1983.

4.10. The UP Standing Committees

For decentralization of work and proper solution of problems each Union Parishad can constitute standing committees with its members or co-opted members (if any) which will perform its duties according to the specific rules. Section 38 of The Local Government (Union Parishads) Ordinance 1983 has stated that the Union Parishad can form any committee with prior permission of the authority if it deems necessary. The concept of Union Parishad Standing Committee came from the objective of making the UP more active and efficient. According to the Local Government Union Parishads (Amendment) Acts. 1993 and 2001 each UP will constitute 13 standing committees, one for each of these areas: (a) finance and establishment (b) education and mass education (c) health, family planning and epidemic control (d) audit and accounts (e) agriculture and other development works (f) social welfare and community centers (g) cottage industries and cooperatives (h) law and order (i) welfare of women and children, sports and culture (j) fisheries and livestock (k) conservation of the environment and tree plantation (l) union public works (m) rural water supply and sanitation.

Formation of Standing Committee:

The UP forms its standing committees for one year. In every fiscal year in the first meeting of the UP or as soon as possible in the second UP meeting, these committees must be formed. A standing committee elects one of its members as its Chairman, and another member as its Vice-

12 Siddiqui, K. (2005) 'Local Government in Bangladesh' The University Press Limited, page 154
13 Siddiqui, K. (2005) 'Local Government in Bangladesh' The University Press Limited, page 163

Chairman. One-fourth of the total number of Vice-Chairmen of the standing committees shall, subject to the availability of candidates, be elected from among the women members elected from the reserved seats. Furthermore, a UP may co-opt a person of either sex who is not a member of the Parishad but who may in the opinion of the Parishad possess special qualifications for serving on any of the standing committees however such a member does not enjoy any voting rights in standing committee meetings but is deemed to be a member thereof for all other purposes. Besides, the UP may with the previous approval of the Deputy Commissioner (DC), constitute additional standing committees for such purposes as may be prescribed by regulations.

The purpose of the UP standing committee is to assist with the activities of the UP. Some matters are not possible to resolve in the UP office without proper verification. In those cases the UP standing committees conduct on the spot inspection, take people's opinion, analyze that information gathered and submit them to the UP. When such a matter is put before the UP with the analysis and suggestions from the standing committee then it is easier to implement. The UP decides the working area of a standing committee. Any decision made by the standing committee has to be approved by the UP.

Functions of different standing committees are described below:

4.10.1. Finance and establishment committee:

- ❖ To take initiative to increase the income of the Union Parishad
- ❖ To ensure the regular attendance of the UP Secretary and the Coukidars/Dafadars
- ❖ To supervise the activities of UP employees and inform the UP Chairman for taking adequate steps about any activity against discipline and suggest measures against such activities by the UP employees

4.10.2. Education and mass education:

- ❖ To take necessary steps to ensure the attendance of the students in all the education institutes in the Union
- ❖ To try to solve any problem occurred in the education program
- ❖ To take necessary steps to ensure the attendance of the teachers in all the education institutes in the Union
- ❖ To supervise regularly the proper functioning of all the education institutes in the Union and take necessary steps in case of any irregularity
- ❖ To take necessary steps to ensure education for those elderly people who could not take education at proper age, so that they can read, write and calculate

4.10.3. Health, family planning and epidemic control committee:

- ❖ To take necessary steps to ensure proper healthcare of the local people
- ❖ The committee will keep itself informed of the activities of the health and family planning workers in the local area so that they carry out their duty properly. If any irregularity is found, first advise them to solve it and then if necessary request the concerned senior officer to take measures against the responsible persons
- ❖ To aware the local people about the family planning matters and give publicity to birth control in the local area.

4.10.4. Audit and accounts committee

- ❖ Scrutinize the UP accounts and submit the report to the regular UP meeting 3 times a year
- ❖ To conduct inspection of all UP accounts including the cash book of the secretary at different times
- ❖ Inspection of accounts and works of all budget/skim
- ❖ Inspection of register books of tax collection, assessment, daily collection, income account at different times
- ❖ Instruct the secretary to resolve any irregularity, if found. If the irregularity persists. disclose the matter to the UP meeting for due action against responsible persons

4.10.5. Agriculture and other development works

- ❖ Take necessary steps towards agricultural development of the UP area
- ❖ Motivate the people to use high quality seeds

- ❖ Arrange meetings/drives to disseminate information on diseases and nursing of crops and make an officer of the agricultural department present in those meeting
- ❖ Coordinate between the agriculture department and the local people to make sure that the people get proper service from the employees and officers of the agricultural department

4.10.6. Social welfare and community centres committee

- ❖ Give publicity to the programs of the social welfare department
- ❖ Arrange trainings through the social welfare department
- ❖ Maintenance of community centres, if any in the UP area

4.10.7. Cottage industries and cooperatives committee

- ❖ Motivate the local people to be engaged in cottage industry and arrange for necessary training
- ❖ Motivate local people to development activities through cooperatives

4.10.8. Committee for welfare of women and children, sports and culture

- ❖ To identify the problems of the women and children of the UP area and take necessary steps to solve them or raise this matter in the UP meeting for taking necessary steps
- ❖ Inform the local people about the harmful effects of dowry, divorce etc
- ❖ Publicity to resist torture against women and children
- ❖ Take necessary steps if any incident of torture against women and children occurs
- ❖ To take necessary steps to inform the local people about provisions of punishment for the crime of torture against women and child

4.10.9. Fisheries and livestock committee

- ❖ Motivate the people for fish farming and take necessary step
- ❖ Arrange training by officials of the concerned department for the fish farmers
- ❖ Arrange training on livestock rearing for the local people by the officials of the livestock department
- ❖ Inform local people on modern system of fish and livestock farming

4.10.10. Committee for conservation of the environment and tree plantation

- ❖ Publicity for plantation of more trees
- ❖ Undertake tree plantation program on the roadside in the UP area
- ❖ Assist any organization who are interested in tree plantation
- ❖ Take necessary steps to nurture the planted trees
- ❖ Take necessary steps to aware the local people about the importance of conservation of the environment and what they should do to avoid damaging the environment

4.10.11. Union public works committee

- ❖ Supervise the progress of public works undertaken by the UP and to ensure that the work is properly done
- ❖ To monitor all works in the UP area undertaken by any department to ensure that the work is done properly

4.10.12. Rural water supply and sanitation committee

- ❖ Take necessary steps to ensure pure drinking water for the UP residents
- ❖ Take necessary steps to ensure healthy sanitation system for the UP residents

4.10.13. Law and order committee

- ❖ Take necessary steps to ensure security in the UP area
- ❖ To supervise the work of the dafadar and choukidar
- ❖ To inform the chairman about any threat to the security of the UP residents¹⁴ The Local Government Division of the LGRD&C Ministry in 1989 issued a circular for the formation of a committee in each UP of the country to resist oppression of women. The functions of this committee are as follows:
 - to entertain complaints regarding oppression of women and take necessary measures on a priority basis to combat such oppression. Where the committee is unable to solve the problem, the matter is referred in writing to the Upazila Women's Affairs Officer
 - to take all necessary steps to combat the oppression of women

¹⁴ See for details 'Skill Development Training Module for the Union Parishad' Published by Neeti Gobeshona Kendro and Plan Bangladesh

- to publicise problems faced by women on the UP bulletin board, so that the oppressed women can easily know where to knock for help
- to hold meetings at least once a month and submit a report to the Upazila Women's Affairs Officer every month on its activities

4.11. Conclusion

In any discussion of Local Government has not been completed without studying basic knowledge of Union Parishad. The strengthen Local Government system has required to socio-economic development of rural area. There is no option without strengthening of Local Government to ensure good governance at the grass route level. Union Parishad is such lowest tier of administrative body. It has required providing basic knowledge for its chairman, members and women members especially female members do not have idea about their duties and responsibilities. In this regards, an attempt has been made to review and analyze the efforts made for bringing about reforms in public administration and local government systems in Bangladesh since its emergence as an independent country in 1971. In the process, it has been observed that unfortunately some reform efforts fell short of expectation in bringing about desired changes in the public administration and local government systems of the country for a number of reasons. But for the sustenance and institutionalization of democratic tradition, values and culture in the polity, an efficient, result oriented, representative, participatory, gender sensitive, transparent, corruption free and neutral public administration and Local Government system are required. There is a consensus that a broad and holistic reform effort has to be initiated in the light of the changes that have taken place in the national and global arenas. Furthermore, this chapter has been described various aspect of Union Parishad including legal basis, structure, functions, formation of standing committees and village court. Elected representatives as well as rural inhabitants have been learned about Union Parishad by this knowledge.

Chapter-Five

Analysis of Study Findings and Conclusion

5. Introduction

The study has been tried to suggest some recommendations in order to cover strengthening women empowerment of local government in Bangladesh from the view of leadership quality, pre-requisition of empowerment, and participation of the UP chairmen and members in development projects and plan at UP level. It has found some constraints of UP from organizational perspectives including empowerment, participation and leadership for establishing strengthen of local government system in Bangladesh. It is not an easy task to implement these steps with in short time in the present antagonistic political culture in Bangladesh. Actually, the" women empowerment strengthening of local government is a political agenda and it has been used by the political parties to gain in power. In that case, they do not want to complete or solve this issue. Although it is said that development should spread out from city to rural area. If they have to execute this purpose then power should not be centralize. Only decentralization process can delivered better services to rural people. So, decentralization is the key component to implement the central government development activities in the study area.

5.1. Analysis of Study findings

The study has been shown that effective leadership means incorporation of some distinct attribute such as a leader should be able to give orders, to spot what needs to be done, to encourage the people who are under their leadership, to possess is the ability to be able to keep the peace within his group, to lead a group, to be looked upon as a role model, help to make new ideas and ability to represent followers etc. If these indicators have been functioning together at a time then the role of leadership would call effective leadership. The existing literatures and theories suggested that the women empowerment strengthening local government requires effective leadership. Here, the study found a causal relationship between effective leadership and strengthening of local government. This empirical research found various inability of local leadership in this study. These are 22.08% respondents recognized that they have been facing difficulty to manage office personnel. 22.27% are unable to take decision on the spot before happening incident. 25.97% leaders' thought that they do not have enough ability to encourage their

followers. 28.57% have experienced to face unwanted and unexpected behavior of followers. The quantitative findings show that significant number of leadership have satisfied on their performance in the context of effective women empowerment. On the other hand, less but not ignore the opinion of existing leadership, they thought or recognized their performance is not satisfactory level. Therefore, it is said that the study mentioned causal relationship between effective leadership and strengthening of local government in the conceptual framework. As the result of this study, it does not find all the indicators of effective leadership in the study area. So, the existing leadership could not influence the strengthening of local government. The result of the qualitative study has also found a significant result. Such study explore some important reasons behind less strengthening of local government like Excessive control of the central government on Union Parishad, mismanagement of local resources, absence of proper coordination, no transportation facilities for elected members of UP, top down decision making process, and political pressure etc.

The women empowerment strengthening local government requires effective leadership, institutional and individual women empowerment of UP; and participation of elected members. The study has been explored a cause and effect relationship among independent and dependent variables. It means that the level of participation as much as increased and besides the level of strengthening of local government is going up and down. No one expects, execute strengthening of local government without participation, it is not possible here. There are some variables between participation and strengthening of local government which are functioning as intervening variables. These are increase democracy, empower people, mobilize resources and energy, develop holistic and integrated approaches and achieve better decisions and effective services. The causal relationship of independent and dependent variables determined by those indicators which have known as intervene variable and significant valued. The study found that 64.94% elected members replied their UP meeting has been holding one for a month and 25.97% mentioned more than two for a month. The statistical data show that they are not following any unique rules for the arrangement of UP meeting. It cannot encourage the participation of elected members of UP by which UP would be strengthen. Another significant factor is delivering speech in a meeting. But reality is that in the study area, 22.08% and 7.79% thought that they are not free to give their opinion. Influential chairmen and members are playing dominated role especially it has been happening for

UP women members. This is a great hindrance to exercise strengthening of local government. The study found that 83% members are involved to take project planning and implementation. On the other hand, 16.88% members replied that they do not have involvement with project planning and implementation. In this case, UP chairman has become more powerful than his or her authority which is discourage the participation of elected members of UP, Another finding is local political influence on UP for selection and implementation of development projects. Sometimes, personal relation with chairman can influence project approval and implementation in the study area. Furthermore, 100% members thought that the existing rules and regulations of UP are not advantageous to the participation of elected members in development. This study found some significant barriers to discourage participation of elected members. These are introvert, ignorance, busyness, insufficient knowledge. Finally, they have lack of awareness about their duties and responsibilities. Although, Upazila administration has been providing training to them.

Obstacles of women empowerment in local government Bangladesh.

- Women's usually give consent not opinion in the local administration
- Women been selected as a member of various committee not in vital role.
- Women are holding less important in union parishad due to lack of quoram.
- They feel uncomfortable in front of general public regarding family and local issues.
- They are driven according to the will of husband/guardian not herself.

5.2. Recommendation

This study has been mentioned that strengthening of local government system is required for delivering better services to the local citizens. Accordingly the government has formed different committees and commissions to reform local government system in order to enhance its capacity so that local people can be benefited. This research suggested that some initiatives for enhancing strengthening of UP as a lowest tier of local self-government. These are-

- Financial dealing should be central govt. instead of UNO.
- Financial decision should be made by local government.
- Eradicate the discrimination of man and women in decision making.

- Monthly honarary should raise up to 10,000/-20,000 for chairman and 8,000-15,000 for member of UP.
- For making practical roles and regulation needs to consider the roof level of representative opinion.
- Bottom-up decision making must be required for strengthening of UP. Because, citizens are closely related with the bottom level personnel and know well about sadness and happiness of citizens.
- Women empowerment strengthening local government system is a political agenda. It requires the political commitment of all political parties whereas ruling party must cordial to execute that issue without outside influence.
- Chairmen and general UP members must change their patriarchal behavior and assist to perform their female UP members. Women UP members should have educational qualification and fight against all kinds of undue domination and influence.
- This is time to rethink about minimum educational qualification of local people's representatives.
- Local leadership have characterized by professionalism. They need to learn managerial knowledge.
- Upazila parishad has to effective and omit excessive administrative control by UNO on elected representatives of Union Parishad in the study area.
- Ruling party has to less control and must prevent political pressure on local authorities of Union Parishads.
- Government should reorganize of Union Parishad in order to reduce its institutional inefficiency.
- Sufficient personnel are required for better performance.
- Excessive workload of UP Chairmen and members should rearrange for their better performance.
- Need to proper management and mobilization of local and national resources.
- Union Parishads have to arrange regular meetings of the standing committees to ensure participation of local leadership so that local government system could be strengthen.
- Government should provide skill development training for the elected representatives especially women members as well as employees of Union Parishad.

- Government has increased honorarium of Ups chairman & members by the circulation of proclamation on 31 January 2008; 3000 for chairman and 1500 for members. So, this honorary is not quite enough as per their status. Therefore, make sure adequate honorarium for them. Honorarium should be increased to a respectable level. It should be not less than tk. 10,000 per month for the chairman and tk. 7,000 for the members.
- Transportation facilities of Union Parishads are required to provide outstanding services to their local area.
- Have to promote specific status of UP chairmen and members.
- UP must reduce its dependency on the central government in order to get government grant or fund and besides expand their own sources of income for increasing strengthening of Union Parishad.

5.3. Conclusion

The Union Parishad deals with local administrative and establishment issues, ensuring law and order services related to public welfare, and formulation and implementation of local economic and social development plans. Almost all Union Parishads have yet to form a set of departmental standing committees to carry out their tasks properly as well. It is impossible to realize national development goals without proper and accelerated local development. But persistent political and administrative interference in the UP affairs has made it ineffective. This trend has been continuing in the independent country of Bangladesh so far. This study identified some issues through focus group discussion those are working behind inactive or less strong local government system in Bangladesh particularly in union parishad. Although, Union Parishad has vast volume of work but it doesn't have adequate personnel, and financial solvency. In this circumstance, Union Parishad requires to increase strengthening itself. It is an essential in order to completion of huge volume of work. Strengthening of Union Parishad means adequate allocation of resources and freedom of expenses of it, skilled and efficient administration; empowered UP members as well as institutionalization of Union Parishad. Performance of leadership has been required with effectiveness, competence and commitment to the village citizens. Finally, it may mention that local government system either strengthens or not it depends on the political decision. So we should enlarge social movement in good turn of effective, efficient and strengthens of local government system especially Union parishad as a grassroots level institution. Whatever, local government experts and development

activist said that UP has to face hurdles in every step. It does not have power to take decision, plan and projects independently and there is no own sources of income, absence of adequate wealth and no way to get it which was sending estimated fund. If it had full autonomy, adequate sources of income, and financial power then it can contribute a lot for the social development activities. UP is related with good and bad feeling of local people. So, no one should come in Union Parishad who have political ambitious, dishonesty and financially corrupted person. UP needs a leader who has educational qualification, honesty, and huge confidence of local people. Accountability and transparency of UP may be established, if Up get honest, good moral character and educated leader and accelerate the trend of people wellbeing and development activities. But the government has taken good initiatives to introduce direct election in UP level for the purpose of involvement of women in various social development programs in the UP level. Somehow, this purpose did not fulfill due to domination of male members and chairmen. On the other hand, UP women members do not have the definite roles and its explanation regarding their duties, responsibilities and power. Finally, If government want to develop urban and rural area equally then must withdraw administrative and political control on Union Parishad. Some terms and conditions are required for the strengthening of local government system especially union parishad such as power of tax impose and collection, to recruit required personnels, to take development plan and projects and implementation it, and promote priority to select social welfare project independently.

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ANNEXURE
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR
CHALLENGES AND PROSPECT OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN LOCAL
GOVERNMENT (UNION PARISHAD)

(For the Elected Representatives of Union Parishads)

Questionnaire – ‘Kha’

Name _____ Age _____

Sex _____ Educational Status _____

Address _____

Women Empowerment

Well-functioning services:

1. Is this Parishad publicly accountable?

Ans: a) Yes b) No c) others.....

If Yes, How.....

2. What is the policy to distribute all duties, responsibilities and allocation?

Ans:

3. How much efficiently delivering your services to the people?

Ans: a) Good b) Better c) Excellent d) Others.....

4. Is there any problem regarding integration among various departments and members of this parishad?

Ans:

5. Is ‘Administration of Union Parishad adopted with local people with cultural aspect?

Ans: a) Yes b) No

6. If Yes, How.....

Organizational effectiveness and capacity:

7. Is UP sustaining with its competence?

Ans: a) Yes b) No

8. Are you satisfied to produce existing outcomes of Union Parishad?

Ans: a) Satisfied b) Moderate c) Not Satisfied

9. Do you have any question regarding effectiveness of leadership?

Ans: a) Yes b) No c) Others.....

10. Is each member of your Parishad empowered?

Ans: a) Yes b) No c) Others.

11. Does Union Parishad has communication network with relating others organizations?

Ans: a) Yes b) No

12. If yes, how.....

13. Does empowerment and people's participation required implementing development projects and plans in union parishad?

Answer:

14. Does strengthening local government system establish by empowerment of UP, participation of people and effective leadership? Answer: