

**“Role of Women Representatives in the decision making
and decision implementation process of local government in
Bangladesh: A case study in Mymensingh Pourashava.”**

*A thesis submitted to the University of Dhaka in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Political Science*

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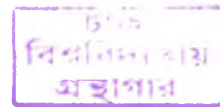
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Dedicated To

My Beloved Parents

Mrs. Halima Begum

Md. Abul Hashem

“Role of Women Representatives in the decision making and decision implementation process of local government in Bangladesh: A case study in Mymenshingh Pourashava”.

A thesis submitted to the University of Dhaka in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Political Science

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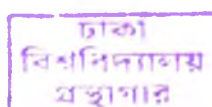
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DECLARATION

I do hereby declare that the thesis entitled **Role of Women Representatives in the decision making and decision implementation process of local government in Bangladesh: A case study in Mymensingh Pourashava** prepared and presented to the University of Dhaka in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **Master of Philosophy** is my original work.

Basana Khatun
19.03.13

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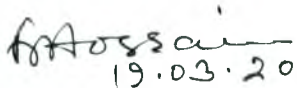
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “**Role of Women Representatives in the decision making and decision implementation process of local government in Bangladesh: A case study in Mymenshingh Pourashava**” has been prepared under my direct supervision by **Basana Khatun** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy in Political Science**. This is her original work. This thesis has not been presented in any form to any other academic institutions for any degree or any other purpose.


19.03.2013

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Basana Khatun

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Abstract

Women are in vulnerable situation in all respects in Bangladesh. This study is an attempt to explore the level of women representatives in both the decision-making and implementation processes, especially in Mymensingh Pourashava, a local level government unit of Northern district of Bangladesh.

This thesis examines the local government system as well as a brief history of Mymensingh Pourashava. It has been explored and focused that women participation is very nominal and they are discouraged to participate in the electoral race of general seats for strengthening women's empowerment, particularly in the local government system.

In addition, the women who are elected under reserved seats also dominated by the "Male bosses" and humiliated by the "Structural phenomena" because of the historical trend.

The influence of local leaders who belong to ruling party has also affect to the women representatives in the process of decision making and implementation. The ratio of women representatives in reserved seats is one-third which is an explicit discrimination and it was found that no women were able to win the election in general seat. This is very surprising that they neither interested nor ambitious to hold a office in local general seat. This study found that male candidates are more capable and energetic than the women in terms of electoral campaign. This research suggests to increase more reserved seats and procedures should be enacted to ensure a proportionate number of women candidates for nomination for the general seats. So that women participation will be increased in the local government system.

The duties are not clearly prescribed in the Pourashava manual for the reserved women, as a result they rarely could perform their duties and they are extremely dominated by the male officials in working terms.

At last but not least, this study is of course, an approximate effort due to constraints of space and words limit. Social science research never claims as perfect and absolute rather, tentative and relative. That is why, it requires further amplification to delineate the core and profound analysis in future research.

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Abbreviation

ADB: Asian Development Bank
ADC: Additional Deputy Commissioner
ADP: Annual Development Program
AL: Awami League
ANC: African National Council
B. Ed: Bachelor in Education
BDO: Basic Democracy Order
BNP: Bangladesh Nationalist Party
BTT: Business Turnover Tax
CAP: Community Action Plan
CBO: Community Based Organization
CC: City Corporation
CDC: Community Development Committee
DESA: Dhaka Electricity Supply Authority
DC: Deputy Commissioner
EPR: East Pakistan Regiment
ESCAP: Economic and Social Commission for Asian Pacific
HSC: Higher Secondary School Certificate
LG: Local Government
LGI: Local Government Institute
LGO: Local Government Order
LGP: Local Government Politics
LGRD&C: Local Government Rural Development & Cooperatives
MAB: Municipal Association of Bangladesh
MP: Member of Parliament
M. Ed: Masters of Education
M. Sc: Masters of Science

NAEP: National Academy for Primary Education
NGO: Non Government Organization
NILG: National Institute of Local Government
PFA: Platform of Action
PIC: Project Implementation Committee
SANEI: South Asia Network of Economic Research Institute
SDO: Sub-Divisional Officer
SEDF: Socio-economic Development Fund
SGS: Sawnirvar Gram Sarker
SIF: Settlement Improvement Fund
SSC: Secondary School Certificate
TLCC: Thana Level Coordination Committee
TP: Thana Parishad
TR: Test Relief
T&T: Telephone & Telgraph
UCR: Radical Civil Union
UGIIP: Urban Generating and Infrastructural Improvement Project
UNDP: United Nations Development Program
UNO: United Nations Organization
UP: Union Parishad
UPPRP: Urban Partnership for Poverty Reduction Project
VAT: Value Added TAX
VGD: Vulnerable Group Development
VGF: Vulnerable Group Feeding
WASA: Water and Sewerage Authority
WFP: World Food Program
WID: Women in Development
WLCC: Ward Level Coordination Committee
ZP: Zila Parishad

Glossary

Bazar	: Market
Chowkidar	: Village Police
Chowkidari (System)	: A system of appointing village police
Dafadar	: Messenger
Gram Police	: Village police
Hat	: Weekly/ bi-weekly market in rural areas of Bangladesh
Panchayat	: A kind of village local government of the then India
Panchayati (System)	: A system that performs the duties and functions of Panchayet Raj
Sachib	: Secretary
Shahar	: Town
Shalish	: A kind of informal village judgment (village court)
Swanirvar Gram Sarkar:	Self-sustaining local government at the village level
Uthan Boithak	: Yard Meeting
Zamindar	: Big landlord

Chapters' Overview

Chapter one: This chapter clarifies the major areas of the paper with its objectives, significance, statement of the research problems etc. It discusses the methodological device of the study and finally the key concepts of the study.

Chapter two: This chapter explains the historical background of local government as well as of Mymensingh pourashava. In this regard administrative structure and functions of the local government and some basic descriptions of Pourashava are discussed here. On the other hand, the history and area of Mymensingh Pourashava and administrative structure and Key functions of this Pourashava are discussed with visual map.

Chapter three: This chapter at first defines women representatives and shows the historical background of women representatives in both the urban and rural local government systems as well as in Mymensingh Pourashava. It also illustrates the situation of women participation in the last Pourashava election of Mymensingh.

Chapter four: In this chapter the socio-economic situation of women representatives of Mymensingh Pourashava is discussed. Moreover, the age composition, educational qualification, marital status, occupation, personal monthly income, husband's educational qualification and occupation and their religion is also presented.

Chapter five: This chapter presents the political background of women representatives in Mymensingh Pourashava. In this aspect, it discusses the involvement of respondents as well as their family members in political parties, their previous experience of participation in local government politics, reasons of women's participation in LGP, sources of their inspiration, management of their election expenditure, reasons of being elected from the reserved seat.

Chapter six: This chapter mainly deals with the role of women representatives in decision making and implementation process in local government system especially in Mymensingh Pourashava. In this regard the knowledge and awareness of the respondents about standing committee, the role performed by them, fulfillment of election manifesto, training facilities and their satisfaction about their role in the pourashava are discussed.

Chapter seven: This chapter states the problems which the women representatives face and their prospects in local government institutions. In this regard the problems faced by women representatives, outlook of male representatives towards them, and the ability of women representatives to express opinion in the meetings and to what extent they are counted by the male representatives are discussed. Lastly, suggestions are collected from women representatives, civil society and male representatives asking the questions about how the situation of women representatives can be improved in the decision making and implementation process in local government system especially in Mymensingh Pourashava.

Chapter eight: This chapter mainly discusses the concluding remarks with some recommendations.

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Structural Framework and the Key Segments of the Study

Introduction:

“Women’s equal participation in decision making is not only a demand for justice and 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 incorporation of women’s participation at all levels of decision making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved” (Mahtab, 2007: 131).

Women have the equal contribution to men in build up the civilization. But from the time immemorial women are considered as the most vulnerable group through the worldwide. In Bangladesh, women bear many of marks of a ‘disadvantaged minority, in the social, economic and political realms (Mahtab, 2007: 20). Nevertheless, women in Bangladesh live in such a social system where socialization process plays an influential role to pause them in an inferior and subordinate position in the society. Women are identifying with domestic life while politics is viewed as a male dominated public activity that is typically masculine in nature (Khan and Ara, 2006: 1).

Though women constitute nearly half of the total population of Bangladesh their situation has traditionally been adverse. The traditional society of Bangladesh is par meted with patriarchal values and norms of female subordinate, subservience, subjugation and segregation. The reality of the women of Bangladesh is that remain a vulnerable and marginal in socio-political, economical, cultural life yet to enjoy equality in status with their male counterparts. Discrimination against women is still widespread and violence against women remains a global phenomenon. There is continuous barrier to women’s advancement in government, politics and business. Various indicators reveal that the status of women is much lower than that of men. Gender discrimination is widespread in all spheres and at all levels as indicated by official statistics on education, health, employment and political participation (ADB: 2011).

But at this time of globalization, keeping women apart from the mainstream of the state policy, sustainable development cannot be achieved. Thus Karan states, “Women’s equal participation in political life plays a pivotal role in the general process of advancement of women.”

Without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women’s perspective in all levels of decision making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved (FWCW, 1995: 1). Women’s participation in decision making process and the implementation of decisions are considered as integral to the process of empowerment (Calman, 1984: 15).

To stress on the importance of women's participation in decision making process for the empowerment, Karl has commented, "Keeping women aloof from the decision making, it is very difficult to practice democracy, to ensure human rights and people's participation in governance and development. Women's participation in all levels occur some changes by bringing new priorities and perspectives to political process and the organization of society , it can make society more responsive to the needs of all people" (Karl, 1995: 1).

In this context women's participation in decision making and implementation process indicates the way to achieve their equal rights and equal representation towards their community.

Achieving the goal of equal participation of women and men in the decision making will provide the balance that more accurately reflects the composition of society and is needed in order to strengthen democracy and promote its proper functioning (United Nations 1995).

In addition to this, to return women their required respect in order to ensure their gender equality, to ensure a sustainable development and to establish a fair and practical democracy the world organizations have arranged some Declaration, Charter and Conference. The General Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed the year 1975 as "International Women's Year" and also the year 1976 to 1985 was declared as the "Women Decades". Subsequently, several conferences were held in Copenhagen 1980, Nairobi 1985, Beijing 1995 and Beijing +5 conference in Newyork 2000, Beijing +10 conference in Addis Ababa (06-14 October, 2004), (Moin, 2011: 03). Fourth World Conference on women in Beijing (1995) declared a Platform For Action (PFA) that described itself as "an agenda" for women's empowerment (Goswami, 1998: 46) and the main goal of the PFA is to ensure women's participation in economic activities, politics and all the social and cultural affairs without facing obstacles (GOB, 1996: 1).

Bangladesh Government has also taken some initiatives to ensure the equal participation of women in all aspects of life and in promoting the advancement of women in the perspective of events at the national and international levels. Such as –

- Constitutional Guarantees;
- Legislative Measures;
- The Institutional Review of WID Capability of Government of Bangladesh;
- Declaration of the National Policy for the Advancement of Women.1997;
- Formulation of the National Action Plan 1997-1998;
- The Fifth Five Year Plan (1997-2002);
- Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) (2002-2005);
- Gender Budget (2005);

Among all these initiatives the Local Government Ordinance of 1997 is a milestone in the history of political empowerment of women in Bangladesh. This initiative was a major breakthrough in the process of ensuring political participation of women. In this Ordinance there is a provision that in the urban areas, i.e., in the pourashava at least three women members will be elected as commissioner from reserved seat through direct vote. Through

this Ordinance women possess the right to vote as well as the right to stand for election to an office or for membership at these local bodies. But there exists a gap between rhetoric and reality.

The world has just celebrated 100 years of International Women's Day, with the theme "Equal Rights, equal opportunities: Progress for all". Without mainstreaming women in the development process and integrating them equal in local level and central government, it will be quite impossible to think about sound development of any developing country like Bangladesh. Local government is considered as the linchpin of any country's central government (Siddika and Rahman, 2011: 2).

This study "The Role of Women Representatives in the decision making and decision implementation Process in local government in Bangladesh: A Case Study in Mymensingh Pourashava" is intended to explore a detailed feature of women representatives in decision making and implementation process in Local Government. This study will mainly to emphasis on a case study, particularly on Mymensingh Pourashava in Bangladesh.

Aim of the study:

The specific aim of the study is to examine the real scenario of women representatives in the decision making and implementation process in local government. This study particularly will focus on Mymensingh Pourashava in Bangladesh.

In exploring so, detailed features of women representatives in decision making and implementation process in local government (Pourashava) system and its relevant aspects will be touched upon.

Objectives of the study:

Objectives are always contained more than one. However, the key objectives are as follows:

- To examine the socio-economic condition of women participating in the local government politics;
- Find out the nature of women's participation in local government system;
- To find out the reason why women feel more comfortable to take part in election under the reserve seats other than the general seats, though they have the both opportunities;
- To find out how far women are conscious about their duties and responsibilities and enjoying their rights in the local government system;
- To find out how far they are able to take part in decision making and implementation process in local government system;
- To find out the problems of women representatives while they take part in local government institutions; and
- Finally, to search out some recommendations in women empowerment in local government institutions.

Significance of the research:

Every particular research has some significance. This research bears crucial significance to the women representative, mass people and the government from the following corners:

- A strong and effective democracy is one of the essential preconditions for ensuring good governance. It is generally agreed that an empowered local government is the key foundation on which the success of any democratic nation rests. Women constitute almost half of the total population. So, for a sustainable democracy, women's equal participation in Local Government system is the crucial demand of the time. This study will examine how far the women are smoothly capable to take part in the decision making and implementation process in local government.
- By the Local Government Ordinance of 1997, women have been becoming elected under reserved seats in Pourashava through direct election. But there are no particular rules and regulations in the Manual about the duties and responsibilities of the women representatives. Moreover, the mass people have a massive expectation towards them. In respect to this, an attention will be drawn to the government to fix up some policies which will help in empowering the women representatives.
- Lastly, the Mymensingh Pourashava will be presented as a model Pourashava towards the whole nation with some socio-economic, cultural and political problems of the women representatives and some solutions will be recommended in aspect of women representation.

Statement of the research problems:

The women representatives of the Local Government system of Bangladesh are always being ignored. Not only in Local Government politics but also in all sectors, the women are rarely honored and valued in proper treatment. But as a human being, they should obtain equal respect, position and rights. Since ancient period to modern age, the women are evaluated as a 'live tool' by the male dominated social pattern. In Bangladesh, since independence, the women have been contributing equally in all branches of the life. At present Bangladeshi women are more efficient and female education rate is also increasing. It is needless to say that since 1991, two female leaders of both the major parties have been administering as Prime Minister and head of opposition party by turn. But the overall situation of the general women remains unchanged.

Women are ignored, tortured, misevaluated, discriminated, harassed, underestimated, humiliated and finally not counted in various administrative system in Bangladesh. In such a situation, this research is designed to explore "The role of Women Representative in decision making and decision implementation process in Local Government of Bangladesh: A case study of Mymensingh Pourashava"

In my consideration, after successful conclusion of the research, an optimum level of scenario and in function would be available on Mymensingh Pourashava.

Hypothesis and research questions of the study:

This study will follow three hypothesis, these are as follows:

- Women representatives in decision making and implementation process in local government system are still insufficient and unequal to men.
- The outlook towards women representatives in decision making process is still conservative and constraint.
- The government is reluctant to promote women in decision making and implementation process in local government system in Bangladesh.
- The women representatives of urban local government are seemed to be more vocal and conscious about their rights but still they are to face discrimination.

Research questions of the study:

Research questions of the study are as follows:

- Why the participation of women in the general seat in Mymensingh Pourashava is almost nil?
- What is the real situation of women empowerment in Mymensingh Pourashava?
- What are the constraints of women empowerment and how these problems can be solved?

Methodological devices:

This study has been conducted on Mymensingh Pourashava for M. Phil research and the research is based on the collection of information on primary and secondary sources. The elected representatives (both under reserved and general seats) and inhabitants of the Pourashava were the main sources of primary data. In respect to collect such types of data, this research is preceded on applying scientific approaches of social science, such as: survey method-including qualitative and quantitative method, prescribed interview method (questionnaire-cum- interview schedule), empirical observation method and case study method.

Apart from these, secondary data was collected from various published and unpublished sources such as, books, journals, articles and documents. District gazetteers and reports were also used as secondary sources of data. These secondary data were used to construct and explain the important concepts and ideas relevant to the issue of women empowerment and their participation in local government politics.

Sampling, methods and techniques of data collection:

A sample represents a portion of population. There are many ways to draw a sample from the population such as probability and non- probability with their sub-categories. There are four basic types of probability sampling such as, random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling and cluster sampling. Selection of a sample for a given study depends on the nature

and objectives of the study, population size in the study, area, time, funds and staff availability of the study. In this research systematic sampling method and simple random sample have been used to collect data. In systematic sampling system, instead of using a table of random numbers, the researcher simply go down with a list to all the selected individuals to collect data.

However, Mymensingh is a significant Pourashava of the country which consists of 21 wards. In each ward there is one male representative. Therefore, there are 21 male representatives and for each three wards there is one reserved seat for one female representative. In respect to this, there are seven women representatives in whole Pourashava. Since the researcher has intended to examine the socio-economic condition and empowerment situation, problems and prospects regarding decision making and implementation process of the women representatives, they are in focal point and main sample of the study.

Data was collected through questionnaire-cum- interview schedule in a systematic sampling method from the all women representatives. A friendly atmosphere has been developed with female respondents from the beginning, which was facilitated collecting their personal information. To justify the outlook towards the women representatives, the assumption of 21 male representatives and interview of total 105 inhabitants of Mymensingh Pourashava (From each ward 05) was taken through applying simple random sampling and questionnaire method. In addition to this, they are also included in the sample size. Therefore, based on research questions, mainly qualitative data collection methods have been employed for exploring the political life of women representatives of Mymensingh Pourashava. These are case study and group discussion methods. Case study enables to holistically capture the experience of the representatives' family members with great details. Furthermore, the use of case study has helped me in gathering tangible and intangible information including their empowerment, problems, scopes and mental stresses.

Data documentation and analysis:

With the aim of collecting accurate information, I had to maintain a close relationship with the respondents. In respect to this, I had frequently to visit the Paura-office to meet with the respondents. Apart from this, I had to talk over phone with them to continue the relationship. I had to explain the aim of the research to the focus group. They agreed with me about the necessity of this research and they thought me one of them. They appreciated me and expressed that it is a praiseworthy activity. Time to time they have delivered the valuable information to me. I went to the residents of all women representatives. I have collected the data through a questionnaire-cum- interview schedule and I have also attempted to record information while talking with the respondents. As soon as returning from the field, I wrote down the more detailed information in accordance with the questions (more detailed they said during the interviews) and also wrote down my observations. To present the collected data accurately and precisely several data analysis strategies were applied. Different type of data have been gathered but similar sorts of data have been categorized based upon type. After categorization, data have been analyzed by referring to the relevant existing studies and literature on Pourashava. The fictitious names of the respondents are used in the case studies

for the ethical reasons. In most of the cases, the data have been presented in the form of simple frequency table. Moreover, in some cases 'Bar Diagram' and 'Pie Chart' have been used to present the data from different context. Arithmetic mean and simple percentage have been used to comment on the data.

Theoretical framework of the study:

Parliamentary form of government is such type of government which permits equal participation of both male and female in all aspects of government. The constitution of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh also guarantees that women possess full political rights with male.

Article 28(1) of the constitution states that, the state will not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.

According to the Article 28(2) of the constitution, women shall have equal right with men in all spheres of the state and of public life.

Article 28(4) states that, nothing in this Article shall prevent the state from making special provision in favor of women and children for the advancement of any backward section of the population.

Again Article 29(1) states that, no citizen shall on ground of sex be ineligible for or discriminated against in repent of any employment or office in the service of the Republic.

But there exists a gap between rhetoric and reality. Like most other constitutions of different states of the world, Bangladesh also guarantees political equality to women at least in theory though not in practice. According to scholars, ensuring women's equal political and economic rights has seemed to cause controversy, disinterest and denial everywhere. This situation is not different in Bangladesh. The struggle for women's' political equality in Bangladesh has still a long way to go, despite the efforts of various women's organization, NGOs and groups. The Western liberal arguments in support of increased representation of women in politics are as follows:

- a. Women comprise about half of the total population and should be represented adequately to establish a government by the people.
- b. Women are more likely to see an open and transparent government.
- c. Women will bring a different perspective to politics.
- d. Women can broaden the political agenda.
- e. Women are more aware of the needs and issues which affect them; and
- f. Extensive participation of women in public life is likely to lower the level of corruption (Ahmed, 2012: 3).

If women participate in the politics, decision making process, in parties, in elected bodies and in government in proportion to their percentage of population, they can be associated with this process as protagonists and can change the modalities and outcome of politics. Only then the concept of democracy and participation of women will go hand in hand and promote each

other mutually (Karl, 1995: 59). But still in the 21st Century women's equal participation in decision making process is nothing more strives after imagination in Bangladesh perspective. Information, statistics and many reports show that position of women in respect to health care, education, employment and politics is low and not very satisfactory (Nasrin,1995: 94).

The Local Government Ordinance of 1997 is a milestone in terms of women's empowerment in local government. According to the Ordinance, besides the male councilors there is one female councilor directly elected for each of the three wards. Though it is a landmark in women empowerment in local government system, there exist some problems:

- According to the women folk the number of women representatives is very poor as it is one-third of the male members that indicates women are minor in representation.
- Discrimination in socio-economic situation which discourage women to choose politics as a career.
- Women's weak access to political institution whether due to formal or informal practice that deny women equal opportunity
- In urban local government system women are mostly elected in reserved seats. Due to this the male members who elected from the general seats count them very little.
- Women often face a lack party support including financial support, which fails to facilitate women's participation in the decision making process.
- Last but not least , though government have created the opportunity for the women there are some gap between the practice and functioning because of not having any definite rules and regulation in the Municipality Manual.

However, it is found that women who have already entered into politics performing their duties facing various obstacles. By a conversation with the directly elected women representatives of the reserved seats of Mymensingh Pourashava, it is illustrated that the women members of the Pourashava, particularly women elected from the reserved seats are discriminated in terms of decision-making, getting financial responsibilities and are excluded from development activities. The elected male members take most of the important decisions.

From various research and writings as it is more or less established that the elected women members of reserved seats of Union Parishad cannot take part in decision making and development activities for various problems. But there is a gesture that the performance of the women representatives of the Pourashava would be more active and properly represented as they are touched with the urbanization, modernization and globalization. The assumption is wrong. Many problems are identified by the women ward commissioners such as, lack of specific work responsibilities mentioned in the Municipal Manuals, limited scope of participation in development projects and lack of equality in distributing projects.

But it is observed that most of the elected women representatives of the reserved seat of Pourashava are vocal and conscious about their rights and duties. But there are some constraints in their equal participation in Local Government Institution (LGI). Because of the ascendancy of the local influential's women are incapable to contest in the general seat and the people of the locality is less confident about the performance of women representatives of

general seat. Due to being elected from reserved seat and only for being women they do not get the opportunity of equal representation. To what extent these factors are deep rooted in women's participation should be reviewed. However, the process of women's participation in local government is still in its initial stage. Hence, it is important to know the degree of women members' role performances and their success and failure in the total process. If the local government institutions are considered as the medium of empowering women in grass root level, then it is important to know to what extent women are able to contribute in these institutions, where these institutions are not sufficiently powerful (Huq, 1999: 15).

However, by overcoming all these obstacles, the women's who are dedicated, well educated, confident, skilled and the women who have control on their own life can be successful in politics. On this aspect women are especially dependent on their luck and skill (Bulitier and Kally, 1991: 79).

Some key terms of the study:

“The role of women representatives in the decision making and decision implementation process in local government: A case study of Mymensingh pourashava in Bangladesh”. At the eve of research of the study we should analyze some key terms such as political representation, women representative participation, decision making and implementation processes and local government.

Political representation:

As we are working with women representatives in local government so we should be acknowledged with the word “political representation”. The concept of political representation is misleading simple: everyone seems to know what it is, yet few can agree on any particular definitions of this elusive concept. Different political scientist likewise Pennock and Chapman 1968; Pitkin 1967 and Schwartz 1988 have provided some exclusive ideas on this matter. Hanna Pitkin 1967 provides, perhaps, one of the most straightforward definitions: to represent is simply to make present again. On this definition, political representation is the activity of making citizens' voices opinions and perspectives “present” in the public policy making process. Political representation occurs when political actors speak, advocate, symbolize and act on the behalf of others in the political arena. In short, political representation is a kind of political assistance.

Among the political scientists who have delivered the definition of political representation Pitkin offers one of the most comprehensive discussions of the concept attending to its contradictory character in her “The Concept of Representation: Adopting a Wittgensteinian approach to language”. Pitkin maintains that in order to understand the concept of political representation, one must consider the different ways in which the term is used. Pitkin identifies at least four different views of representation: formalistic representation, descriptive representation, symbolic representation and substantive representation. She has in many ways set the terms of cotemporary discussions about representation by providing this schematic overview of the concept of political representation. These are as follows:

1. Formalist representation:

The institutional arrangements that precede and initiate representation, formal representation has two dimensions: Authorization and accountability.

- Authorization: These means by which a representative obtains his or her standing, status, position or office.
- Accountability: The ability of constituents to punish their representative for failing to act in accordance with their wishes or the responsiveness of the representative to the constituents.

2. Symbolic representation:

The ways that a representative 'stands for' the represented that is, the meaning that a representative has for those being represented.

3. Descriptive representation:

The extent, to which a representative resembles those who are represented.

4. Substantive representation:

The activity of representatives, i.e., the actions taken on the behalf of, in the interest of, as an agent of, and as a substitute for the represented.

One can overestimate the extent to which Putkin has shaped contemporary understandings of political representation, especially among political scientist. So, still Putkin's theory of representation is acceptable by all. Women representative or representation of women means, women who act as representative of their constituency side by side the male or individually.

Participation:

There are another two key words 'Participation' and 'Decision making' used in the study. Uphoff et al. (1979) gave the definition of 'Participation' in the following way. They have stated that, participation means peoples involve in decision making process in implementing programs and their involvement in efforts to evaluate such programs. According to Human Development Report, 'participation' means that peoples are closely involved in the economic, social, cultural and political process that affects their lives (Human Development Report, 1993: 1). Pressing importance on political aspects, Choudhury (1995: 5) argues that, political participation means taking part in various activities like voting, campaigning for political parties, keeping oneself aware of politics, attending public meetings and demonstrations etc. Quddus et.al (1997: 34) states that, participation means voluntary and democratic involvement of people in decision making process such as formulating policies, planning and contributing to development programs. Michel Fenoli stated that, participation in social science refers to different mechanisms for the public to express opinions and ideally exerts influence-regarding political, economic, management or other social decisions. Participatory decision making can take place along any realm of human social activity, including economic, political management, culture or familial.

Decision making:

Decision making can be regarded as the mental processes (cognitive process) resulting in the selection of a courses of action among several alternative scenarios. Every decision making

process produces a final choice. The output can be an action or an opinion of choice. Human performance in decision terms has been the subject of active research from several perspectives:

- From a psychological perspective, it is necessary to examine individual decisions in the context of a set of needs, preferences an individual has and values they seek.
- From a cognitive perspective, decision making process must be regarded as a continuous process integrated in the interaction with the environment.
- From a normative perspective, the analysis of individual decision is concerned with the logic of decision making and rationality.

Therefore, decision making is a reasoning or emotional process which can be rational or irrational and can be based on explicit assumptions or tacit assumptions. Jim Nightingale, author of “Think Smart-Act Smart”, states that “We simply decide without thinking much about the decision process”. Logical decision-making is an important part of all science-based professions, where specialists apply their knowledge in a given area to making informed decisions. It is important to differentiate between problem analysis and decision-making. Traditionally it is argued that problem analysis must be done first, so that information gathered in that process may be used towards decision-making. Decision planning should be ensured before decision-making. Making a decision without planning is fairly common, but does not often end well. Planning allows for decision to be made comfortably and in a smart way. Planning makes decision-making a lot simpler than it is.

B. Aubrey Fisher stated, there are four stages that should be involved in all group decision-making. These are: Orientation stage, Conflict stage, Emergence stage and Reinforcement stage. It is said that critical norms in a group improves the quality of decisions while the majority of opinions do not. This is due to collaboration between one another and when group members get used to and familiar with each other, they will tend to argue and create more of adipose to agree upon one decision. This does not mean that all group members fully agree- they may not want argue further just to be liked by other group members or to “fit in”.

Other decision making process have also processes have also been proposed. One such process, proposed Dr. Pam Brown of Singleton Hospital Swansea, Wales, breaks decision making down into seven steps:

1. Outline your goal and outcome.
2. Gather data
3. Develop alternatives, i.e., brainstorming
4. List pros and cons of each alternative
5. Make the decision
6. Immediately take action to implement it
7. Learn from and reflect on the decision

So, from the above decision we can understand that decision making itself depends on some particular variables such as assumption, logic, consciousness and unconsciousness,

consensus, problemalization, decision planning, techniques etc. and we found that if the majority easily cannot be consensus than improved type of decisions are formulated.

Conceptual theory of local government:

Generally, local government means a kind of government carried out by the local authorities. By the term local government Cole (1947: 28) means such a form of government “that serves only a small area and exercise only delegated powers”. He also states that local governments are not sovereign and they do not have the right to promulgate any law. They only administer law passed by the higher authority (Moin, 2011: 16).

Jahan stated, local government means an intra-sovereign governmental unite dealing 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 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 Peoples’ Republic of 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). According to Robson (1959: 574), ‘Local Government is a concept, which means a theoretical, non-sovereign community possessing the legal right and necessary organization to regulate its own affairs’.

Finer (1964: 395) defines local government as ‘the government of restricted territories of a state in so far as it is carried out, under the general jurisdiction of the government of the whole territory, by authorities representative of their localities and enjoying a measure of discretion in the execution of their powers and duties’.

Aziz (1991: 2-3) identified some characteristics of local government. These are as follows:

- It is a political system constituted by law;
- It is a body corporate with its own legal personality and identity;
- It is organized for a specific local area;
- Decision is taken by a local elected body rather than the government officials (though the later may be members);
- It is vested with substantial power of administration and taxation over the local area;
- It is ultimately subordinate to the national government.

Siddique (2008: 5) has defined local government essentially in terms of five attributes: first, its statutory status; second, its power to raise finance by taxation in the area under its jurisdiction; third, participation of the local community in decision making in specified subjects and in administration; fourth, the freedom to act independently of central control; and lastly, its general purpose in contrast to the single purpose character of many autonomous bodies. It may be mentioned here that ‘Local Government’ is widely known as Local Self-Government. The term Local Self- Government was originated during British colonial era.

Now, this is popularly used as local government. However, for the purpose of this study, the term 'local government' means a representative body elected by the local people for a particular period of time in a specific territory entrusted with some delegated power.

Limitation of the research:

There are some limitations behind every noble activity. In conducting the research work I had to face a number of limitations. These are mentioned below:

Firstly: In every activity, there should be a time frame so that the worker becomes intended to complete the work in time. Therefore, in conducting the research I had also a time frame. But due to my physical sickness, I had to face a great trouble in submission of the research on the fixed date. Moreover, I am servicing in 'Army Head Quarter' controlled Government Organization, where still definite rules and regulations relating to the higher education of teachers has not been established. In this respect, for want of study leave I had to face great trouble in terms of data collection.

Secondly: Red tappism in bureaucracy, corruption, lengthiness and whimsical mentality of government officials in service are still prevailing in our country. For this reason, I had frequently to go to the government offices for data collection.

Thirdly: The women of our country are still oppressed and suppressed and they are afraid of the patriarchal society. So, at first they felt little bit hesitation to tell some confidential information. But when I assured them that it will not hamper their political carrier and day by day I have become closer to them and then they provided all types of data to me. Some respondents' educational qualification is not up to the mark, in respect to this sometimes it was little bit difficult to make clear the questions to the respondents but later they have responded very well.

Literature review:

"Local government in Bangladesh" edited by Kamal Siddiqui (2008), is very significant book for the students, teachers and researchers to acquire a vast knowledge about the local government situation of our country. He seems the pioneer amongst the writers about the local government of our country. In this book he has introduced the local government system through some theories. Then he has acknowledged the evaluation of local government in Bangladesh from ancient Bengal to the period of Sheikh Hasina (1996-2010). Moreover, the structure, functions, financing, relationship between the central and local government, leading issues and major challenges of local government have been described very elaborately and efficiently. This book was very bountiful for me in conducting my research work.

"Local government in South Asia" by Kamal Siddiki, is another book which I would like to mention for my researcher especially. In this book the writer has made a good comparison among the local government structure of the South Asian countries. In the fourth chapter of the book he has discussed about the local government structure of Bangladesh through which the students of social science will be benefited.

“Empowerment of women and their participation in local government politics” is a Ph. D thesis by Julia Moin (2011). In this book the socio-economic condition, political background and nature of women’s participation in local government politics, election system, role, performances and empowerment condition for the women has been presented by quantitative, qualitative data and questionnaire cum-interview schedule. In this book she has presented the problems and prospects of women participation in local government very meticulously. She has also made a comparative discussion about roles in politics and empowerment situation both in the rural and urban local government respectively. It has been proved that women in rural local government is not less vocal and conscious about their role, responsibilities and rights than the representatives of urban local government, some extent the rural women representatives are more trained and sensible by the effort of the NGO’S. Lastly she has presented some logical recommendations how to improve the overall socio-political condition of the women representative in local government.

“A woman in Bangladesh from inequality to empowerment” by Dr. Nazmunnessa Mahtab (2007) is another epoch-making book for the conscious folk of the society as well as of the researcher. The book is the outcome of a collection of papers prepared by the author for presentation in conferences, workshops, seminars both in home and abroad. In this book she has depicted women’s studies in Bangladesh, potential and challenges, dimensions of gender inequality amongst the women in Bangladesh, women’s political participation and paths to empowerment, women in urban local government on the perspective of Bangladesh advancement of global and natural women and other socio-economic conditions of women has been acknowledged in very efficiently which was very prolific for me as a researcher.

“Bangladesh politics and governance” edited by Dr. Makhdum-E- Mulk Musrafi and Hasibur Rahman is also a consequential book. In this book editors have gathered some writing of some rising writings of our country. Amongst the writings, “Empowerment of the rural women: An analysis of some problems” is a significant writing to understand the situation of women. Though the research is about the women representative of urban local government, I have got a vast knowledge about the problems that obstruct the women’s empowerment.

Rajnaitik Narir abhodaya, the Bengali translation of the book, *“The making of political women”* by Rita M. Kelly and A. M. Boutilier (1991) translated by Nurul Islam khan. This book is about a conducted study on thirty six women politicians of the world in 1978. This is another significant research book written on women in politics. In this book the writers have developed a number of models and theories to analyze the background of women politicians in the familial, social, and cultural context. This study may be termed as one of the pioneering works about women’s political participation. In this book they have raised the multilevel problems of woman than the man to participate in the politics. They have also acknowledged women’s psychology in politics and political women’s psychology very efficiently. In respect to be a research work they have elevated their views through various variables, structures, case-study and theories. Lastly, it’s an ideal book to know the women psychology about politics.

“Why women count” (Essays on women in development in Bangladesh) by Shamim Hamid (1996) is an important book written on the assessment of the social and economic situation of women in Bangladesh. In this book there are three essays, among these the second one and the third one is written respectively on trend of women’s development in Bangladesh and about women empowerment situation in Bangladesh. Through various case studies she has explained the empowerment condition of women of this country.

“Women in Bangladesh Local Government” by Sadik Hasan (2007) is also a mention worthy book written on women participation in local government. In this book he also stresses a special emphasis at women participants on local government. In respect to this, he has arranged nine chapters and in these chapters he has mentioned the status of women in Bangladesh, the theoretical discussion of local government, the politics behind the reforms initiative in local government of Bangladesh introducing different political regimes started from the British period. He has also tried to identify the political motives of the political leadership and the control of bureaucrats in these initiatives. However, this may be useful for the study.

“Women in Bangladesh Parliament” by Jalal Firoj (2007) is another important book for the research. Although, the research is based on local government, the book has provided some information on women participation in decision making and implementation process in Bangladesh politics. In this book he wanted to present that democracy without women is not a democracy. One of the aspects of ‘democracy with women’ is ensuring women’s participation in the decision making institutions of a democratic policy. A balanced representation of women and men at all stages of decision making process guarantees better governance. However, it is known by that entire Parliament is the best source of decision making in our country. So how far the women representatives of our country are able to take part in decision making process, this book is mainly intended to explore on this regard.

Women in politics and bureaucracy edited by Nazma Chowdhury, Hamida Akter Begum et. al. The volume has two broad sections with seven papers. In part A, Khaleda Salauddin’s paper elaborately analyses women in politics in Bangladesh. It adequately deals with women’s representation in national level even in local level politics as nominated entities. She has in the end proposed certain recommendations for women’s greater participation in the political process. Sayeda Rowshan Qadir’s papers discussed women’s political role and pointed out how women are excluded from the process in Bangladesh context. She has analyzed women’s limited candidature in the parliamentary elections and has identified the practical hindrances and hurdles to be overcome. She has also identified the causes of marginal participation of women in politics.

Bangladesh is still a male dominated country which is one of the main reasons of less participation for women in politics. Besides, political status of women and their possibility in the politics has been explained in the book *“Women in Politics”* written by Nazma Chowdhury.

The constitution of Bangladesh has been in effect from 16 December 1972. The constitution recognizes the basic and fundamental rights. The constitution also made some special provisions for establishing and promoting governance at the local level by promoting

democratically elected local government institutions. The constitution of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh helps me to know the equal rights of women and provision of local government.

“Social Science Research Design with Empirical Case-studies”, “Gateway to Social Science Research for Advanced Studies” and “Theory, Method and Practice in Social Research” by Dr. Md. Amran Hossain is three well written books on Social Science Research Methodology. In these books he has illustrated very nicely how to conduct a social science research. By these books I was highly benefited to conduct the research.

Articles:

‘Women, Participation and Empowerment in Local Government: Bangladesh Union Parishad Perspective’ by Mostafizur Rahman Khan and Fardouse Ara (2006) is a well written article. In this article they have mentioned the Constitutional provisions regarding women participation in the Union Parishad, institutional arrangement for women’s participation, scope of elected women’s participation. They have presented the rules of women participation in the Union Parishad, the problems and obstacles they face in performing their responsibility etc. Lastly, the writers ended with some policy recommendations. Above all, this is very acceptable article for the research.

Women and politics in Bangladesh, by Kamal Uddin Ahmed (2012) is another article which was much beneficial for the study. In this article he has discussed women and politics in global perspective, applied some theories on women’s low participation in politics. He has presented some arguments for women’s representation in politics. In Bangladesh perspective, he has mentioned women participation in the Parliamentary election of 2001. He has shown that under the general seats women have lower opportunities to be elected than that of man. In this aspect the political parties should keep mentionable role in women’s advancement in politics. They should be more generous to give nomination in election to more women and they should be provided some important posts by the respective political parties. He has mentioned the obstacles which women face in their duties then ended with some recommendations. This article keeps a mention worthy benefit for the study.

Pranab Kumar Panday also has written on *Local Government in Bangladesh* (2011). In this article he has stated that at the post-independence period the governments have repeatedly experimented with the local government system. He has illustrated local government in various periods and in Bangladesh in different regimes. He has also mentioned the relationship among the central and local government and the local people. Then he has shown some major issues, rules and functions of local government. He has stated that there prevails a great absence of institutional capacity and accountability and transparency in these institutions. This article was very helpful for the study.

Women in Local Government [Story from Bangladesh] and Women’s Participation in Local level politics are other two articles written by M. Mizanur Rahman & Aisha Siddik (2011). In

these articles they have presented the socio-economic and political situation of women in our country. Then, stated about women's participation in local government politics, their power and functions in this institutions. I was benefited with these articles.

Shawket Ara Husain's (2000) article "*Women's Participation in Electoral Politics*" is an attempt to evaluate the nature of women's participation in elections both in national and local levels. She tries to show whether true participation of women in electoral politics is increased. She also tries to identify the barriers and to suggest some remedies to raise their participation in politics. Women's participation in different elections is discussed in this paper from two aspects- in parliamentary elections and elections of local government bodies. Emphasis is given on the role of political parties to increase women's participation in politics. This article presents a brief account of the trends of women's participation in both general as well as reserved seats in the national and local government elections in Bangladesh.

Abeda Sultana [1998] has tried to show the extent to which women members of Union Parishads are empowered through their participation in decision making process and performance in institutional responsibilities in the article "*Union Parishad Narir Kshmatayan: Ekti Parjalochana*" (in Bangla) [Empowerment of women in Union Parishad: An Analysis]. On the basis of secondary sources, she has qualitatively analyzed the nature of women's involvement in the mainstream of decision making process from the grass root level. She has briefly discussed the trend of women's participation in local government in Bangladesh by presenting statistical information from historical perspective and has pointed out the constraints, which hindered women's political participation.

Abeda Sultana [2000] in her another article entitled "*Rajiti o Prashasanik Siddhanta Grahane Nari: Paripreckshit Bangladesh*" (in Bangla) [Participation of women in Political and Administrative Decision Making: Bangladesh context], has tried to identify the extent and nature of women participation in political and administrative decision making bodies. To demonstrate the situation of women's political participation, she has selected political parties, parliament, cabinet, top administration and Union Parishad as the unit of her study. But this is done on the basis of exclusively secondary data.

Reports/documents:

Bangladesh women leaders; women's organizations is a document written on Bangladeshi women, their rights and their involvement in politics, governance and decision making. This document states that before the Gazette notification (the Pourashava Ordinance 1977, which was amended on 1998) for municipalities and city corporations respectively, female ward commissioners were appointed by selection. But by the latest Ordinance they got chance to be elected under the reserved seats; which acted as milestone on the aspects of women's empowerment in local government. This document also presented law and order situation and gender-based violence in Bangladesh, the overall situation of women in politics, the politics of integrating gender to state development processes, Bangladeshi women and politics of religion, women's empowerment behind the NGO intervention.

Women in local government in Asia and the Pacific A comparative analysis of thirteen countries is comparative report which draws together a picture of women's involvement in local government in the Asia and Pacific region. It is based on 13 country reports prepared for Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP) and LOGOTRI. It is intended to set the scene for discussion at the Asia-Pacific Summit of Women Mayors and Councilors to be held in Phitsanulok, Thailand, from the 19 to 22 June 2001. It highlights containing barriers to women's involvement in local government, initiatives that have increased women's participation and the transformative leadership that women provide in local government. It also outlines regional and country-level strategies for increasing women's involvement in local government.

Gender and Local Governance A new discourse in development by Prof. Ishrat Shamim & Dr. Ranjana Kumary (2002), is another report was submitted to South Asia Network of Economic research Institutes (SANEI). This report is based on comparative discussion about women participation in local government between two countries Bangladesh and India. This report illustrated the socio-economic profile of women representatives, nomination process of women representatives to indirect election in Bangladesh and reservation process for women in India, women's political participation; cooperation received at local level, capacity building through intervention, problems and prospects, etc. are discussed in this paper.

Chapter - 02

Background of Local Government System and Mymensingh Pourashava

Introduction:

Bangladesh was under the British rule for one hundred and ninety years and under the Pakistani suppression and exploitation for twenty four years. In 16th December, 1971 being independent Bangladesh formed a Parliamentary form of Government according to the demand of the mass people. But from 1975 to 1991 it was under the Presidential type of Government. In August 1991, the Parliamentary form of Government was reestablished. The state consists of full area 55,598 square miles or 1, 43,998 square kilometers. The whole country is divided into seven Administrative Divisions, 64 Zila Parishad and 485 Upazila Parishads. There are at present 4468 Union Councils and 86,038 villages in the country.

Two types of Local Governments are introduced such as Urban Local Government and Rural Local Government. The Urban Local Governments are City Corporation (10) [Dhaka is divided into two city corporations] and Pourashava (316). Amongst these Pourashavas, Mymensingh is a Number One, “A” type and 1st class category Pourashava. The area of Mymensingh Pourashava is 21.73 square km and the population is 4, 50,312.

Besides the Central Government, the Local Government plays a pivotal role in over all development of the state. So it is important to know about the background information of the Local Government Institutions as well as the Mymensingh Pourashava as it may provide us with sufficient knowledge for the better understanding of the issues raised and discussed in this study. It is also useful to provide an overall idea about the historical background, power and functions of Mymensingh Pourashava

Historical background of local government in Bangladesh:

It is usually assumed that local government was the basic form of government in the sub-continent till 6th century B. C. local government of one sort or another has a long history in the geographical area that now constitutes Bangladesh. Most of the local government bodies in Bangladesh owe their origin to the British rule, which ultimately passed through the Pakistan period to independent Bangladesh (Khan and Ara, 2006: 79).

Local government is considered as one of the components of generating process and service delivery mechanisms in almost everywhere in the world. Bangladesh is a part of greater South Asian political culture which inherited a very rich heritage of autonomous local and community governance structure (Ahmed, 2003: 4). The importance of local government system is recognized in the Constitution of Peoples’ Republic of Bangladesh in Article.59. The Local government Commission Report, 1997 shows the legal basis of LG in Bangladesh in the following ways:

The Local government Institutions (LGIs) has been given legal status with statutory power. The 59 paragraph under 12th amendment of the Constitution (Third chapter) mentions that there shall be representative bodies at each level of administration of the Republic and the LGIs will be responsible for:

- a) Administration and public welfare;
- b) Maintenance of law and order;
- c) Provision of public services; and
- d) Planning implementation of development activities.

This enabling paragraph of the Constitution is the legal basis of the Local Government Institution. However, a study of local government system in Bangladesh concludes that although the constitution provides for an autonomous local government system these provisions have not been implemented resulting in a local government system that functioning properly. The local government system has been subjected to many changes and experiments, which has not only established the system but also caused the local government system to distance it from the community it is supposed to serve (UNDDSMS, 1996).

In Bangladesh there exist two types of LGIs. At present five tires of local government are approved by the government according to the report of Local government Commission, 1997. The present structure of local government in Bangladesh is as follows:

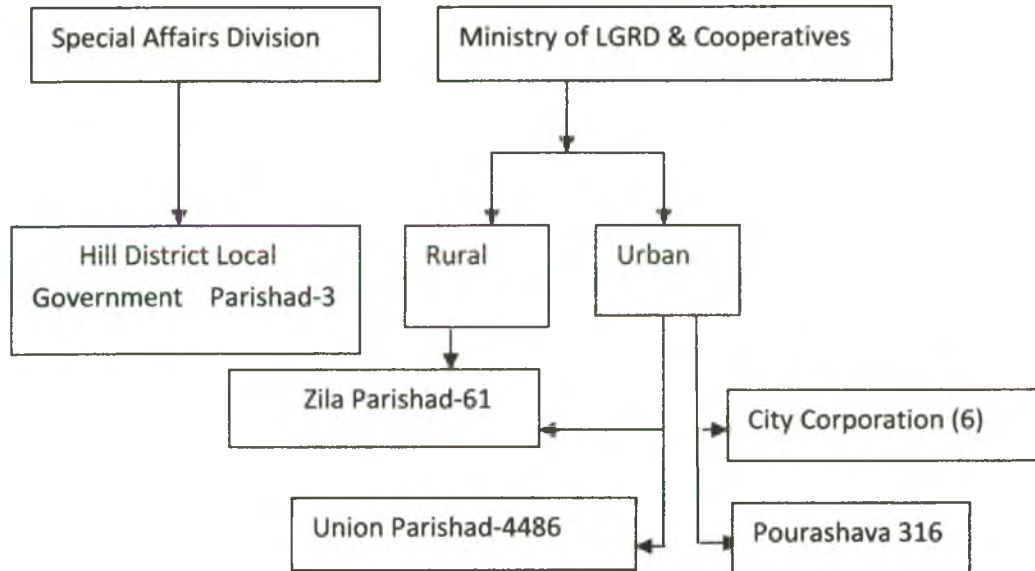
Local government in Bangladesh

Rural local government	Urban local government
Zila Parishad(64)	City Corporation (10)
Upazila Parishad (485)	Pourashava (316)
Union Parishad (4,501)	
Gram Sarker(1,92,348)	

Sources: [http: /www.local-democracy.org/archive/documents/historical-background.html](http://www.local-democracy.org/archive/documents/historical-background.html), [http: /www.lgd.gov.bd/html/about.html](http://www.lgd.gov.bd/html/about.html) and different sources of the GOB.

The tires are also shown in the following Chart:

Chart-1: Structure of local government in Bangladesh



Source: Kamal Siddique, 2008: 529

It may be mentioned that, at present there are only two local government bodies, i.e., the Union Parishad and Upazila Parishad in rural areas and Pourashava and City Corporation are respectively functioning in the urban areas. Whereas, Gram Sarker and zila Parishad are not in operation, because election of these bodies has not yet been held (Siddique, 2008: 115). Brief historical background of Local Government Institutions (LGIs) in Bangladesh is discussed below:

Urban local government:

Bangladesh was under British Colonial rule for one hundred and ninety years (1757-1947) and under Pakistani suppression for 24 years Local Government system (1947-1971). During almost two hundred years of British rule of the Indian -Sub-Continent, a number of experiments were made with the system of Local Government. The British rulers developed the Local Government system in this region according to the image and shape of the western type. Moreover, the Local Government system was developed here to save the imperial interest of Colonial rulers. Therefore, it can be said that Bangladesh possesses a long history of Local Government system as the legacy of British rule followed by Pakistani rule (Moin, 2011: 39).

Now the development of urban and rural local government in this region is discussed in the context of the then British India.

British period:

The history of local government in Bangladesh goes back to the British Colonial period. When the British came to this country, they first settled in the trading centers of India. During the British period, several acts were passed to promote local-level self-rule and people's participation in the administration was almost absent (Siddique, 1994). Municipal institutions on the pattern of British Urban Government were thus the first to be implemented. The first municipality was established in Madras in 1687 (Qadir, 1996: 57). The members of this municipality were selected both from the British Government and native people consisting three categories, namely the Mayor, Alderman and Burgesses. Other two municipalities were also set up in Calcutta and Bombay in 1726 (Murtaza, 2000: 15). In 1793, the British Parliament enacted the first law of Municipal administration for India which applicable only to the three Presidency towns, namely Calcutta, Madras and Bombay (Siddique, 2008: 49). In this Act, the Municipal administration got the authority to appoint "Justice of Peace". They also had the authority to impose tax on house and appoint *Chawkidars* and sweepers and to repair of roads in the cities. In 1813, Dhaka was the first town in Bangal where taxation for the provision of *Chawkidars* was imposed and the Act X of 1842, which may be considered as the first Municipal Act of Bengal. In the Act XV of 1842, the provision of creation 'Town Committee' was introduced on the basis of the application of at least two-third house owners of the towns (Rahman, 1998: 87). The then British Government constituted town committee with nine nominated members, but that Act could not create sufficient interest among the town dwellers. In 1856, under the Town Police Act the Magistrate was empowered to appoint *Panchayat* and improve five percent tax on houses. The fund was to be spent on the pay to choukidars, conservancy, town improvement and street lighting.

Another new municipal law was enacted in 1863-64 with a view to improving the condition of towns, which was known as "The Municipal Improvement Act, 1864". Under this Act, the government could appoint a town committee with seven nominated town dwellers (as members of this committee) including District Commissioner, Magistrate, executive engineer as members. The income of town committee was from improving tax on houses and vehicles. The structure of municipal government as we know it began with this Act. Under this Act the towns such as, Hawra, Jessore, Dhaka, Bhagolpure, Munger, Purnia, Nadia were upgraded as town committee municipalities (Moin, 2011: 41).

The number of municipality was further increased under the 'District Town Act of 1868'. This Act provided for a committee of five persons for a town, of which not more than one third could be government officials. The committee appointed its Chairman and Vice-Chairman annually. The main source of income was property tax. In 1874, some special laws were passed providing for municipal slaughter houses, prevention of cruelty to animals and registration of birth and deaths. In 1876, all the previous Acts were null and void and a consolidated Act (Act iv of 1876) was promulgated. Through this Act the municipal institutions were divided into four categories (Siddique, 2008: 51):

1. Those municipalities governed by the Act of 1864, declared as 1st class category;
2. The municipalities, constituted under the Act of 1868, called 2nd class municipalities;

3. The municipalities which were still under the Act xx of 1856 became Unions; and
4. The municipalities, which were constituted under the Act of 1850, became Stations.

Under the Act of 1878, all first class municipalities were empowered to take over cleaning of previous and to levy a rate for the purpose. Although various Acts were formulated to improve the municipal as well as the local government system, it became quite difficult to execute the activities of those institutions due to the absence of peoples' representatives and bureaucratic dominance of the government. To remove the problems Lord Ripon adopted new government proposal in 1882 which was similar to the existing system of England. In 1884, during the vice-royalty of Lord Ripon another Act named "Bengal Municipal Act" was introduced consolidating the previous Acts related to municipality. This Act introduced the provision of election of a chairman, a vice-chairman and of two-third commissioners. Under this Act, municipalities were constituted with 9 to 30 members out of them two-third was elected and one-third was government nominated (Khatun, 1996: 31). The municipalities could levy with prior sanction of the government various rates, fees, tools and taxes. After the Act of 1884, various Acts were promulgated by the British rulers for the advancement of municipal administration among this Municipal Act, 1898; the Decentralization Commission Report, 1909; the Montague-Chemsfort Report, 1917 and the Government India Resolution 1918 were mention worthy (Murtaza, 2002: 16). Unifying the Act of 1884 and subsequent amendments of the Bengal Municipal Act of 1932 was passed through which some important reformation was adopted including women franchise and the reservation of seats for the minority community in Bengal (Siddique, 2008: 53). This Act was one of the first pieces of Municipal legislation in the region. This was however, a developed Act but due to some events like, Second World War, communal riot and partition of India and Pakistan municipal administration was interrupted. It was observed that the introduction of various Acts for reorganization of local bodies could not fulfill the necessary services to the community people (Moin, 2011: 42).

Local Government in colonial days was closely supervised by the colonial officials and native administrators. They performed mainly system maintenance roles such as, keeping law and order situation and collecting revenue (Haque, 1988: 2). There were 118 municipalities in undivided Bengal during the year 1947(Kundu, 1999: 71; NILG, 1999: 3). At the time of the 1947 partition of India and Pakistan, there were 45 municipalities in Bangladesh (the then East Pakistan) and four municipalities and one Town Committees in the district Sylhet, which were administered according to the Assam Municipal Act of 1923 (Siddique, 2008: 53)

Pakistan period:

After the partisan, the previous municipal government of colonial period continued till 1958. The military junta, which staged a coup d'état in 1958, used to believe that the Pakistani people was not suited to the Westminster model of the representative government. Due to this, the then Pakistan government reshaped the urban management structure through the Basic Democracy of 1956 and Urban Administration Ordinance of 1960, provision of forming Union Committee, Town Committee, and Municipal Committee was introduced. Union Committee was set up in each union which was considered as urban counterparts of

union council and the divisional commissioner nominated the members of this committee (Mia, 1993: 36). Municipal Committee was introduced. Union Committee was set up in each union which was considered as urban counterparts of union council and the divisional commissioner nominated the members of this committee (Mia, 1993: 36).

Local Government under BDO, 1959 in East Pakistan

Tire of basic democracy

Rural areas	Urban areas
Union Councils(4036)	Union Committees(37)
Thana Councils(393)	Municipal Committees(29)
District Councils(17)	
Divisional Councils(4)	

Source: Kamal Siddique, 2008: 55

In this new enactment, total 56 town Committees were set up in 28 municipality boards and municipal committee was constituted in the rest 28 municipal boards (Rahman, 1998 : 88). Towards the end of 1962, a new municipality was created, thereby raising the number of municipal committees to 29. Municipal committees was consisted of elected members (Chairman of union Committee), an equal number of appointed (non official) and official members. All the members elected a Vice- Chairman from amongst the elected members for the duration of five years. A part time chairman remained in most of the municipal committees and then the SDO (Sub-Divisional-Officer) or ADC (Additional-Deputy-Commissioner). This system was continued till 1971.

Bangladesh period:

Soon after the emergence of Bangladesh in 1971, all the previous Local Government bodies were dissolved though the President Order No.7 of 1972 and administrators were appointed by the government. Through this order the name of the local government bodies were changed into respectively Union Committee to Nagar Panchayet, Town Committee into Shahar (town) Committee and Municipal Committee into Pourashava. This arrangement continued up to 1973. In 1973, President's Order Number-22 was promulgated in which the provision of electing chairman and vice-chairman was created through election and 'Shahar' Committee was upgraded into Pourashava (NILG, 1999: 4).

At the beginning of 1975 a major change was occurred in the political scenario of Bangladesh. On 25 January, 1975 under the Fourth Amendment to the Constitution, a Presidential form of Government was introduced in place of the Westminster type Parliamentary system. Later on a new Ordinance was introduced in 1977 entitled "Pourashava Ordinance, 1977", which abolished the post of vice-chairman and the system of nine elected members and a chairman was introduced. According to this Ordinance, there was provision for two types of commissioners, i.e., Commissioners in the general seats and in the

reserved seats. The later was exclusively for women commissioners, with one for every three wards in a Pourashava (Siddique, 2008: 139).

In 1980, some changes have been brought in municipal administrations by creating four Municipal Corporations in Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi (popularly known as City Corporation) through Urban Management Ordinances. Each City Corporation was promulgated through separate Ordinance such as – Chittagong Municipal Corporation Ordinance, 1982; Dhaka Municipal Corporation Ordinance, 1983; Khulna Municipal Corporation Ordinance, 1984 and Rajshahi Municipal Corporation Ordinance, 1987. The Municipal Corporations were named as City Corporation in 1990 (Murtaza, 2002: 18; NILC, 1994: 4; Siddique, 2008: 139). In the year of 2002, Barisal and Sylhet municipalities were upgraded into city corporations. According to the City Corporation Act, 2009, Narayangong City Corporation has started its activity on 5 June, 2011, Comilla municipality improved to City Corporation on 10th July, 2011. According to Local Government (City Corporation) Amendment Act 2011, Dhaka City Corporation was divided into two on 4 December 2011, named as Dhaka City Corporation North and Dhaka City Corporation South. Rangpur has been officially declared as City Corporation on 28th June, 2012. At present there are 10 city corporations and 316 Pourashavas are providing civic facilities in the country (<http://www.lgd.gov.bd> and other sources).

Rural local government:

As it is mentioned earlier that, though there exist four tiers of Rural Local Government bodies in Bangladesh, two tiers are acting. These are Union Parishad and Upazila Parishad.

At present structure of Rural Local Government especially the Union Parishad in Bangladesh had its origin in British colonial rule in the Indian-sub-continent. The first attempt was taken by the then British colonial rulers at establishing local government institution and was made during the later part of the 19th century. The structure, functions and financial management of local government institutions have under gone many changes from the British colonial period to the present day. But it is historically established that the villages are self reliant before the colonial rule. It is usually assumed that local government was the basic form of government in the Sub-continent till the 6th century B. C. At that time, the village people were generally left to themselves and during this time Village Self-Government was in vogue. Thus it is said that “Village Self-Government in the Sub-continent is as old as the villages themselves” (Siddique, 2008: 29). At that time, every village had its own community based organization named as Panchayet which was existed during ancient times and Mughal period in India. These village Panchayets were locally constituted bodies which looked after different aspects of village life such as enforcement of law and order, resolving legal and social disputes maintenance of tanks, arrangements of village education. The Panchayets were self-financed and used to generate their own resources to fulfill their functions (Hasan, 2007: 39).

The important task of the Panchayet in the whole of India was public order; they both police and judicial duties. The villagers did not only accept the settlement of disputes by Panchayets but they identified the Panchayets with this role. The Panchayets, literally meaning a body of

five persons, were usually composed of villagers belong to higher casts and the wealthy cultivators (Haque, 1988: 26-27). Sddique stated, the village Panchayets were controlled by the leaders of the upper casts and after just by headman who asked for the advice of the Panchayets in different matters (Sddique, 2008: 31). In this system village appeared to be the basic unite. It passed through different regimes but the functions and prestige remained almost unchanged for a long time.

In 1342, Shamsuddin Ilias Shah established a sovereign kingdom in this region under his absolute rule and named the country as Bengal. The duration of Sultan regime was 200 years in the region. Following the independent Sultans, came the Mughals. During Mughalrules, the Mughal Government introduced a new local government system for effective administration. They divided their empire into Subas (province). Subas were divided into several Sarkers and again, each Sarker was constituted with a number of Panchayets or Mahals. The head of the Suba and Sarker were termed as Subader and Shikder respectively. Fauzdar, Kazi and Mirdal were appointed to look after the administration of Paragonas. Village headman and Cowkidar were appointed in village. The main aim of the Mughal period was the revenue collection (Moin, 2011: 46). At the end of Mughal rule, Bengal again asserted their independence. With the defeat of Nawab Sirajuddoula in the battle of Palashi in 1757, Bengal lost her independence this time to the British.

Rural local government under the British colonial rule (1757-1947):

The British rulers in India acted as reformer of political institutions especially of local government system. Under this circumstance their main aim was to create a group of native people to serve their own interest and to exploit the local natural resources of the sub-continent. In addition to this, they abolished the indigenous system and established institutions nurtured by them and were modeled on their own. Kalam stated, “Everywhere the British introduced colonial rule, the gradually changed the native rules and established modern administrative system in their own styles” (1993; 39). When the British arrived at this country, they first settled in the trading centers. Due to this, the urban local government got more priority by the while the evolution of rural local government passed through several stages trial and error.

Their policy was to create some indigenous groups for keeping the administration costs at low level. It was possible because the native landlords (Zaminders and Talukders) were always acted upon, as their central authority (the British rulers) wanted them to act. However, in 1793 with the introduction of a new Zamindari system, the traditional local self-governing institutions of rural Bengal were destroyed. The then Governor General of India Lord Cornwallis introduced the Permanent Settlement Act of 1793, with a view to creating a permanent landlord class, who would be responsible for collecting revenue on behalf of the British rulers. Along with the revenue collection, the Zaminders were also responsible for the maintenance of law and order in rural areas. This new created class destroyed the relatively autonomous Panchayats and replaced it with a institution, ‘Landlordism’ (Siddique, 2008). In this circumstances, the economic and law and order situation started deteriorating at an alarming rate, particularly following the Revolt of 1857. Soon the British realized the

necessity of local institutions in the administration of the country. In respect to this, government passed the village Chaukidari Act of 1870 which tried to revive the traditional Panchayet system. This Act, divided the rural areas into Unions, each covering approximately ten to twelve square miles (Choudhury, 1987: 7; Huque, 1987: 30). It authorized the district magistrate to appoint a Panchayet consisting of five members at the village level. The Panchayet had the authority to appoint village 'Chaukidars' for the maintenance of law and order. It was also empowered to assess and collect taxes from the villagers to pay Chaukidars for their service (Siddique, 2008: 40). Hossain has argued that the Chaukidari Panchayet had two kinds of shortcomings. First, it was not representative body rather it was an institution with nominated members. Second, the public welfare was often interrupted due to the tendency of preserving interest of the British Government. As a result, the Panchayats "were popularly regarded not as representatives of the village folk, but as servants of 'Sarkar', the government (Tinker, 1954: 40).

In 1882, Lord Ripon adopted the famous resolution on local self-government, which was the first step towards the reform of this institution. His purpose was to create opportunity for the native people to participate in the local government. In order to give effect to the resolution, The Bengal Council passed the Bengal Local Self-Government Act of 1885. It was a landmark in the history of Local Self- Government in rural Bengal. It provided for a three tier system of local government for rural areas which are as follows:

- a District Board in each district;
- a Local Board in a sub- division of a district;
- a Union Committee for a group of villages.

The proposed District Board was formed with at least nine members for the period of five years. Usually, the number members varied from 18 to 34 according to the size and population of the district. The members of Local Board elected the members (not less than half) of this institution and the members amongst themselves elected the chairman. Under this Act, the District Board was formed in all districts of Bengal except Sylhet. Local Boards and Union Committees were made entirely dependent on the District Board. The Local Board consisted of at least six members of whom two-thirds were elected from the members of Union Committee on the basis of the approval of the Lieutenant Governor (Quader, 1997: 20). Chairman was appointed from the members. The Local Board acted as supervising body of union committees. In 1883 a Central Board was established for general supervision of the Local Boards.

Union Committee was composed of nine elected by the villagers. This institution elected their chairman from among the members. It was responsible for the local municipal functions. The Union Committee had the power to raise funds from the villagers. But because of under interference by the District Board, it turned into non-functional entity. Along with Union Committee, Chaukidari Panchayet was also active in maintaining law and order of the villages under the unions. The provisions of the Bengal Local Self-Government Act of 1885 came into force in 16 districts with effects from 1st October, 1886. But it created a dual administrative system in the union level.

To overcome the problems, some amendments of the Bengal Village Chaukidari Act of 1870 were brought through another Act that was enacted in 1892. Under this Act, the District Magistrate appointed the Chaukidars where the candidacy of Chaukidars was determined by the Panchayet. But this Act also faced some limitations. All these led to a reappraisal of British policies in India. Subsequently, a Royal Commission submitted its report in 1909 in which some recommendations were suggested to increase people's cooperative participation in local administration. It also suggested the reintroduction and reformation of village Chaukidari Panchayet for managing local affairs. In 1909, the Morely- Minto reforms were enacted through which the Union Board was constituted combining the village Chaukidari Panchayet and Union Committee (Saki and Hossain, 1996: 80). In 1918, a bill was submitted in Parliament on the basis of the Montague-Chamford Report and this bill became an Act in 1919 entitled "Local Self-Government Act of 1919" " This Report offered more opportunity for popular participation in local bodies than the previous time" (Aziz,1991: 10). During the years just preceding the Act of 1919, the member of Union Committees were increased in manifold.

A statistics shows that, with introduction of this Act the number of Union Committees was raised from 358 to 2000 within two years (Hossain, 1989: 19). Through this Act, rejecting the previous three-tier Local Self-Government bodies, two- tier local administrations were introduced and the tiers were- Union Board and District Board. Union Board was established in Bengal through this Act except Maldah and Chittagong Hill Tracts [Rahman (b), 2000: 81]. Union Board consisted of six members, out of whom two-thirds were elected and one-third were government nominated. President and Vice-president were also elected amongst the members. On the other hand, District Board constituted with 16 to 70 members, of whom the nominated one-third members. This system continued till the end of British regime (Moin, 2011: 50).

Pakistan period:

The then Pakistani Government did not want to continue the Westminster model of representative Government. The new regime was in favor of a guided democracy, which was to be characterized by authoritarian government at the top and representative government at the local level. This new system of local government was known as "Basic Democracy". The Basic Democracy Order (BDO) was promulgated in 1959. This Basic Democracy system covered both rural and urban areas. Under this order, four tier rural local governments were introduced. The following table shows the total numbers of councils in rural areas and committees in urban areas of East Pakistan as well as it will present the structure of Local Government at a glance under the BDO which was introduced by General Ayub Khan Government.

Table -2.1: Local Government under Basic Democracy Order 1959 in East Pakistan

Tier	Local government institution	Type of selection	Elector/selector	Person in charge
District	District Council	Election & Nomination	Chairman of the Union Councils/Town Committees & Government	Deputy Commissioner as the Chairman
Thana	Thana Council	Ex-officio Members	-----	Sub-Divisional Officer as the Chairman
Union	Union Council	Direct Election	Universal Adult Franchise	Chairman

Source: Sadik Hasan, Women in Bangladesh Local Government (Dhaka, A H Development Publishing House, 2007)

This system fully came into operation from 1962. Out of this four tiers rural local government system formed with Union Council and Thana Council. At the lowest level of the local government system was the Union Council in the rural areas. It was comprised of ten members; from 1960 to 1962, two-thirds of them were elected and one-third nominated by the government. After 1962, nominated system was abolished and the Union Council became completely an elected institution (Khan, 1989: 35). The council elected from amongst its members one Chairman and the Vice-Chairman. For the first time, the Chairman was paid an honorarium of Rupees 600 per year. The tenure of member, chairman and vice-chairman was five years.

The Thana Council was the second tier in the hierarchy of local government bodies. Usually a Thana council covered 8 to 15 Union Councils. There were 411 thanes (police stations) in former East Pakistan. The Thana Council consisted of representatives as well as official members. The Chairman of Union Councils was the ex-officio members of Thana Council. Apart from, SDO and other government officials related with agriculture, education, health, fisheries and cooperatives were nominated as the member of Thana Council by the DC (Deputy Commissioner). SDO and Circle Officer became the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Thana Committee respectively. The main function of the Thana Council was coordination of activities of Union Councils under its jurisdiction.

The District Council was the next tier of local government under the BDO, 1959. It was formed at the District level. Though the order of Basic Democracies, the District Councils came under the control of bureaucracy. DC was the ex-officio chairman of this institution. The District Council comprised of official and representative members as determined by the government. The total number usually varied from 30 to 50 according to the size and population of the district. The number of elected members would not be less than the nominated members. The chairman of Union Council elected the members. The Divisional Council comprised civil and government nominated members. Divisional Commissioner

turned into the chairman and the members of District Councils elected the civil member. In 1962, the Divisional Councils were abolished. Although the BDO created the opportunity to integrate local bodies in development process, the provision of appointing government officials in the post of chairman and members made this system the agent of the central government.

Bangladesh period:

After the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, the new government of the state brought about some changes by promulgating different Acts, Ordinances and Orders through which reshaped the structure of the rural local government. First step was taken by the Presidents Order Number-7 of 1972 (Siddique, 2008: 63). Through this order all the local government bodies were dissolved except the Divisional Council and administrators were appointed to execute the functions of those bodies. By this order, the previous name of the local government bodies was changed likewise:

- the Union Council to Union Panchayet;
- Thana Council to Thana Development Committee; and
- The District Council to Zila Board.

Although the names were changed but the functions and sources of income of those local government bodies remained unchanged and those were as same as before under the BDO of 1959. In 1973, Presidents Order Number-22 was promulgated. By this Order, the Union Panchayet was renamed as Union Parishad (UP). Under the changed arrangement, a union was divided into three wards. Each UP was to consist of a chairman and a vice-chairman and 9 members- three elected form each wards through universal adult franchise for the duration of five years.

In 1976, the Ziaur Rahman government (the then President of the Republic) promulgated a new Local Government Ordinance entitled “The Local Government Ordinance, 1976”. The new Ordinance introduced three types of local government bodies, namely the Union Parishad (UP) at the Union level, the Thana Parishad (TP) at the Thana level and the Zila Parishad (ZP) at the District level. Some changes took place in the composition of Union Parishad such as, the post of vice-president was abolished and two nominated women members were included for the first time. The SDO nominated the women members from the women of entire Union.

In 1979, two posts were created for present nominated members through an amendment of the Ordinance of 1976. But this provision was omitted in 1983. The chairman and members were paid an honorarium by the government. This Ordinance provided Thana Parishad with representative members (all chairmen of Union Parishads) and official members as chairman (SDO) and vice-chairman (Circle Officer). All of them were the ex-officio members. The primary duty of Thana Parishad was to co-ordinate all the development activities within its jurisdiction. On the other hand Zila Parishad with both elected and official members and nominated women members. It was entrusted with the function of construction and maintenance of public work activities.

In April, 1980 by an amendment of the LGO, 1976, the Swanirvar Gram Sarkar (SGS) was introduced at the village level. It consisted of a Gram Proddhan and 11 members including at least two women members. The SGS was assigned the responsibility of increasing of food and production, eradicating illiteracy, reducing population growth, invigorating rural cooperatives and maintaining law and order in the village. But a Martial Law Order abolished this tier in July 1982. In subsequent years, some basic changes took place in Local Government system of Bangladesh through the promulgation of “Local Government (Upazila Parishad and Upazila Administration Reorganization) Ordinance, 1982” and “The Local Government (Union Parishad) Ordinance, 1983” (Ahmed, 1989: 47). Under the decentralization program of Bangladesh government, the old thanas were primarily changed as upgraded Thanas in 1982. In 1983, those upgraded Thanas were renamed as Upazilas through the amendment of the Ordinance of 1982. In addition to that, Zila Parishad was established in each district according to the “Local Government (Zila Parishad) Act 1988”. During this period, Union Parishad, Upazila Parishad, and Zila Parishad were in operation as Rural Local Government Bodies. According to LGO, 1983, each union was divided into three wards. A union parishad (UP) consisted of a chairman, nine elected members—three from each wards and three nominated women members, each of whom was to represent one ward. Up to, 1989, the authority that is to choose the nominated women post was changed time to time. The chairman was also considered a member of Parishad. Both chairman and members were paid honorarium by the government. The term of a Union Parishad was three years in 1992, by an amendment of ‘The Local Government Order, 1983’ it was increased to five years. But The Local Government Act of 1997 is a milestone in terms of women empowerment in Local Government bodies. Through this Act, since 1997 in all local government bodies, one-third of the total number of seats has been kept reserved for women and they have been elected directly by the voters of the concerned wards (Siddiqui, 2008: 350).

The then Upazila Parishad was constituted with an elected chairman, representative members, three women nominated members and some government officials. On the other hand, Zila Parishad was constituted with public representatives, nominated male and female members and some government officials. But still now the election the election of Zila Parishad has not been held. On the other hand, for the development of three Hill Districts of southeastern Bangladesh (Bandarban, Khagrachari and Rangamati), three Hill Districts Local Government Parishad were established in 1989 through three separate Acts.

In 1991, Upazila Parishads were abolished through the promulgation of The Local Government (Upazila Parishad and Upazila administration reorganization) (Repeal) Ordinance, 1991 (Siddiqui, 1994: 89). Later on, Upazila system was reintroduced by passing the Bill [The Upazila Parishad Act, 1998, (Act no 24 of 1998)]. On November 25, 1998 [Rahman (a), 2000: 328]. Long time after the passing of this bill, the election of Upazila Parishad was held in January 22, 2009 on the legal basis of The Local Government (Upazila Parishad) Ordinance, 2008 and it has come into operation from February, 2009. Effectiveness of the Upazila system was ensured through Upazila Parishad, Act 1998 (Act no-27 of 2009) (Moin, 2011: 53). Apart from this, the Gram Sarker Act of 2003 has introduced Gram

Sarker as an associate unite of the Union Parishad instead of an independent local government body (Khan and Ara, 2006: 80). But Gram Sarker has not yet been constituted.

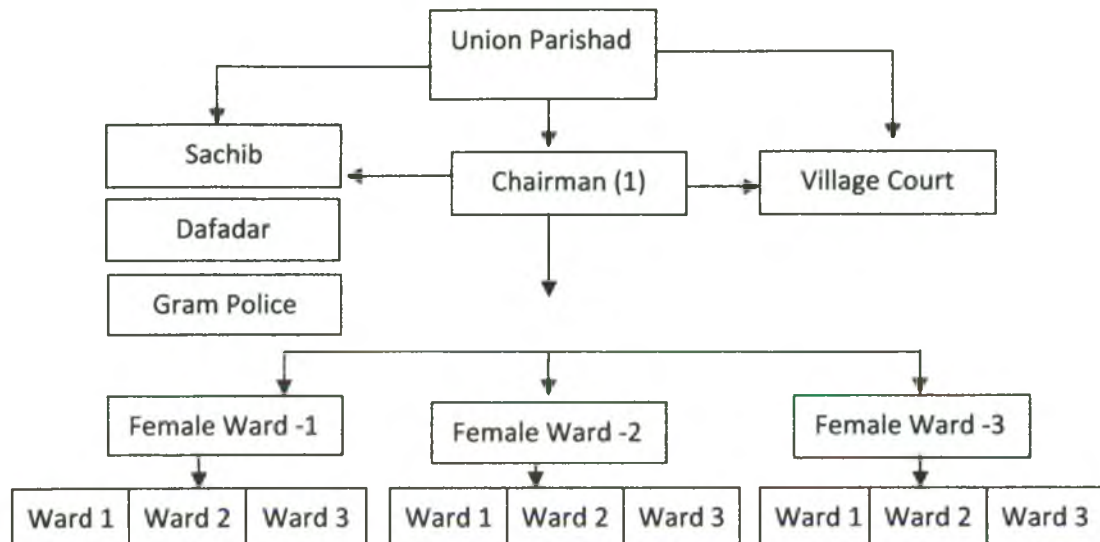
Administrative structure and functions of local government:

It is earlier mentioned that there are two types of Local Government in Bangladesh. These are, Urban Local Government and Rural Local Government. In the historical background of local government we have already been discussed the history of these two organizations. It has already been mentioned that Gram Sarker and Zila Parishad are not in operation because election of those bodies have not yet been held. At present only one local government body i.e. the Union Parishad is functioning in the rural areas, although the Jatiya Sangsad passed the Upazila Parishad Act, 1998 and the Zila Parishad Act, 2000. But these two local government bodies are yet to be constituted (Siddique, 2008: 115). In respect to this, the administrative structure and functions of the Union Parishad is discussed below:

Administrative structure and functions of Union Parishad:

At present the Union Parishad is the lowest tier of Local Government system of Bangladesh and the entry point of the people's political participation in the grass root level. Union Parishads are governed by the Local Government (Union Parishad) Ordinance, 1983. In 1988, 1993 and 1997 major changes occurred with respect to the structure and composition of Union Parishads. However, these amendments have been incorporated in the 1983 Local Government (Union Parishad) Ordinance (as modified till date). The structure and composition of the Union Parishad are based on these amendments (Siddique, 2008: 121). According to the Local Government Ordinance, 1983, Union Parishad was established with a chairman and twelve members including three nominated members in reserved seats (Ali, 1997). But the "Local Government (UP) (Amendment) Act, 1997" was enacted to change the structure of UP to some extent. Under this Act, Union Parishad is divided into nine wards which comprises of a chairman, nine members and three women members under reserved seats. The Chairman is elected from the entire Union on the basis of universal adult franchise. Members are to be popularly elected from nine wards (one from each ward). For the election of women members in reserved seats a female ward is formed with three general wards. The voters of three wards directly elect a women member. Moreover, each Union Parishad has an office consisted of a Sachib (Secretary), Dafadar (messenger) and Gram police (Village police). Union Parishad is entrusted with the Judiciary function, which is performed through the village court. Chairman is the central person for executing total functions of Union Parishad (NILG, 1998: 8). All members of the institution have to assist the chairman. Although from the time of its creation the name, structure and functions of Union Parishad have been changed several times, now it receives comparatively a stable character as a democratic and representative organization in the grass root level. The present organizational structure is shown in the following chart:

Chart-2: Organizational structure of Union Parishad in Bangladesh



Source: Julia Moin, 2008: 55

Functions of Union Parishad:

From the establishment to present, the functional responsibility of local government in Bangladesh at the Union level has undergone changes for several times, so far, in 1885, 1919, 1959, 1976 and 1983 (Siddique, 2008: 158). Lastly with the new Act of local government in 1997, with the structural change of Union Parishad there also occurred some functional changes. Therefore, the functions of Union Parishad can be divided into the following categories:

- Civic responsibilities;
- Police and defense functions;
- Revenue and administrative functions
- Development functions; and
- Judicial responsibilities

Moreover, Union Parishad has to perform many other important activities throughout the year such as, Rural Infrastructural Development and Reconstruction, which are implemented under Food for Work Program, Mass Education, VGD and VGF Program etc. (Moin, 2011 : 55) The functions performed by the Union Parishad are of two types-compulsory and optional. A large number of functions have been prescribed in the laws. In practice, however, UP functions are usually confined to the following areas:

- Assessing and collecting taxes;
- Maintaining birth and death registration;
- Constructing and maintaining roads, bridges, culverts etc;
- Constructing and maintaining ponds
- Maintaining hats and bazaars;

- Excavating and re- excavating derelict ponds for pisciculture;
- Issuing various kinds of certificate and licenses;
- Providing road lightings
- Planting trees;
- Settling local petty disputes;
- Promoting cottage industries;
- Maintaining UP information and records;
- Motivating people to adopt family planning methods;
- Celebrating national days
- To preserve public property ;
- To conduct census from time to time.

Apart from this, there are 38 optional functions of Union Parishad which are generally related to the maintenance of public property. However, Union Parishads perform different types of activities determined by the government to reach the administrative facilities to the people in grass root level.

Structure and function of urban local government bodies:

In the Urban Local Government body of the state there are two types of institutions; City Corporation and municipality. As the study is working with the municipality, the structure and functions of this institution is given bellow:

Structure and function of Municipality/Pourashava:

The word ‘municipal’ comes from a Latin word “municipiam” which means a town or city. It has non-sovereign urban community possessing necessary organ to run its own affairs (Molla, 1883: 138).

Municipality is an urban based representative unites of local government which exists in medium sized and small towns. On the basis of the Pourashava Act of 1977and according to the defined criteria (i.e. having 3/4th male adults engaged in non-agricultural profession, a minimum total population of 15,000 and a population density of 2,000 people per square mile) a rural area may be declared “urban” and then the urban area may be declared a Pourashava (Municipality). At present there are small or large 316 municipalities /pourashavas in the country (NCTB; Class IX-X, 2012: 128).

Area and categorization of a Pourashava:

Pourashava is a constitutional institution. The people representatives as in many other countries of the world administer the Local Government Institutions of Bangladesh. With the contact of globalization and modernization in Bangladesh the estimated area and number of towns are increasing rapidly. The number of municipalities was only 50 in 1974, whereas at

present there are 316 Pourashavas in the country. The level of urbanization was 23.39 percent in 2001 and is estimated to be 33% by 2015. However, the urban population has experienced a very rapid of growth during the last three decades. The Pourashava provides municipal services to towns with population of above fifteen thousand. According to the existing legislation, an urban area must fulfill three characteristics before its declaration as a Pourashava.

- First, three- froths of the adult male population of the area must be employed mainly in non-agricultural occupations ;
- Second, such an area must contain a population of not less than fifteen thousands;
- Third, its population density should be not less than two thousand inhabitants' per-square mile.

There are three categories of Pourashava in Bangladesh. The government gazette notification of March, 1992 while updating the East Pakistan Local Council Service Rules, 1968, reclassified Pourashava into three categories. These are as follow:

- Category “A” Pourashavas are those that have an average annual revenue income from their own sources of over taka 6 millions in a three-year period;
- Category “B” Pourashavas are those having average annual revenue income taka 2.5 million and taka 6 million in a three-year period; and
- Category “C” Pourashavas are those having average annual revenue income between taka 1 million and taka 2.5 million in a three-year period.

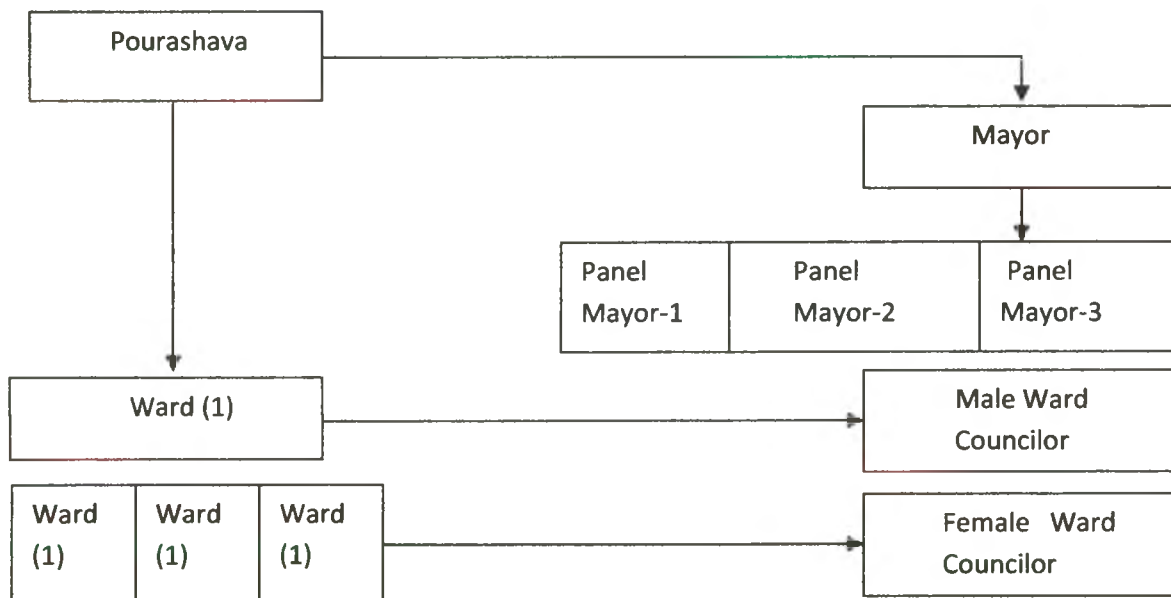
The government gazette regularly updates the list of different categories of Pourashava in the country. There is significance of categorization for various purposes. For example, the government grants varies according to the category status of the Pourashava (Siddiqui, 2008: 133-134).

Composition of a Pourashava:

According to the Pourashava Ordinance No. XXVI of 1977, Pourashava is constituted with an elected Chairman and a number of male Commissioners specified by government; Chairman and Commissioners elected three women Commissioners. The Provision of 1977 in respect to women members' election in Pourashava was in practice till 1997. But afterwards, the structure and functions of Local Government Bodies (Pourashava) have been changed a good number of time. The Local Government Commission, 1991 and The Local Government Commission of 1996 are mention worthy. In September 1996, the Awami League government constituted a high-powered eight-member committee headed by Advocate Rahmat Ali, MP. Its declared aim was the “Strengthening of Local Government Institutions”. It made recommendations for reorganization of the rural local government bodies in respect to their structure, composition, functions, finance, staffing pattern, national-local relations, people's participation in local level development activities etc. The Committee submitted its report in May 1997 (Siddiqui, 2008: 115).

According to the Act of 1997, the women representatives are directly elected on the basis of universal adult franchise along with their male counterparts (Moin, 2011: 44). According to the existing legislation, a Pourashava consists of a Chairman and a number of Commissioners (fixed by the government) in the general seats and one-third of the total numbers of Commissioners as reserved seats exclusively for women Commissioners. The women Commissioners in the reserved seats will represent one from every ward. The Chairman and Commissioners and women Commissioners of a Pourashava are elected by direct election on the basis of adult franchise. The Chairman of the Pourashava is to be considered a Commissioner of the Pourashava. The Chairman and the other Commissioners are paid an honorarium fixed by the government (Siddiqui, 2008: 135). Later on, there occur some changes in the name of the representatives of urban local government institutions. Accordingly, the Chairman of Pourashava is called as Mayor and the Commissioners of all City Corporation and Pourashava are called as Councilors (Moin, 2011:44). Another new provision was added that besides the Paura-Mayor, amongst the directly elected Commissioners three Panel- Mayors will be elected through the secret vote of the Commissioners. Amongst them 'Panel- Mayor-1, and 'Panel- Mayor-2' will be elected from the elected Commissioners of general seats and 'Panel- Mayor-3' will be elected from the elected women Commissioners of reserved seats. The structural composition of Pourashava is shown at the following structure:

Chart 3: Structure of Pourashava



Source: Kamal Siddique, 2008: 530 and various sources.

Functions of Pourashava:

Due to rapid urbanization, the role and functions of urban local government institutions in Bangladesh have been gaining in significance in recent years. It is mentionable that though City Corporation and Pourashava have been set up under separate statutes, their functions are almost similar in nature. Municipalities are authorized to constitute committees and sub-committees for executing their functions and for acceptance and implementation of development Programs. It is entrusted with several functions mentioned in part-4 of the Ordinance, 1977 (GOB, 1998). The functions of the Municipality are of two types; compulsory and optional. Though its functions are many but its resources are limited. Due to financial constraints the Pourashava, in reality performs the following functions only:

Construction and maintenance of roads, bridges and culverts;

Removal, collection and disposal of refuse, wastes and rubbish;

Provision and maintenance of street lightings;

Maintenance of public streets;

Provision and regulation of water supply;

Construction and maintenance of community and shopping centers;

Eradication of mosquitoes;

Registration of birth, deaths and marriages;

Provision and maintenance of slaughterhouses;

Provision and maintenance of parks and gardens;

Naming of roads and numbering of houses

Provision of public toilets;

Provision and maintenance of drainage;

Control over private shopping centers;

Provision and maintenance of graveyards and cremation grounds (Siddiqui, 2008, 178).

Apart from these, Municipalities can directly cooperate with the national government in implementing different programs. There are also some additional functions of Pourashava, like issuance of certificates and judicial functions. In terms of the judicial functions, according to the Conciliation of Disputes (Municipal Areas) Act, 2004, the Pourashava has judicial functions as well. It discharges these through the formation of a Conciliation board (Siddiqui, 2008: 179).

Some basic descriptions on Pourashava: Some basic descriptions about Pourashava are discussed below:

Qualifications and disqualifications of Mayor and Councilors of Pourashava:

Qualifications: The qualifications for election as Pourashava Mayor and Councilor are as follows:

- a. S/he must be citizen of Bangladesh;
- b. S/he must have attained the age twenty five years; and

c. His/ her name must appear on the electoral roll for any ward in the Pourashava. The qualifications for election as women councilors are similar to those for election to the post of Pourashava Mayor and Councilor.

Disqualifications: A person shall be considered disqualified from being a Mayor or Councilor, if:

- a. S/he is declared by a competent court as of unsound mind;
- b. Is an un-discharged insolvent;
- c. Loses citizenship of Bangladesh, acquires citizenship of or affairs allegiance to, a foreign state;
- d. Is sentenced to imprisonment for a term of not less than two years on conviction of any offences relating to corruption or criminal misconduct, unless a period of five years has elapsed since his/her release;
- e. Holds any full-time profitable job in any government office or in any local authority including Pourashava;
- f. Is a party to a contract for any work or supply meant for the Pourashava concerned;
- g. Has defaulted in repaying any loan taken by his/her from any specified bank within the time allowed by the bank;
- h. Is a member of Parliament (MP);
- i. Is a defaulter in paying any of the taxes, rates, tolls or fees levied under the Pourashava Ordinance 1977;
- j. Has been dismissed from the service of the Republic or any local authority for misconduct involving moral turpitude and a period of five years has not elapsed since his/her dismissal. A person cannot simultaneously be a candidate for more than one office of Mayor or Councilor. The disqualifications for a women councilor are the same as those for Pourashava Mayor or Councilor (Siddique, 2008: 135-36).

Responsibilities of local government representatives:

According to two circulars of the Local Government Division of the LGRD&C Ministry the main duties and responsibilities of the Pourashava councilors (general and reserved seats) are given bellow:

Responsibilities of the councilors of both general and reserved seats:

1. The councilors both from general and reserved seats will take up projects to increase the income of the poor, for example, cottage industries, livestock rearing, fisheries and tree planting, etc. They also motivate and encourage people to be proactive in this regard.
2. The councilors both from general and reserved seats of Pourashava may issue nationality and character certificates and also birth death and succession certificates in their own wards.
3. The councilors will encourage and motivate people about illiteracy eradication and promote family planning, public health, EPI programs and primary health care. They will also implement projects taken up by the Pourashava.
4. The councilors from both seats will take up projects to build public toilets and to encourage the people to use the toilets properly.
5. The councilors from both seats will inform the Pourashava about births, deaths and marriages.
6. The councilors from both types of seats will take necessary steps to preserve public assets, such as public paths, government places, open spaces, parks, playgrounds, cemeteries, burning ghuts, meeting places, pools, bridges, culverts, embankments, canals, telephones, electricity and so on and will inform the Pourashava and the related authority about these matters.
7. The councilors from both types of seats will develop games and sports facilities, establish libraries, celebrate the national festivals and encourage the people at the ward level to take up physical exercises and organize cultural program.
8. The councilors from both types of seats will make people aware about natural and man-made calamities. The councilors from general seats will form the ward disaster management committee, along with important local personalities, noted professionals and the youth of that ward. The councilors from general seats will be the Chairman and the councilors from reserved seats will be the advisors of the committee.
9. The councilors from general and reserved seats will work for the management of the environment. They will supervise the collection and removal of waste, garbage and carcasses piled up in roads and streets. They will establish slaughterhouse and will report to the Pourashava.

10. The councilors from both types of seats will supervise dug wells, tube wells, tanks, ponds and other water sources to ensure supply of pure drinking water and also supervise toilets and washing places to prevent water pollution.
11. The councilors from both types of seats of pourashava will report on dangerous building and control the construction of such buildings. They will check to see whether a building is being built according to the design permitted; if it is otherwise they will report the matter to the pourashava.
12. The councilors from both of categories of seats will help implement the primary education and literacy programs of the government.
13. The councilors from both of categories of seats will motivate the people to pay taxes, rates and fees to increase the income and will support the implementation of development work of the pourashava.
14. All councilors will perform all other activities specified by the government and pourashava.

Apart from these, the councilors of both general and reserved seats perform some activities fixed for them respectively.

Responsibilities of the Councilors of general seats:

1. The councilors from the general seats of pourashava will form the law and order controlling committee, along with respectable citizens and various professionals related to that ward. They will help maintain law and order in the ward and take steps to control crime, disorder and smuggling, and report on these matters and offensive and dangerous business to the pourashava. The councilors of the general seats will be Chairman and the councilors of the reserved seats will be advisors of that committee.
2. The councilors from the general seats will help the relevant authorities in conducting different kinds of census.

Responsibilities of the Councilors of reserved seats:

1. The councilors of Pourashava from the reserved seats will play an active in preventing abuse of women and children, doing away with dowry and early marriage, eliminating acid throwing, encouraging the registration of marriage and promoting the welfare of women and children. The councilors of the reserved seats will be chairmen of committees related to these aspects.
2. One-third of the total members of any standing committees will be form among the councilors from the reserved seats. The councilors from the reserved seats will be chairman of standing committees in the ratio 1: 3. However, the Pourashava Mayor will be the Chairman of the standing committees on finance and establishment.

3. The councilors from the reserved seats will be Chairman of one-third of the total project implementation committees.

The councilors are expected to form all the duties and responsibilities, specified in the circulars honestly and sincerely and make local government units effective, dynamic democratic and public welfare institution.

Committee system of Pourashava:

A Pourashava performs its functions and responsibilities through various committees and sub-committees. It prescribes the functions of committees and sub-committees regulation. Actually, a Pourashava performs its duties by the following committees such as finance committee, health committee, tender committee, market committee, review committee etc. But in performing these duties each and every Pourashava has to face some obstacles such as financial obstacle, administrative obstacle, lack of coordination among Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA), Dhaka Electricity Supply Authority (DESA), Telegraph and Telephone Board (T&T) and Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company (Titas Gas) have their own mandates and provide specific utility service to the dwellers. So lack of coordination among this institutions development is hampered in the Pourashava.

Mymensingh Pourashava: History and area:

Mymensingh, pronounced moy-mon-shin-haw, is a city of Bangladesh situated on the river Brahmaputra. It is the headquarters of the administrative unit Mymensingh District. Mymensingh is the anglicized pronunciation of the original name Momenshahi, referring to a ruler called Momen Shah. Mymensingh city is located about 120 km (75 mi) north of Dhaka which is the capital of the country.

Mymensingh is one of the 16 old districts of Bangladesh which was constituted by the British East India Company on 1 May 1787. Being more than 220 years old, Mymensingh has a rich cultural and political history. Earlier Mymensingh was called Nasirabad. During the British Raj most of the inhabitants of the town were Hindus. From early 20th Century Muslims moved into town. Since then this city has played an important role as a centre for secularism. The Vidyamoyee Uchha Balika Bidyalaya and Muminunnesa Women's College have played a great role in educating Bengali Muslim women. The exodus continues albeit at a slower pace. King Edward VII made a visit to Mymensingh in 1903. Nobel Laureate poet Rabindranath Tagore paid a visit to Mymensingh for four days in 1926. At the time of liberation war, the nine month long liberation war of Bangladesh started on 27 March 1971 as people started to fight against Pakistani forces at EPR Camp killing all the Pakistani soldiers, Mymensingh remained free from occupation army till 23rd of April 1971. Despite the genocide in Dhaka on 25th of March 1971, Mymensingh remained calm except for killing of Biharis. Mymensingh became free as the Pakistani occupation forces deserted Mymensingh on 10 December and Mukti Bahini took over on 11 December, just 5 days ahead of the victory of Dhaka on 16 December. The District of Mymensingh is situated between 24°02'03" and 25°25'56" north latitude and 89°39'00" and 91°15'35" east longitude. According to the latest report received (1971) from the director, Land Records and Survey, it comprises an area of 5,039.76 square miles (13,052.92 km²). Mymensingh city is situated within Mymensingh Upazilla which is a sub-district.

Map 1: Map of Bangladesh



The city governance organization is called Mymensingh Pourashava which comprises elected members, supported with government officials. The head of the Pourashava is called Mayor who is assisted by Ward Councilors. The Mymensingh Pourashava was first established in the year 1869, on 8th April, by Maharaja Surya Kanta Acharya Mymensingh Municipality and as Mymensingh Municipal Committee in 1960. The Mymensingh Municipal Committee was replaced by a Pourashava in 1972 after the independence of Bangladesh. Mymensingh Pourashava covers an area of 21.73 km², with a population of at present around 4, 50,312, among these female 2, 12,922 and male 2, 37,390. Rate of education is male 66.40% and female 53.60%. At the previous time it consists of seventeen Mauzas comprising seven wards. The mauzas are Mymensingh town, Balashpur, Bhatikasar, Krishnapur, Sehara, Gopalkandi, Kasar, Golganda, Maskanda, Dholadia, Keatkhal, Chak Chatrapur, Rakta, Akua(part), Chhatrapur (part), Boyra Bhaluka (part) and Khagdahar (part). But now it is comprised of 21 wards. Total number of councilors is 28. Male councilors are 21 in number and the females are in 07. All are elected by direct vote of the people. The female councilors are elected under reserved seats; for each three wards one seat is reserved for one woman. The status of the Pourashava is "A" category and 1st class type. On 14th February, 2011 the present Pourashava has launched its activities.

The town had its own power generation system which was established in pre-partition India. The power plant called Bati Kall was situated near the District Court and generated DC electricity using petroleum. Toward the end of 1960s, Mymensingh was connected to the national power supply grid with a distribution station at Kewatkhali. Now, a 60MW power plant is established at Kewatkhali. Recently Rural power co. ltd established a 210 MW (4 gas turbine 35 MW and one 70 MW steam turbine) combine cycle power plant besides the

Brammaputra River at Shamvuganj. Maharaja Surya Kanta Acharya established Mymensingh Water Works, which is the first water supply system of the city. An underground water distribution system was laid subsequently. Also, hydrants were posted in different places to help the pedestrians.

The national access code of Mymensingh is 091. The digital telephone exchange of Mymensingh was set up in 2001. It was upgraded in 2008 with a capacity of 20 thousand telephone connections. Mymensingh was connected to national gas distribution network in 1996. But most people still use kerosene stove or firewood oven. Also many kitchens run on liquefied petroleum gas available in steel bottles.

The city is well connected with a road network. However, most of the streets are narrow and driving car is difficult. The concrete roads built up in the 1960s have proved to be good enough to survive next forty years. But other roads are topped with tar and in absence of regular maintenance, coupled with heavy rains potholes and ditches are a common feature. Roads of the city are owned and maintained by the Pourashava. The spinal road of the town stretches from the Town Hall area to the Railway station. It was initial situation but as the city is gradually enlarging, the length of busy road is greatly increasing. Town service is running but the city population never gets the chance to get in the bus as the number of buses is inadequate and bus actually runs between peripheral Upazilas.

Street lamps often define built-up area of a city. Before electricity was available, street lamps were set up by the Pourashava. They were replaced by electric bulbs hanging from the light posts during 1950s and 1960s.

There are many government offices as well as regional offices of private companies located here, including banks, a jute mill, a rice mill, and a power plant (RPCL). The main government office is the office of the Deputy Commissioner. Many government offices have established regional offices in Mymensingh since 1980s. Local government is known as Mymensingh Zilla Parishad (Tr. Mymensingh District Council) which is effectively a government organization with the Deputy Commissioner as the chief executive.

The headquarters of Mymensingh zone of Bangladesh Police is situated near the office of the Deputy Commissioner. The chief of the office is called Superintendent of Police, close to the Brahmaputra. Local law and order is the responsibility of Police Stations and Police Fari (post). Police has a traffic section entrusted to control the traffic of the city. Officer in charge of a police station is commonly referred to as OC (officer-in-charge) who is often regarded as the most powerful person since can he can arrest a person, held him custody, prosecute in the court or even release him on bail if he so wishes. The second officer is often referred to as *Daroga* and more often seen around with some constables. The police residential area is called Police Line which is situated on the outskirts along the Mymensingh-Tangail Road near the residence of the District Judge.

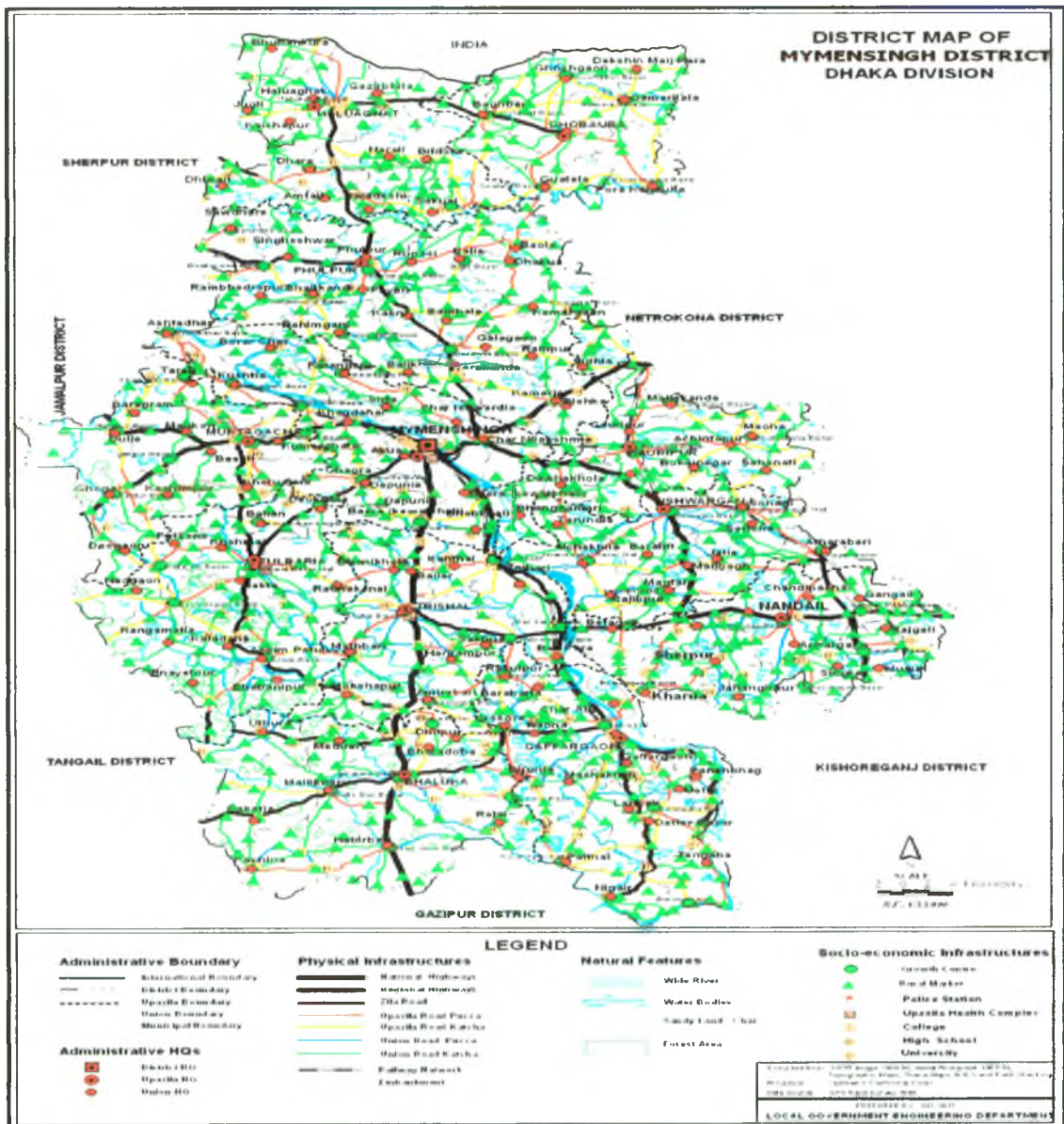
Net contribution of Mymensingh to national revenue is traditionally poor for high cost of collection of land revenue. The collection of Business Turnover Tax (BTT) and its successor Value Added Tax (VAT) from remains insignificant because of predominance of small size business. Revenue (VAT) from handmade cigarette called Birhi (Bidi) still predominates.

The Circuit House was built up to accommodate the Circuit bench of the High Court which was occasionally sat in Mymensingh to dispense with appeal cases and decide writ petitions.

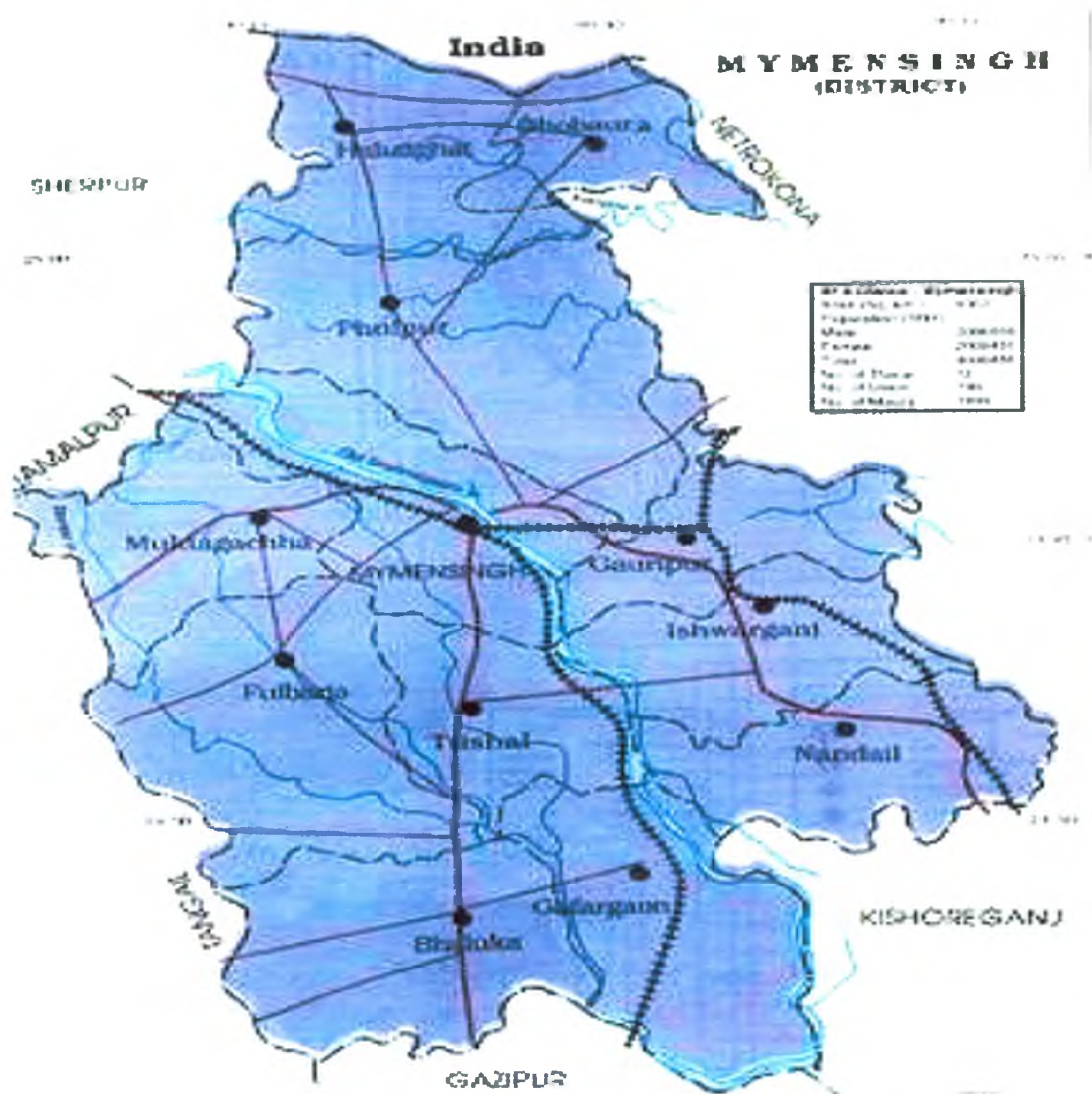
A nicely built one story building with red color, it has a number of spacious rooms decorated with old paintings. It is the de facto hotel for the government officials and dignitaries since the 1950s. It was expanded in the 1990s.

The first Officers' Club was established in the British era on the college Road near the Muslim Balika Bidyalaya. A posh club with a lawn tennis court and bar, in addition to other recreational facilities, was established in the 1960s behind the residence of the Deputy Commissioner, near the park on the Brahmaputra.

Map 2: Map of Mymensingh District



Map 2: Map of Mymensingh District



Mymensingh Pourashava at a glance

- Name of the pourashava: Mymensingh
- Date of establishment: 8th April, 1869
- District: Mymensingh
- Date of taking responsibility of present Poura- Council: 14-02-2011
- Number of wards: 21
- Area of pourashava: 21.73 square km.
- Status of pourashava: A-1 class
- Number of commissioners: 28
- Male commissioner: 21
- Female commissioner: 07
- Total population: around 4,50,312
 - Female: 2, 12,922
 - Male: 2, 37,390
- Number of total voter: 1,54,747
- Rate of education in pourashava area:
 - Male: 66.40%
 - Female: 53.60%
- Number of slums: 71
- Number of educational institutions in Pourashava area:
 - Government primary school: 24
 - Non-government/Registered primary school: 27
 - Government high school: 03
 - Non-government high school: 25
 - Madrasa: 13
 - College: 09
 - University College: 01
 - Poli-Technique: 01
 - Medical college: 01
 - Girls Cadet College: 01
 - Primary training institute: 01
 - B.Ed. /M.Ed. training college: 01(Male) • (TT college): 01(Female)
 - Agricultural University: 01
 - Technical training centre: 02
 - Fundamental educational academy (NAEP): 01
- No. of educational institution conducted by the Pourashava(primary): 01
- Dustbin made by pourashava: 370 (Limited according to necessity)
- No. of vehicles of pourashava:
 - Garbage truck: 08
 - Hand moving van: 140
 - Beam lifter: 01
 - Jeep car: 03
 - Microbus: 01
 - Power tiller trolley: 15
 - Road roller: 03
 - Motor cycle: 14
 - Chain dozer: 01
 - Pick up: 02
- Quantity of daily produced garbage in pourashava area: 120 ton
- Daily removal of garbage: 80 ton
- Pourashava conducted:
 - Hat-bazaar: 04
 - Sayrat mahal: 01
 - Slaughter-house: 01
- Number of holdings under pourashava: 24,079
 - No. of total employees of pourashava: 170
 - Number of total daily laborer: 603
- Total monthly salary of employees: tk 41,26,783
 - Monthly Salary of worker: 19, 12,457
 - Salary of regular worker: 22, 14,326
- Road under pourashava: 226 km
 - Bituminous: 170.80 km
 - RCC/CC: 10.385KM
 - HBB/Soling: 14.30 km

- Raw road: 31.80
- Road under SOWS in Paurashava: 28.60km
- Drain under pourashava: 139.95 km
 - Peach road: 78.90 km
 - Raw road: 61.05 km
- Water remove lake: 5
- Water supply handover: 23-11-2006
 - Daily demand of water: 1,99,50,000 liter
 - Measurement of daily supply: 1,20,46,000 liter
 - Total connection no.: 4890
 - Total length of pipe-line: 98 km
 - Total no. of overhead tank: 07
- Total no. of tube well of Pourashava:
 - Running: 13
 - Under process of establishment: 03
 - Number of water tank beside road: 298
 - Tara tube well: 166
 - Hand operating tube well: 166
- Others:
 - Cinema Hall: 04
 - Public library: 04
 - Mosque: 110
 - Mondir : 20
 - Orphanage: 03
 - Church: 04
 - Graveyard: 08
 - Burning Ghat : 01
 - Graveyard for the people of Christian Religion: 01
- Hospital: 03
- Animal Hospital: 01
- Park: 03
- Town Hall: 01
- Fine-Arts Academy: 01
- Stadium: 01
- Museum: 02
- Eid Ghah Field: 08
- Museum of the Collected Arts of Joinul Abedin: 01
- Community Center (Private): 10
- Community Center (Owned by Pourashava): 03
- BDR camp: 01
- Police Line: 01
- Anser Camp: 01
- Prison: 01
- Shisho Academy: 01
- Fire brigade Station: 01
- Rail way Station: 03
- Playing Field: 03
- Post Office: 15
- Bank: 25
- Residential Hotel: 85
- Restaurant: 290
- Petrol Pump: 03
- Bus Stand: 03
- Source of income of Pourashava: Paura-Tax, Rate, Fees and others
- Expenditure: Establishment cost, Education, Health and Sewerage, Collection of Electrification Tax, Construction of Road; Drain and other expenditure.

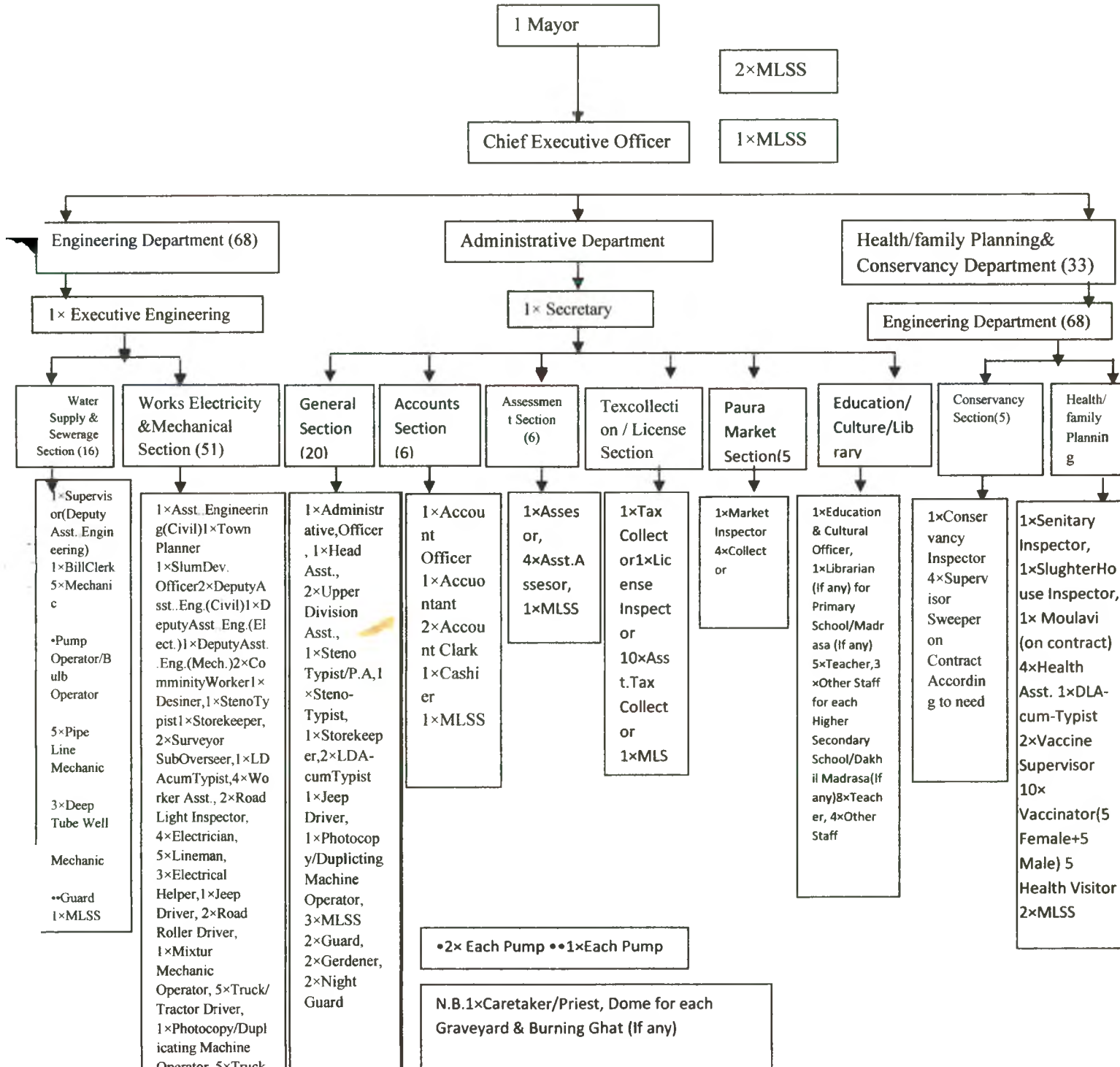
Administrative structure and visual map of Mymensingh Pourashava:

Mymensingh Pourashava is “A” category, first class type pourashava. So the administrative structure of such type of pourashava is presented below: Category: A-1

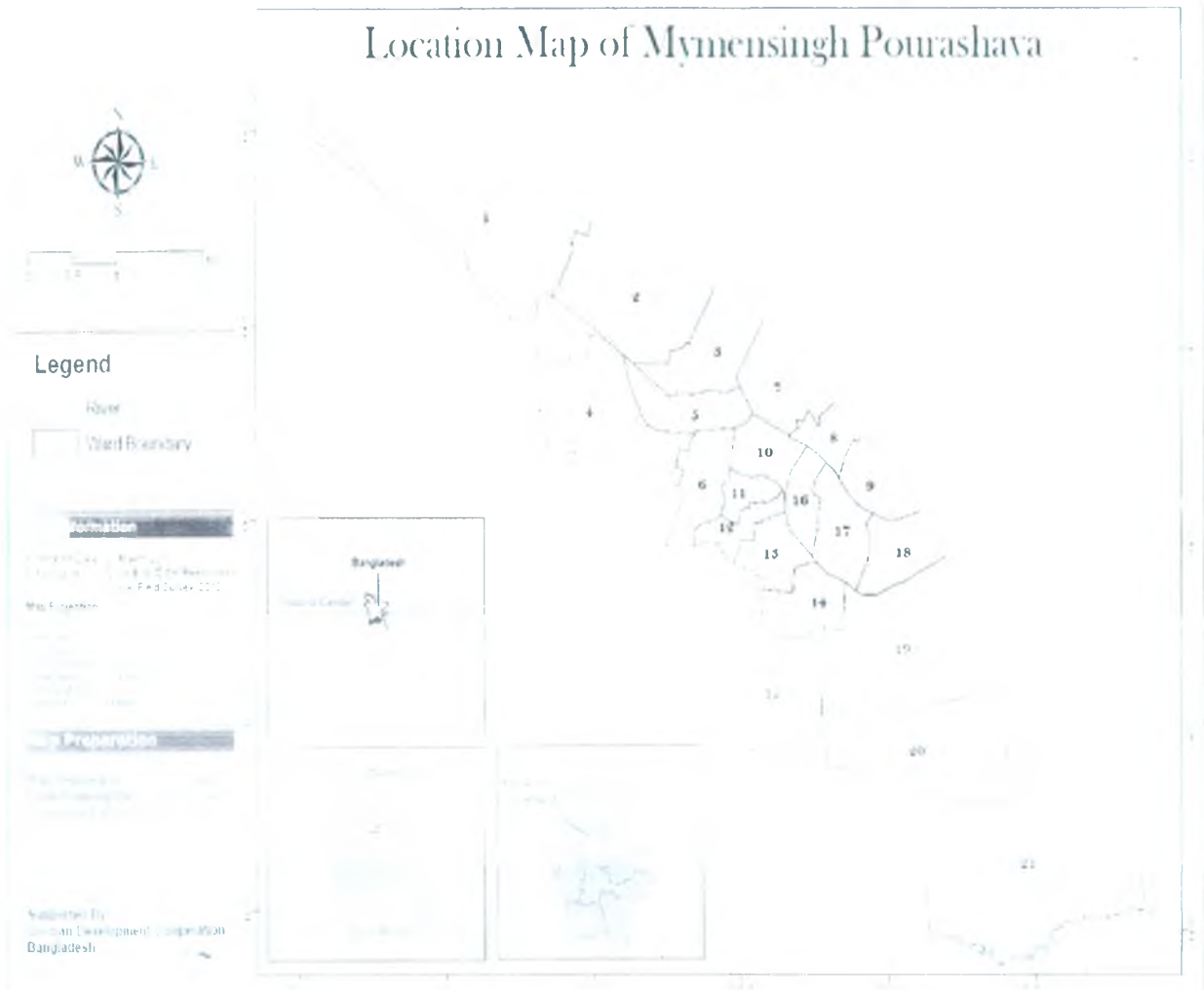
Chart 4: Administrative Structure of Pourashava

162+Pumpoperatorguard+TeacherStaff&

Librarian Sweeper (on contract)



Map-4: Visual Map of Mymensingh Pourashava



Key functions of Mymensingh Pourashava:

Mymensingh is a first class type 'A' category Pourashava. It performs all the activities a first class type of Pourashava does. Besides, it does some special type of activities under the projects of LGED, UNDP, UK AID and ADB. Since 1990, LGED has been implementing various development projects in the medium size towns of Bangladesh. It is to be noted that they have already started the implementation of medium town development project 1 and 2 with the help hand laid by ADB. At first the main aim of those projects was to ensure improved service and infrastructural development of Pourashava. Gradually through experience, it was understood that involvement of local people and stakeholder could play an important role to make the project successful. In respect to this, at the end of '90s with the help of ADB, Urban Generating and Infrastructural Improvement (sector) Project-1 (UGIIP-1) was introduced. To maintain the continuity, Ward Level Coordination Committee (WLCC) and Town Level Coordination Committee (TLCC) were formed under (UGIIP-2). In this way, through the establishment of WLCC and TLCC participation of local people was ensured. At present the activities of WLCC and TLCC are being implemented through Community Based Organization (CBO) under (UGIIP-2).

Functional circumference of Community Based Organization (CBO):

Bangladesh is over populated country. Here the urban area is increasing rapidly and in unplanned way. On the other hand the general people are less involved in conduction the activities of Pourashava. Due to less accountability and weakness of economic management, the administration of Pourashava is comparatively weak. Most of the Pourashava's self income is low therefore; they have to depend upon the reservation of government. Amount of collection of holding tax by Pourashava is also very low. There is scarcity of skilled and trained man power in conducting the activities of Pourashava and in many cases enough man power is not obtained. Due to unplanned and rapid urbanization the demand for infrastructural development and improved civic service is increasing. To fulfill this goal, with the help of ADB, for sustainable development second Urban Generating and Infrastructural Improvement (sector) Project-2 (UGIIP-2) has been adopted. (UGIIP-2) project has been started with three types of committees and organizations, considering the involvement of town dwellers in the development of Pourashava. These are as follows:

1. Town Level Coordination Committee (TLCC)
2. Ward Level Coordination Committee (WLCC) and
3. Community Based Organization (CBO)

These are the organization of public as well as public representatives and complementary of one another in such a way that for solving any problem of grass root level they work combined to achieve success.

What is CBO?

CBO is a compete in political, secular and neutral social organization that's aim is including the participation local people in the grass root level, to maintain the security of their own area, socio-economic and infrastructural development/ maintenance and sustainable management of garbage. This was formed to fulfill these aims. CBO has been formed so that people can enjoy every facility by ensuring the participation of citizen of Pourashava through (UGIIP-2) project. Each CBO has been established to comprising 200 to 300 families in comparatively more density areas in every ward of Pourashava. In the meantime 1750 CBOs has been established in 35 Pourashava under the project. The executive committees of CBO have also been trained under the project to conduct the activities of CBO.

Aims and objectives of CBO:

1. To ensure the participation of CBO in conduction of Paura-service by sending representatives to TLL at Pourashava level and WLCC at ward level.
2. To identify the infrastructural problems of CBO area / determination of demands and to ensure the participation of local people by communicating with the Paura-authority for solving those problems.

3. To ensure the participation of local people for road sweeping, drainages cleaning and to ensure removal of household garbage by communicating with Pourashava to form sustainable garbage management in order to maintain the cleanliness of the area, improvement and maintenance of infrastructural environment.
4. To arrange community police and placing street lamp, by communication with the Pura-authority to ensure security of the CBO area.

Besides, from the year of 2000, Mymensingh pourashava is performing some others important development activities with the combined help of LGED, UNDP and UK AID. In whole Bangladesh they are working in 23 City Corporations and Pourashavas. From 2007, these three organizations are combined implementing Urban Partnership for Poverty Reduction Project (UPPRP) through Community Development Committee (CDC) in Mymensingh pourashava.

Functional circumference of Community Development Committee (CDC):

Under this project at first, an area has been selected then a vulnerable group like poor and extreme poor group has been selected. In a particular area they work with 250 to 300 families. Through a mass meeting they create groups, each group contains 15 to 20 members and the number of groups depends on the size of area. Before selecting the area they do a survey on the communication system, occupation, sanitation system, rate of school going children etc. Then according to the size of the target area and including 60% population, they create 6/7 groups mainly with women. These groups are called primary groups. The members of these groups elect their President and Secretary. With 2 (President + Secretary) from each group total 14 form the CDC. Later on, they take approval from the Pourashava. From these 14 members, 4 members are deployed as Office Bearer, among them 1 is elected as President, 1 Vice-president, 1 Secretary and other 1 cashier. If there is any group of male members then any male may obtain only the post of Vice-president. The primary groups will form a personal savings and savings account will be opened in the name of Office Bearer group and all the savings will be deposited in these accounts. Through this savings micro-credit system will be administrated.

Therefore, for the development of community, the community will form Community Action Plan (CAP). They will draw the map of their own area, will identify the problems of their area and will select the problems on priority basis. The problems will be on the basis of socio-economic and infrastructural development. The problems may be on the following type:

- To build up sanitary latrine
- Want of pure drinking water
- Communication problems in the rainy season
- Problem of garbage management

- In the rainy season blockage of water
- Child marriage and polygamy
- Dowry and women oppression
- Rapid growth of population
- Drug addiction
- Deprived of old/ widow allowance
- Dropping out of children from schooling
- Want of capital
- Want of employment
- Malnutrition
- Want of good seeds
- Open sanitation system
- Lack of awareness of health
- Scarcity of treatment of the handicapped etc.

Then they will make plan to solve the problems on priority basis. They will inform about the plan to the UPPR office. Then Poura-mayor, respective Councilor (member), Town manager (member) will approve the plan. Then CDC itself will activated this plan, UPPR officers will only monitor the activities and will provide them necessary direction. All the activities will be performed by the beneficiary group of CDC who are almost women. Apart from this CDC is conducting pre-school institution and day care centre. At present in Mymensingh Pourashava, there are 19 pre-school institution and 4 day care centers where $(30 \times 19) = 57$ children are getting pre-schooling and $(25 \times 4) = 100$ children are getting day care center facilities respectively.

Financing of the project:

The financial support is combined provided by LGED, UNDP and UK AID. They provide at least 4, 00000 taka for each CDC. This money will be deposited in the account of Pourashava, according to the demand. CDC will apply for the money to the Poura- mayor; the money will be given into four steps. After getting the money into the account of CDC, they will perches necessary tools and materials and will employ necessary men power to get the works done. There will be four types of account of CDC. These are-

- Savings account
- Infrastructural development fund
- Socio-economic development fund and
- Administrative and maintenance fund

All the accounts will be conducted by CDC.

Executive committee of CDC:

Each CDC will form a Project Implementation Committee (PIC). Each PIC will obtain-

- President- Male councilor of the Pourashava
- Member- Female councilor of the Pourashava
- Chairman and Secretary of each group
- Important persons of the locality
- Social worker
- School teachers
- Water and sanitation supervisor of the respective wards

Each CDC will contain 25 to 30 members which will depend on the number of group of CDC.

Aims and objectives of CDC:

The main aims of CDC are -

- Capacity building of the most vulnerable group; which is implemented by Settlement Improvement Fund (SIF)
- Socio-economic development, leadership training, organization development training, Arrange training for the poor and extreme poor unemployed youths. These activities are performed by Socio-economic Deployment Fund (SEDF). Apart from these Mymensingh Pourashava performs various cultural and development activities.

Chapter-03

Women Representatives in Local Government System: An overview

Introduction:

The socialization process in Bangladesh plays an influential role in pushing women into an inferior and subordinate position in society. In this system, women are burdened with indoor activities and the man is with outdoor activities. It is mentionable that women's access in outdoor activities is not gradually appreciated. Hannah Ardent in her book *'The Human Condition'* stated that, according to Greek idealism, "women's working field is circled round by her household activities and her family. The Politics does not match up with women and family" (Kelly and Boutilier : 1991: 30). The Greek idealism and influence of values is still vigilant in present society, due to this, women are still suppressed and oppressed in the modern world. Once Winston Churchill stated that, "The best influential proficiency and qualities of human society is bloomed, burly and nurtured up surrounding round the family and household environment". So the statement also does not support women to be involved with outside activities. Kelly and Boutilier, in the book *'The Making of Political Women'* stated that women conceive babies, especially, it differentiate the males and females household responsibilities. In addition to this the activities outside household are instructed for male and women are strongly bounded with family atmosphere until the adulteration of children (Kelly and Boutilier 1991: 75).

Conventionally in a patriarchal society like ours, women are always identified with domestic life while politics is viewed as male-dominated public activity. Even after the completion of the UNO declared Women's Decade (1976-85), politics in Bangladesh remains male-dominated with respect to number, position in the party hierarchy, presence and effectiveness in the national legislature and other political structure.

Women's participation in the National Parliamentary election as well as the local government politics in our country is not satisfactory. However, women's involvement in the political process at the local level is need to make them familiar with the problems of the local community in general and women's needs and issues in particular.

However, by analyzing the history of women's participation in political arena, it is found that women had been struggling to establish their rights as the citizen of a country as well establish their political rights.

In this chapter the researcher is aimed at to define women representation, to illustrate the background of women representatives in local government system, to demonstrate the history of women representatives in Mymensingh Pourashava and lastly to portray the women's participation in the Mymensingh Pourashava election- 2011.

Women representatives: How can be defined?

The basic task for an electoral system is to translate votes into seats; to transform the expressed will of the voters into people who will represent it. There are many views of what fair representation is geographic representation, descriptive representation, ideological or party political representation, but regardless of the view that is taken in each country, representation as a principle is a key guide when designing the most suitable electoral system.

Therefore, political representative can be defined as a person who is nominated by the party or self-indulged to be elected as public officials by local people and after being elected becomes the member of Legislature or Local Government Institutions and works on behalf of the people to solve the local problems. When this definition will be applicable towards women then she can be considered woman representative.

Elected official are accountable to the people and they must return to the voters at prescribed intervals to seek their mandate to continue in office and face the risk of being voted out of office. They determine the leadership of the government for a set period of time. Popularly elected representatives hold the reins of power; they are simply figureheads or symbolic leaders. They must work within the democratic ethic of tolerance, respect and compromise to reach agreements that will benefit the general welfare of all the people not just their supporter.

Representation of women:

There are many ways to enhance the representation of women. Proportional systems tend to result in the election of more women, primarily by eliminating the disincentive inherent in FPTP systems of needing to present a single "most acceptable" candidate. Electoral systems which use reasonably large district magnitudes encourage parties to nominate women on the basis that balanced tickets will increase their electoral chances. Some List PR countries also require that women make up a certain proportion of the candidates nominated by each party.

In addition to the choice of electoral system, there are also a number of other strategies that can be used to increase the number of women representatives:

First, there are reserved seats, where a certain number of seats are set aside for women in the legislature. These seats are filled either by representatives from regions or by political parties in direct proportion to their overall share of the national vote. Reserved seats typically exist in plurality/majority electoral systems, and are often entrenched in a country's constitution. In India, seats on local authorities in some states are divided into three groups: at each election, only women may be nominated for one group of seats, thereby guaranteeing a minimum of one-third women elected.

Second, the electoral law can require political parties to field a certain number of women candidates for election. This is most often done in PR electoral systems, for example in Namibia (30 per cent of candidates at the local level) and Peru (30 per cent of candidates). It is also required in the List PR component of Bolivia's MMP system (30 per cent of candidates). However, the laws do not always guarantee that the target will be met unless there are strict placement mandates and enforcement mechanisms guaranteeing that women are placed in electable positions on party lists (i.e., positions on a party's list that are likely,

given the party's expected number of votes, to be included in the party's legislative delegation).

Third, political parties may adopt their own internal quotas for women as legislative candidates. This is the most common mechanism used to promote the participation of women in political life, and has been used with varying degrees of success all over the world: by the ANC in South Africa, the Peronist Party (PJ) and the Radical Civic Union (UCR) in Argentina, CONDEPA (the Conscience of the Fatherland) in Bolivia, the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) in Mexico, and the Labor parties in Australia and the UK, and throughout Scandinavia. The use of women-only candidate short-lists by the Labor Party at the 1997 UK elections almost doubled the number of female MPs, from 60 to 119. In 2004, 14 countries had quotas entrenched in the constitution, 32 countries had quotas provided for by legislation, and at least 125 parties in 61 countries had adopted their own voluntary party quotas. In terms of electoral system type, 17 countries with plurality/majority systems had quotas, and there were 15 in mixed electoral systems and 45 in PR systems. Two of the 'others' Afghanistan and Jordan used quotas.

Systems that guarantee women representation in the legislature vary where both their success and their consequences are concerned. For example, reserved seats may help guarantee that women make it into elected positions of office, but some women have argued that quotas end up being a way to appease, and ultimately sideline, women or to privilege the female relatives and friends of traditional male politicians rather than encouraging females to develop careers in politics, which can take many years. Since entry into politics is often done at the local level, even by male politicians, it may make more sense to institute quotas, at least initially, at the local rather than the national level.

Being elected to a legislature does not necessarily mean being given substantive decision-making power, and in some countries women legislators, particularly those elected from reserved or special seats are marginalized from real decision-making responsibility. Yet in other countries, women have used the position afforded to them by quotas to make significant contributions to policy making and influence 'traditional' policy making.

For further details and data, see the IDEA/Stockholm University Global Database for Electoral Quotas for Women at www.quotaproject.org.

Background of women representatives in local government system:

Local government plays an influential role in grass root level development through responding to local needs. Local government means an intra-sovereign governmental unit dealing mainly with local affairs, administered by local authorities and subordinate to the state government (Jahan, 1997: 92). According to Article 59(1) of the constitution of Bangladesh, "Local government in every administrative unit of the Republic shall be entrusted to bodies composed of persons elected in accordance with law". Local government is a system of providing services and facilities of central government to the local people. From its representative character it is expected that though women cover half of the total population the participation of people's representatives should remain equal in proportion to male and female. But it is noticed that from the creation of local government it is male-dominated institution.

A survey of women active political leaders was carried out in 1974 (Jalal, 1975), which shows that entry of women in politics had two definite patterns. The older group took part in the 1954 general election almost by chance. The second group came into active politics in student life in school, college or university. They emerged from student politics as distinct political personalities and got affiliated with their respective parent parties. The younger group displayed a firmer faith in party politics than the older group.

Women political leaders, old or young, all belonged to middle or upper middle classes. They came from a privileged social background. Women politicians are relatively new in politics. They generally hold office in a sub-committee of a party or its women's branch rather than in the national body or the executive committees of the party (Siddiqui, 2008: 310).

The history of women participation in politics shows that the right to vote in local bodies was dependent on the possession of property, tax payment and education. Women ordinarily being deprived of property and educational opportunities were automatically left out of this voting right, which in a way amount to discriminate.

During the British regime, local government in the Union remained an almost exclusive domain of males. Women of our country were not allowed to cast vote in election till 1956 when election was held on the basis of universal adult franchise for the first time (Qadir, 1999: 22). Prior to that, women could cast votes in Calcutta Municipal election in 1923. Later voting power of women was established lawfully but till then women never thought of participation in this system. At the local level, still women's participation is limited.

In Bangladesh, women have been incorporated into local government through reservation at the local government level. Bangladesh has experimented different forms of local government through its political history- sometimes at the village level, the Gram Sarker and sometimes at the sub- district level, the Upazila. But the Union Parishad, which consists of representatives from several villages, has remained the most effective local body at the local level. After the emergence of Bangladesh several local government elections were held to strengthen the local government institutions. Information regarding this issue is demonstrated in the following sections: At the local government level in Union Parishad elections were held eight times- in 1973, 1977, 1983, 1988, 1992, 1997 and 2003.

Upazila Parishad elections were held eight times- elections were held three times- 1985, 1990 and 2009. Pourashava elections were held nine times- in 1973, 1977, 1984, 1989, 1993, 1999 and 2004, 2008 (for nine Pourashava) and 2011.

Election of City Corporations were held in 1988, 1994, 2000 (Chittagong), 2002 (Dhaka, Rajshahi, Khulna), 2003 (Barishal, Sylhet), 2010 (Chittagong) (Moin, 2008: 67). Narayangong City Corporation election was held on 30 October, 2011, Comilla City Corporations election was held on 5th January, 2012 and Rangpur City Corporations election was held on 20th December, 2012. On 4th December, 2011, Dhaka City Corporation has been divided into two parts; named as Dhaka City Corporation North and Dhaka City Corporation South. But yet election does not held in the newly declared City Corporations.

Through these elections government took initiatives to ensure and increase women participation in local government politics as well as local government elections as voter and as member of the participation in local government institutions. Government also took the initiative to reserve seats for women for enhancing their participation in decision making process. First step was taken by the government to ensure women's participation in local government 1973 for Pourashava and 1976 for Union Parishad. Through these provisions, until recently, there was provision of nomination for women members in local government. After that provision of reserved seats was introduced. In addition to this, two seats were reserved for women in each Pourashava and Union Parishad respectively. Later on, by the local government Ordinance of 1983 the number of reserved seats was introduced from two to three (Khan, 1996: 2). At present by the Local Government Act of 1997, one-third direct representation of women is ensured in all the functional Local Government Institutions, such as Union Parishad, Pourashava and City Corporation; which has brought up women's representation from a very few to over 20 percent. This Act acted as milestone in the history of political empowerment of women in Bangladesh. However, apart from the exclusive reserved seats, women can also contest for any of the general seats. On the other hand, the provision of one reserved seat of 'Female Panel Mayor' in Pourashava level and one reserved seat of female Vice-Chairman for each Upazila Parishad is introduced to ensure women's representation on this aspect. Women's participation in urban local government is shown by the following table: In an overwhelmingly male dominated political environment, the quota system has enhanced the opportunity for women's participation in politics at the local level. Under the provision of reserved seats, opportunity was created for 15,086 women to participate in presently active Local Government Institutions in Bangladesh (Moin, 2011: 68).

The following Table shows that 13458 seats are reserved in 4486 Union Parishad and 485 seats in Upazila Parishad. In Urban Local Government 948 seats are reserved for 316 Pourashava and 114 for 10 City Corporations (CC). Apart from this, there are 61 Zila Parishads and 3 Hill Tract Zila Parishads, where 192 seats are reserved for women, but they are not in operation at present due to election not to be held yet. Women's reserved seats in different functional Local Government Institutions are presented in the following table:

Table-3.1: Distribution of Women's reserved seats in present LGIs in Bangladesh

Local Government Unit	Number of unit	Number of reserved seats (in each unit)	Total number of reserved seats
Union Parishad	4,501	03	13,503
Upazila Parishad	485	01	485
Paurashava	316	03	984
City Corporation	10	*30+14+10+10+9+9+9+12+11	114
Total	-	-	15,086

Note: *30 seats in Dhaka CC, 14 in Chittagong CC, 10 in Khulna and Rajshahi CC for each, 9 in Barishal, Sylhet, Narangong CC for each, 12 in Comilla CC, 11 in Rangpur CC.

Source: The Bangladesh Observer, 21 March 2003; The Daily Janakontha, 27 April 2003; The Daily Sangbad, 3 January 2000, <http://www.igd.gov.bd/about.html>, <http://www.local-democracy.org/archive/documents/historical-back-ground.html>, and different sources of GOB, NCTB, 2013-Class(ix-x) edited by Dr Harun-or-Rashid.

From the history of women participation in Local Government Politics in Bangladesh we see that the trend of women's participation in general seats is still insufficient. But information also present that this trend is gradually increasing. In the local government election of 1959 and 1969, no female candidate was elected. In the 1973 elections, held in 4,352 union's only one female candidate won in the elections. In 1982, in 4440 Ups, only four female candidates won in the elections (Siddiqui, 2008: 311). It is found that in the election of 1984 and 1988, seven women were elected as chairperson. In 1992, out of 115 candidates for chairpersonship, 13 became elected. In this election 1135 contested for membership (Qadir, 1994: 6). In 1993, 11 women came to the Union Parishad as chairperson through bi-election and the number of women contested chairperson became 23 in the year 1993. It is mentionable that out of total 1, 14,699 candidates, 863 women contested in the Union Parishad election of 1988 and 1135 contested out of total 1, 69,643 contestants in 1992, which constitutes 7% in each year [Chowdhury (a), 1994: 49]. Moreover, the UP election of 1997 brought 20 women as chairperson and 101 as member in general seats. Also 22 women elected as chairperson and 79 as members in the UP election of 2003. The following table shows the trend of women's participation in Union Parishad:

Table-3.2: Women's participation in Union Parishad elections (1973-2003)

Election	Year	Women candidates		Elected Chairman & Members	
		Chairman	Member	Chairman	Member
1 st	1973	-	-	1	-
2 nd	1977	19	19	4	7
3 rd	1984	-	-	6	-
4 th	1988	79	863	1	-
5 th	1992-1993	115	1135	8	20
6 th	1997-1999	102	43969/456*	20+3	12882/110*
7 th	2003	232	43764/617*	22	12684/79*

Women contested and elected to the general seats.

Sources: Khan and Ara, 2006: 73; WFP, 1991: 1; Moin, 2011: 69.

Women in urban local government bodies (Pourashava):

The Constitution further advances and incorporates the principle of special representation of women in local self-governing bodies. Women possess the right to vote as well as the right to stand for election to an office of membership at these local bodies. According to Local Government Act 1993, in the urban areas, in each Pourashava there is a provision of a quota for at least 3 women members who would be elected by the Commissioners of the Pourashava. Till 1993 no women had been elected as Pourashava Chairperson. However, in each of the elections of 1977, 1984, and 1993, a women candidate was elected as a member of a Pourashava, and it is not the same women (Mahtab, 2007, 164). In 1992, in the 107 Pourashava there were 321 women commissioners. Thus, the total number of nominated women /members in urban and local government bodies in Bangladesh was 13717 at that time. The nomination system was replaced by the reservation in 1993. Since the existing three

wards in all local government bodies, both urban and rural, were recognized into nine wards. Provision were made for reservation of seats exclusively for women one- for each three wards in all local government bodies, who were to be indirectly elected by UP/ Pourashava Chairman and Members/ Commissioners.

However, to implement the constitutional provision and on the basis of the recommendations of the study on the Institutional Review of the Women in Development (WID) of GOB, 1996, and the Local Government Commission Report , 1997, for the first time in the history of the country direct election for women representatives was provided in the local government system. By the Local Government Act, Bangladesh has made great strides in promoting women in decision making bodies through direct election to one-third reserved seats in all local bodies (Mahtab, 2007, 165). According to this Act, in each Pourashava all voters, male and female are electing one woman from among the contesting female candidates (Siddique, 2008: 311). The following table shows women's participation in Pourashava:

Table-3.3: Women's participation in Pourashava

Year	No. of Pourashava	No of Reserved seat in Pourashava	No. of elected women (in reserved seat)
1973	-	2 (Nominated)	-
1977	-	2 (do)	1 from each Pourashava
1984	-	2(do)	1 from each Pourashava
1989	-	2(do)	1 from each Pourashava
1993	107	3 (elected by chairman & commissioners)	321
1999	-	3 (do)	-
2004	-	3 (do)	-
2011	309	3 (Elected by direct vote)	927

Source: compiled by researcher from various sources.

History of women representatives in Mymensingh Pourashava:

Mymensingh is one of the 16 old districts of Bangladesh which was constituted by the British East India Company on 1 May 1787. The city governance organization is called Mymensingh Pourashava which comprises elected members, supported with government officials. The Mymensingh Pourashava was first established in the year 1869, on 8th April, by Maharaja Surya Kanta Acharya Mymensingh Municipality and as Mymensingh Municipal Committee in 1960. The Mymensingh Municipal Committee was replaced by a Pourashava in 1972 after

the independence of Bangladesh. After the liberation war, in 1974 the first Pourashava election was held. In this election no women was elected as commissioner. The second election was held in 1977 and in these election two women was nominated by the Pourashava Chairman and commissioners named Ms. Morium Hashim Uddin and Ms Muslama Khatun. In 1984, three women were nominated named Ms. Morium Hashim Uddin, Rowshan Azad, Efat ara Begum. In this time Poura-area was expanded. In respect to this, the members of Union Parishad were considered as Poura- commissioners. In 1989, three women were nominated as commissioners named Ms. Badrunnaher, Ms. Jayada Khatun, and Ms. Tahmina Begum. In 1993, also three women were nominated named Ms. Fatema Jahura Rani, Ms. Shamsunnahar Masud, and Ms. Rashida Monaem.

In 1999, according to the Local Government Act 1997, for the first time women had been electing in Mymensingh Pourashava. That time Advocate Mahmud-Al-Nor Tareq has been elected as Poura-Chairman and for the first time elected women representatives from reserved seats were Ms. Dilara Begum, Halima Khatun, Nibedita Roy, Anjuman Sarkar, Fatema zohura, Rani Begum and Esmot-ara Banu Asa. The provision of panel mayor-3 did not introduced till then and council was formed with 21 councilors. In the election of 2004, again Advocate Mahmud-Al-Nor Tareq has elected as Chairman and elected women representatives from reserved seats were Ms. Manoara Begum, Ms. Norjahan Begum Jusna, Onita pal, Roksana Shirin, Hasina Akter Laki, Ms Rani Begum, Shamima Akter. At that time council was formed with 30 members. Mr. Ekramul Haque Tito the present Mayor of Mymensingh Pourashava acted as acting mayor from 28 April 2009 to 13 February 2011. In 14 may 2008, according to the provision of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh Government, the post Poura-chairman was improved to Poura-mayor and commissioner post was improved to councilors. At present elected Poura-mayor is Mr. Ekramul Haque Tito, including other 21 male councilors of 21 wards and 7 elected women representatives under reserved seats the Poura-council is formed. There are two women representatives in the present Poura-council who were also elected in 1999 and 2004 respectively. In the history of Mymensingh Paurashava no women has been elected under general seat and the provision of panel mayor-3 for women from reserved has been introduced from the present council.

Source: Pourashava office, Mymensingh.

Women's participation in the Mymensingh Paurashava election- 2011:

There are ten Pourashavas in Mymensingh district. Mymensingh Sadar Pourashava is one of these and the election of this Pourashava was held on February, 2011. In this election total voters were 1, 56,137 among them the number of male voter was 78,487 and the number of female voter were 77,650. There was arranged 63 polling centers and total 445 voting room to take vote. For the post of Mayor total competitor was 04, for the post of reserved seats (07) number of competitor was 33 and for the post of general seats (21), competitor was 118 respectively. The information related the voter, polling center and competitor candidates of the election are presented in the following table:

Table-3.4: about the voter, polling center and competitor candidates of the election-2011

Name of the Pourashava	Total no. of voter			No. of polling center	No. of voting room	No. of competitor candidates		
	Male	Female	Total			Mayor	Councilor of reserved seats	Councilor of general seats
Mymensingh Sadar	78,487	77,650	1,56,137	63	445	04	33	118

Now, the description of received votes is given. In this election total vote was received from male voters 78,487, female voters 77,650 and total vote was received 1, 56,137. For the Mayor post total vote was received 1, 07,508 for the reserved seats total vote was received 1, 07, 455 and for the post of general seats total vote was received 1, 07,519. Percentage of received votes for the Mayor post was 68.85%, percentage of votes for the posts of reserved seats was 68.82% and for the posts of general seats was 68.86% respectively. The estimation is shown through the following table:

Table-3.5: About the received votes in the election-2011

Name of the Paurashava	Total no. voter			Total no. of casted vote			Percentage of casted vote		
	Male	Female	Total	Mayor	Councilor of res. seats	Councilor of general seats	Mayor	Councilor of res. seats	Councilor of general seats
Mymensingh Sadar	78,487	77,650	1,56,137	107508	107455	107519	68.85%	68.82%	68.86%

Source: District Election Office, Mymensingh.

Chapter-04

Socio-economic Profile of Women Representatives of Mymensingh Pourashava:

Introduction:

In this chapter I will endeavor to focus the socio-economic and political situation of the women participants in the election of Mymensingh Pourashava. This chapter will also attempt to discuss how far women are able to take part in decision making and implementation process in the development activities of this Pourashava. Further I have strived to find out the problems they are facing in complying with their responsibilities. This research will also allow us to understand the extent to which their family surroundings help them to participate in the Pourashava election. This chapter is based on the findings of the field work. At first I will focus on the basic demographical features of the women representatives of Mymensingh pourashava and their election participation process. Then it will discuss the general and specific activities of women representatives, the reasons of their less participation, the obstacles they are facing in exercising their functions and their achievement as women representatives of the Pourashava.

Demographic feature of women representatives of Mymensingh Pourashava:

In this section, the information regarding their age, educational qualification, marital status, profession, monthly income, husband's education, occupation and income were collected. All these data will hopefully help us to realize their socio-economic and political background in a comprehensive way.

Age composition of the representatives:

In a third world country like Bangladesh the women cannot take politics as career in their earlier life, because the male dominated society in this country is not used to see women as a good politician, rather as a good girl, wife and responsible mother.

However, table-4.1 presents the age composition of the women representatives of Mymensingh Pourashava. By analyzing the age-structure of the respondents, it is found that they belong to different age groups ranging from 35 years to 60 years. Here the lower limit of the age is considered 35 years. Under the Local Government (Amendment) Act, 1993, a candidate for the membership of the local government must be at least 25 years old (Siddiqui, 2008).

Table-4.1: Age distribution of women member

Age distribution of respondents	No. of total respondents	Percentage
35-40	2	28.57%
41-45	3	42.85%
46-50	1	14.28%
51-55	-	-
56-60	1	14.28%
Total	7 (100.00)	100%

Table-01 shows that, in Mymensingh Pourashava there are seven women representatives directly elected under the reserved seat, who belong to different groups from 35 years to 60 years. The highest number of respondents 3 (42.85%) were from the age group of 41-45 years. Under the age group 35-40 there are 2 (28.57%) respondents, which is the second highest number. In addition to these ranges, from the age group of 46-50 and 56-60 there are 1 (14.28%) respondents respectively. But it is seen that from the age group of 51-55 no respondent is found. So from the above table I find it out that in the age group 41-45 women are largely involved in politics in Mymensingh Pourashava.

Educational qualification of respondents:

Education is the back bone of a nation and fundamental rights of every human being. Without education a person cannot be conscious about his/her rights; dutiful about responsibilities, cannot be confident to express opinions. Education can develop the capability to participate in decision making. It is only through education one can achieve the upliftment and betterment of life. The education of women can also be power source of social change and economic development (ADB, 1994: 64). By the Local Government Act- 1997, women have got a vast opportunity to participate in decision making process in local government system. It tends to help the participants understand the systems, rules and regulations and also ensure their accessibility to the decision-making process. It is also assumed that women cannot fare well in politics since they are neither literate nor exposed. The collected data also presents that the awareness, efficiency and overall satisfaction of one's own performance depends on the gravity of his/her educational qualification.

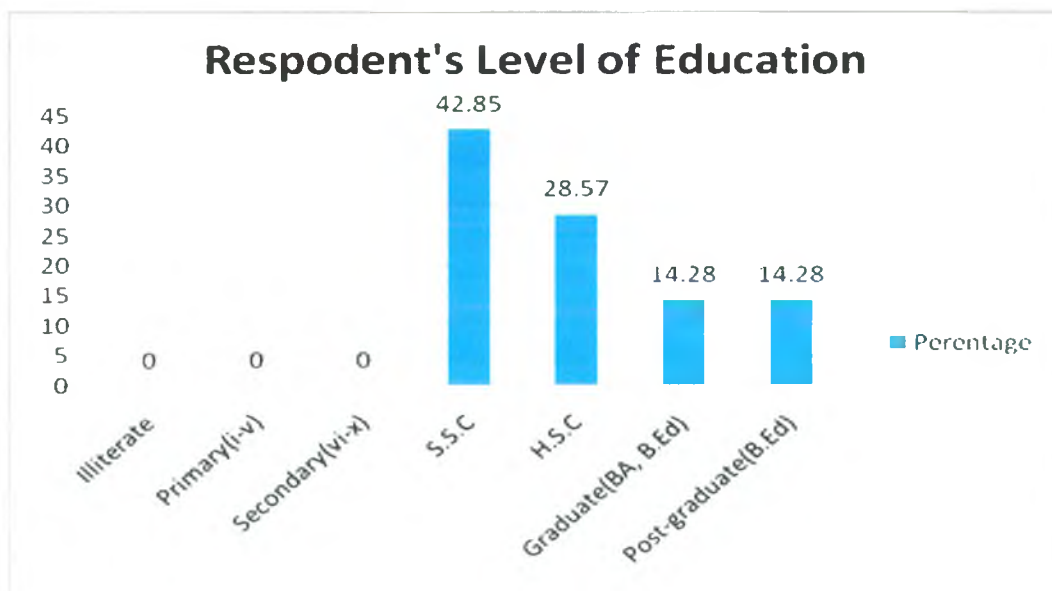
Table-4.2: Respondent's level of education

Level of education	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Illiterate	-	-
Primary(i-v)	-	-
Secondary(vi-x)	-	-
S.S.C	3	42.85%
H.S.C	2	28.57%
Graduate(BA, B. Ed)	1	14.28%
Post-graduate(B. Ed)	1	14.28%
Total	7 (100.00)	100%

In table- 4. 2 we see that there is no respondent without educational qualification. All of the respondents are educated ranging from the SSC level to post-graduate level. It is found that in the Mymensingh Pourashava the common people are no more interested to vote for illiterate candidates. However, the table shows that there are no illiterate respondents among the women respondents in the Mymensingh Pourashava. Also in the primary (i-v) and secondary (vi-x) level no respondent is found. The maximum number of respondents 3 (42.85%) are found from the SSC level. In the graduate and post-graduate level there are 1(14.28%) respondents respectively.

So, the table reveals that all the candidates are educated in the pourashava among whom maximum respondents have completed their SSC level and minimum respondents have completed their graduation and post-graduation level.

Figure: 01



From the figure it is found that, the respondents with higher level of education either belong to the urban or pre-urban areas. Though the Mymensingh Pourashava is a urban area and class one category pourashava, all the candidates of this pourashava are minimum of SSC level. The changing social values towards female education, opportunities and facilities for female education encouraged the urban women to be educated, which is, however, not always possible for the rural women. This tends to indicate that these educated women participants can be able to put forth their demands and try to uphold their rights. Since the women respondents of Mymensingh Pourashava are educated, civilized and closely touched with urbanization, modernization and globalization, they are more vocal and conscious about their rights and obligations. Not only that, they are also striving to put a satisfactory contribution in

all the sectors of development of Mymensingh Pourashava. But in spite of having enough qualification, eagerness and consciousness about their responsibilities, the women are always lacked behind by their male colleagues in this traditionally patriarchal society.

Occupation of the respondents:

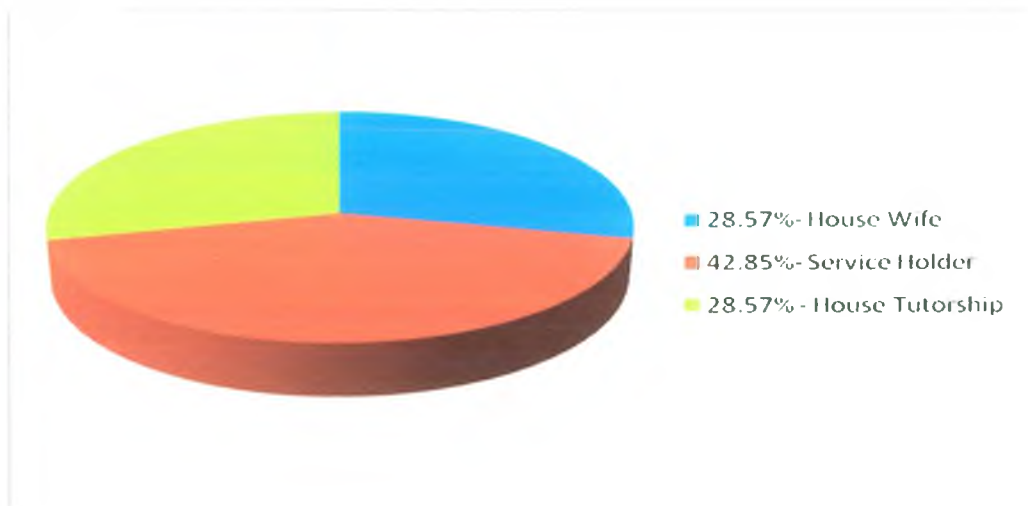
The financial condition of person mainly depends upon his or her occupation. It is indispensable to know the occupations of the respondents to assess their economic condition. In this connection, it is worth mentioning here that, according to the provisions of the Local Government Ordinance (Pourashava Ordinance No. xxvi of 1977) a person shall not be qualified for election as a commissioner or chairman or member if he or she holds any whole time office of profit in service of the Republic or of the pourashava or of any other authority (GOB, 1998: 9; GOB, 1983: 5). Table-4.3 is presented here to show the occupational pattern of the respondents.

Table-4.3: Respondent’s occupation

Occupational category	No. of Respondents	Percentage
House-wife	2	28.57%
Service	3	42.85%
House tuition	2	28.57%
Total	7 (100.00)	100%

Table- 4.3 demonstrates that most of the respondents 3(42.85%) are found as service holder. Among the three respondents two are working as high school teacher and another one is working as kindergarten teacher. Among the remaining four respondents two are working as house tutors and another two are house wives. So, from this table it is found that most of the respondents are service holder.

Figure-2: Occupation of women representatives



Since all the respondents are representatives of a urban area, they are educated and service holder. As they are educated and employed, they are confident about their duties and responsibilities and trying to play a good role in the pourashava beside their male colleagues.

Respondent’s monthly self-income:

The personal income of a person plays a pivotal role in determination of his or her socio-economic status. As women are more vulnerable in our society, self earning increases their status in their family as well as their society. From the field work, I have observed that the women respondents who are more educated are doing better job and playing a better role in the decision making and implementation process of the Pourashava.

Table-4.4: Respondent’s monthly self-income

Monthly Income (in taka)	Total No. of Respondents	Percentage
Up to tk (5,000-10,000)	4	57.15%
Up to tk (10,001-15,000)	-	-
Up to tk (15,001-20,000)	1	14.28%
Up to tk (20,001-25,000)	-	-
Up to tk (25,001-30,000)	2	28.57%
Total	7 (100.00)	100%

From the table- 4.4 it may be mentioned that among the 7 respondents, the self-income of maximum respondents 4 (57.15%) is up to 5,000-10,000 taka. The self incomes of another 2 respondents are 30,000 taka respectively. And the other respondent’s income is 20,000 taka per month.

Education and occupation of the respondents’ husbands:

To know the socio-economic background of the women participants of the Local Government Politics, husband’s educational qualification and pattern of occupation is also important as socio-economic position of the husband often determines support, guidance and help for participating in politics. Generally the participants of well educated families become more conscious about their rights and duties. They are vocal, can take equal participation in decision making and can perform their responsibilities properly. Moreover, if the husband of the respondent is well educated, they will get more freedom of movement and she will get encouragement and cooperation to take part in outdoor activities like social welfare and politics. But from our collected data it is found that four respondents are widow, one is in separation, one’s husband lives in abroad and only is living with husband. Five respondent’s husbands were their source of inspiration, mental support and helping hand. However, the educational qualification and occupation of respondent’s husbands are mentioned in the following table

Table-4.5: Educational qualifications and occupation of the respondents' husbands:

Level of education	No. of respondents	Types of occupation		
		Business	Living abroad	Did not mention
S.S.C	01	01		
H.S.C	01	01		
Graduate	01	01		
Post Graduate	01	01		
Did not mention	03		01	02
Total	07(100)			

From the above data it is found that among the seven respondents, most of their (4) husband's occupation was business. One's husband is living in abroad but she did not mention the educational qualification of her husband. From other two respondents, one is widow and another is separated from her husband. But none of them neither mentioned about educational qualification nor about occupation of their husband's.

Religious status of the respondents:

Religion had been a major source of enforcing the gender-gap in our society. According to the Constitutional Provision Bangladesh is secular state. Besides Muslim other religious communities are also visible in the country. Among them Hindu community is major. The percentage of this community is 10.5%. Mymensingh pourashava is also Hindu community based. So there should be Non-Muslim representatives to represent these communities. But here all the women representatives are Muslim, none is from other religion. Data is presented in the following table:

Table-4.6: Respondents' religious status

Religion	No. of total respondent	Percentage
Muslim	07	100%
Other religion	-	-
Total	07(100)	100%

So from the above table it is found that though Bangladesh is a secular state, and Mymensingh pourashava is Hindu community based, here all the women representatives are Muslim.

Chapter-05

Political Background of the Women Participants of Mymensingh Pourashava

In Bangladesh women have got limited access to the highest decision making body. Their entry into higher position has been depended upon the wishes of the male political bosses and elites. In our country generally, politics is considered to be male dominated, for this reason, a few population of women are involved with the political activities. The participation of women in political decision making and administration remains very slim. Currently very few Bangladeshi women can be found in positions of political leadership in both central and local government structure, and even in the administrative hierarchy. As a result of this lack of opportunities to intervene at the policy and decision making level, women have a minimal impact in the planning, management, and implementation of policies (Mahtab, 2007: 58). The traditional norms, values and customs create obstacles to women's participation in political activities. Participation of women in the local bodies would include:

- Women as voters
- Women as members of political party
- Women as candidates
- Women as elected members of local government bodies taking part in decision making, planning, implementation and evaluation
- Women as members of women's organizations, their association with voluntary organizations
- Women in development works and dealing of priority issues in the village level. (Shamim & Kumari, 2002).

However, in spite of the obstacles, women of our country have gradually shown interest in taking part in politics. Bangladesh has made great opportunities in promoting women in decision making bodies through direct election to one-third reserved seat in all local bodies. The Local Government (Union Parishad) Second Amendment Act, 1997 of Bangladesh is a landmark towards ensuring women's equal access and increased participation in political power structures. This amendment provided direct elections to reserved seats for women in local level election (Khan and Ara, 2006: 2). This initiative was a major back through in the process of ensuring political participation of women.

However, it is indispensable to know the political background and identity of the women representatives on the basis of which they are inspired to engage themselves in politics. Thus, some necessary issues regarding their political background, e.g. pre-experience, reasons of involvement in politics, affiliations of the participants in political party, family member's involvement in political parties are discussed in this section elaborately.

Involvement of the respondents in political parties:

Generally it is observed that, the people who hold various posts in political parties are usually found to be somehow linked up with the political parties and have participated in various elections. Those who wish to be elected as local government representatives become involved with any political party. Because, political parties can play an important role in various kinds of election activities, e.g. campaigning, increasing candidate’s identity in their respective constituencies and to uphold themselves to the common people and so on.

Now the study will find out to what extent the women are involved with the political activities to be elected as representatives in the local government system.

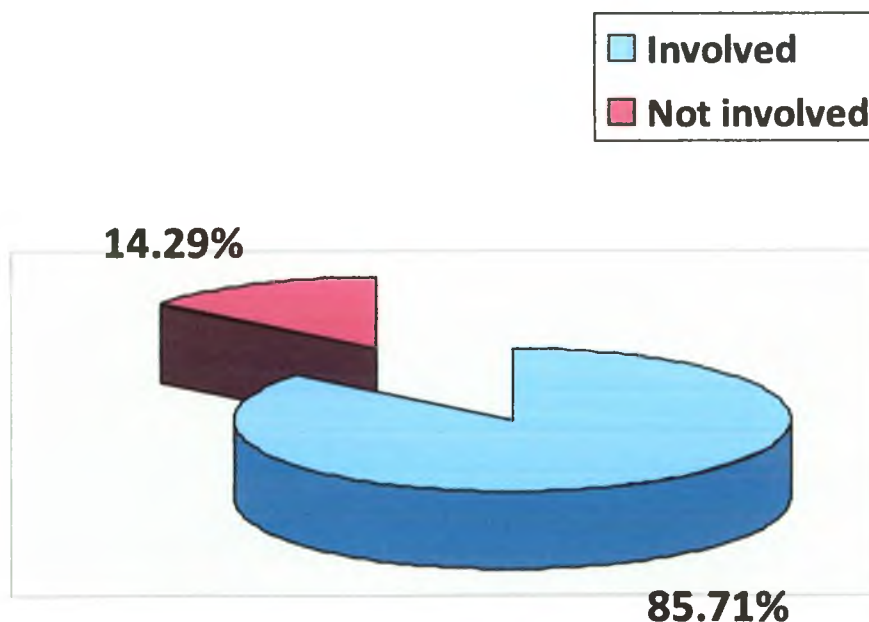
Collected data on this issue are presented in table-5.1

Table-5.1: Involvement in political parties

Types of involvement	No. of respondents	Percentage
Involved	6	85.71%
Not involved	1	14.29%
Total	7	100%

Table - 5.1 indicates that among the total 7 (100%) respondents of Mymensingh Pourashava, 6 (85.71%) are involved in political parties and remaining 1 (14.29%) respondent is not involved in political parties. So it is worth mentioning here that, generally political affiliation is important for being elected. Accordingly the table shows that, out of 7 (100%) respondents 6 (85.71%) are involved in political activities.

Figure-3: Respondent's Involved in Political Parties



From the field work it is observed that, 3 respondents are involved with Awami League (AL) and 4 respondents are involved with the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). It is also observed that, to be elected as a local government representative it is not always necessary to be a politician of the ruling party.

Involvement of respondent’s family members in political parties:

Normally, it is observed that, a significant number of women participants are influenced and motivated by their family members in the involvement of politics and political parties. In my study I found that, the women political leaders are the daughters, wives, cousins, sisters, mothers, nephews of some renowned political figures.

From various studies it is also found that, women who come from political family background usually become interested to take part in the politics. They follow their relatives who have been involved in politics. This scenario is now presented in table-5.2

Table-5.2: Types of family-members involvement in political parties

Type of involvement	Total no. of respondents	Percentage
Involved	7	100%
Not involved	-	-
Total	7	100%

Table - 5.2 demonstrates that, all of the total respondents’ 7(100%) family are involved mainly with two leading political parties, i.e. AL and BNP. The participation of their family members in political parties strengthened the platform from where they could prepare themselves for participating in local government politics (Moin, 2011, 100). Though family members of all the women representatives of Mymensingh Pourashava are involved in politics, they ensured their participation with their own qualities and determination.

Experience of respondent’s previous participation in local government politics:

It is generally observed that previous experience as local government representative plays a vital role to take part in the decision making and implementation process of any local government institution. Data in this regard is presented in the following and table:

Table-5.3: Experience of previous participation in LGP

Experience	Total no. of respondents	Percentage
Had	3	42.85%
Did not have	4	57.15%
Total	7 (100.00)	100%

Once it was thought that, to take part in politics, especially in electoral politics, previous experience in this field is essential. But with the changing of time, situation is also changing. Now, it is seen that women without previous experience are being elected in LGIs. From the table 5.3 it is found that though the maximum 4 (57.15%) respondents did not have any pre-experience, they have been elected in the local government institutions. This tends to indicate that pre-experience is not the essential pre-condition for being elected in LGP.

Reasons of participation of the women participants in LGP:

Each and every politician has some definite goals in their political career, one of which is to be elected in any political institution. For what reasons the respondents were interested to participate in LGP is definitely an important question. Information regarding their responses in this regard is presented in table- 5.4:

Table-5.4: Reasons of participation in LGP

Reasons for participation	Number of respondents	Percentage
To make aware about the right of the women	4	57.15%
To established the right of the women	5	71.42%
To develop women and children	5	71.42%
To public welfare	7	100%
For local development	3	42.85%
To make social and political influence	2	28.57%
Personal involvement with political parties	4	57.15%
Having political affiliation of family	5	71.42%
Pre-experience as local government representative	-	-
Government has made opportunity for women	4	57.15%
To create financial solvency	2	28.57%

Note: Respondents were allowed in more than one category

From the above table-5.4 we have found that, all of the respondents 7 (100%) aim was to work for public welfare. Second highest number of respondents 5 (71.42%) were interested to participate in LGP in order to establish the right of the women, to develop women and children and because of having political affiliation of their family. Again 57.15% respondents expressed their eagerness to participate in LGP to make aware about the right of the women, having personal involvement with political parties and because government has made opportunity for them. Other 3 (42.85%) respondents were interested to be elected for local development. The remaining 28.57% respondents aimed at to make social and political influence and to create financial solvency in their family.

Sources of inspiration for participation in LGP:

Bangladesh is a third world country where the women cannot be confident to take politics as their career. In such a case, women’s participation in the political motivation and inspiration from their relatives and others is very much important. According to my study data was collected about whose motivation and inspiration inspired the respondents to take decision of participating in LGP.

Table-5.5: Sources of inspiration for participating in LGP

Who inspired	Number of total respondents	Percentage
Self inspiration	5	71.42%
Inspired by husband	2	28.57%
Family inspiration	2	28.57%
Inspiration of relatives	1	14.28%
Inspiration of local people	5	71.42%
Inspiration of political party	1	14.28%

Note: Respondents were allowed in more than one category

Table 5.5 shows that the highest number of respondents 5 (71.42%) were self motivated and inspired by the local people respectively to be elected in LGI. The second highest number of respondents 2 (28.57%) were inspired by their husbands and family members. And remaining 1(14.28%) respondent is inspired by their relative’s political parties they belong to. So from the collected data we have found that, being elected representatives in local government institutions, self inspiration and popularity keep more importance and the political party keeps a marginal role in case of LGI. In case of participation in election, nobody was obstructed by their husband, father mother-in-law, parents, religious people of the locality and local influential people. Not only that every respondent physically took part in the electoral campaign.

Cooperation at the time of electoral campaign:

For conducting a proper election campaign, some strategies need to be developed and followed by the candidates. At the time of election campaign almost all the candidates try to convince the general voters in various ways including arranging different types of programs and activities. So, modes of election campaign play a vital role in participating electoral politics (Moin, 2011: 128).

So, from the above study we have found that the women participants have taken various strategies in their electoral campaign and they have pursued help from different sources. They are presented in the following table.

Table-5.6: Cooperation at the time of electoral campaign

Who cooperated	Total number of respondents	Percentage
Husband	1	14.28%
Children	3	42.85%
Relatives	5	71.43%
Only local people	1	14.28%
Only political party	-	-
Various sources	6	85.71%

Note: Respondents were allowed in more than one category

So from the above table we have found that, maximum number of respondents 6 (85.71%) have got cooperation from various sources in their electoral campaign. Then, the second height number of respondents 5 (71.43%) got cooperation from their relatives. Other 3 (42.85%) respondents got cooperation from their children. One respondent got cooperation only from the local people. At the time of interview with her she informed that she got four thousand votes more than her nearest contestant in the Local Government Election. Another one respondent told that she got full cooperation from her husband.

Time spent during the period of election campaign:

Conducting any kind of election campaign is a time and money consuming matter. It is observed that in politics there are no fixed working hours in a day and the requirements of political involvements obscure the distinction between home and work, day and night (Chowdhury, 1994: 18). Under the Local Government Election Act, 1997 from each ward one male member is elected directly where from each three wards one women member is elected directly under reserved seat. So it is observed that women have to conduct their electoral campaign from larger area than that of male. For that reason, they have to spend more time than the male member. Table-5.7 describes total amount of time is spent by the respondents for election campaign

Table-5.7: Time spent during election campaign

Time (in hours)	Total no. of respondents	Percentage
5-7	1	14.28%
9-12	1	14.28%
13-16	5	71.43%
Total	7	100%

So the above table reveals that most of the respondents 5 (71.43%) have spent maximum time i.e. 13 to 16 hours in a day. From the field work we also observed that immediate before the election they have spent their maximum time as far as possible. Secondly another respondent has spent 9-12 hours in a day for her electoral campaign. Remaining one spent 5-8 hours in a day for her electoral campaign. From the collected data and interview with her we are informed that, she was the most educated, efficient, confident and popular candidate for the election. In respect to this, it can be said that, in spite of spending the lowest time she has become able to be elected as a representative for her efficiency and popularity.

Figure 4: Time spent during election campaign by the respondents



Election expenditure of the respondents:

In order to participate at election and conduct an electoral campaign, money is indispensable. It is observed that politics means expenditure and because of that reason any affluent can involve themselves in political activities (Qadir, 1994: 3). For the proper maintenance of the election campaign and other related activities, money is to be spent. But in reality one of the most important factors, which creates obstacle for the women candidates in election campaign, is financial constraint is generally the outcome of women’s economic dependency and less accessibility to financial resources, which creates barrier to carry out political activities (Karl,1995: 11).

In my study, it has already been shown in the table of respondents’ monthly self income. Because of being educated, out of seven candidates five had their own source of income .And

other 2 candidates were dependent upon their husbands for their electoral campaign. Since, all candidates are of a Class -1category pourashava, they are educated and self-sufficient. Nevertheless, as politics means expenditure, they had to collect their election expenditure from various sources.

Table- 5.8: Election expenditure of the respondents

Amount of expenditure	Number of Respondents	Percentage
20000-40000	1	14.28%
40001-60000	-	
60001-80000	1	14.28%
80001-100000	1	14.28%
100001-1,20000	-	-
1,20001-1,40000	-	-
1,40001-1,60000	2	28.57%
1,60001-1,80000	-	-
1,80001-200000	-	-
2,00001-2,20000	-	-
2,40001-2,60000	-	-
2,60001-2,80000	-	-
2,80001-300000	1	14.28%
3,00001-3,20000	-	-
3,20001-3,40000	-	-
3,40001-3,60000	-	-
3,60001-3,80000	-	-
3,80001-400000	1	14.28%
Total	07	100%

From the above table we have found that out of seven respondents only one respondent has spent the highest amount of money (400000). Out of four lacs taka she spent 2, 50,000 from her personal income and rest of the money was collected from her relatives and various sources. The second highest amount of money (3, 00000 tk) was by 1(14.28%) respondent. She has managed the expenditure selling her land property and from her relatives. Between 2(28.57%) respondents each has spent taka 1, 50,000 as their electoral expenditure. They have managed the money from their husband and paternal relatives. Another 1(14.28%) respondent taka 1, 00000 and she has collected the money from her husband's pension money, family income and from paternal relatives. Between remaining two, their financial

condition is very poor and the people of their locality totally have helped them to manage their electoral expenditure. Their expenditure was 80,000 and 20,000 respectively. In this regard, the case of Asma Ahmed is presented below:

Case #1, Asma Ahmed:

Asma Ahmed is a fifty years old woman. She has one daughter and one son. Her daughter is married and son is autistic. She is separated from her husband for 17 years, after birth of her son. There was a political background of her family. Her father was involved with the politics of Awami League and was a member of pourashava during the Pakistan period. He was elected three times as commissioner of Mymensingh pourashava. Asma Ahmed had eagerness for politics since her childhood. She helped her father in exercising his functions of pourashava. From her college life she was loyal to Professor Motiur Rahman who is the Parliament Member of seat-4 of Mymensingh Sadar. Professor Rahman is her political model. In fact, for her financial solvency, political background and personal eagerness, the local people encouraged her to participate in election for reserved seat. The local people bore almost the total expense of the election. Even they gave her 5,000 taka at the date of election for her personal expense. She has become emotional while talking with the researcher. She was elected by getting more than 4000 vote from her nearest contestant.

But, the hopes and aspirations with which she was elected are largely remained unfulfilled. Her promises to the local people were to construct roads, develop the drainage and sewerage system, supplying pure drinking water by setting up tube well and develop the sanitation system. Above all her promises to the people were to give the people everything which she will get from the Pourashava council during her time duration.

On the first day when I meet and talked with her, she seemed too dissatisfied and frustrated. She told me that she could not fulfill the promises which she gave to the people of her locality. She expressed much dissatisfaction against the Mayor and the male members. She told that sometimes she has to feel shame to the local people. She told that in order to do the development activities of pourashava, labor facilities are available for the male members and no labor is supplied for the female members. She also opined that the honorarium for women representatives should be increased because they represent at a time three wards. She also told that the development activities are mainly performed by the male members. In every council meeting male member plays the vital role of decision making. But the decision of female members is not taken very seriously. They are kept just for putting their signatures. She also expressed that normally the public does not become excited if they are told about her (women representative) incapability and then they keep patience. She also told that in the 'Uthan Boithok' of Gender committee, she talks about various promises but most of them are not activated, for this reason sometimes she has to feel shame to the public. But two months later when the researcher further contacted over phone with her, she seemed to be satisfied to some extent. She said that she is now little bit performing the development activities like constructing and repairing roads, improving drainage and sanitation system of her locality with the help of Mayor.

Reasons of being elected from the reserved seat:

It has already been mentioned that, though Mymensingh is a Class-1 Category pourashava, no women representative was elected from the general seat, rather all have been elected under the reserved seat. Now from the collected data we shall find out the reasons why the entire female candidate was interested to participate in the election under reserved seat and whether there was any obstacle to compete with male candidates under the general seat. From the table 5.9, we shall try to find out the reasons why all the women representatives had competed under the reserved seat rather than general seat.

Table-5.9: Reasons of being elected from the reserved seat

Reasons of contesting under reserved seat	Number of respondents	Percentage
It is comparatively less competitive	-	-
It is comparatively less expensive	1	14.28%
It is less laborious	-	-
Because local dignity is less important	-	-
Because in reserved seat the ascendancy of local influential is lower	3	42.85%
Public less confident towards the women than that of men	3	42.85%
Because of party policy of the political party	2	28.57%

Note: Respondents were allowed in more than one category

From the above table 5.9, I find it out that there is no candidate who said that it is less competitive, because each of them competed with more than one female contestant. No candidate is found to tell that it is less laborious, because the constituency of the local government election under reserved seat is three times larger than the general seat. That is why; it is more laborious for electoral campaign. Local dignity is also important to be elected. Most of the respondents informed that, better financial condition, personal communication, family's political influence, personal political linkage and social affluence is also important to be elected as representative in the local government institution like Pourashava. The highest number of respondents 3(42.85%) have informed that, their main reason for competing under reserved seat is, less confidence of the public towards them than the male. Other 3(42.85%) highest number of respondents told that, in the election under general seat the ascendancy of the local influentials are more, for these reasons women are not encouraged to take part in election under general seat. Other 2(28.57%) respondents informed that for the party policy of their supported political party they did not take part under the general seat. Among the respondents most of them had definite electoral promise towards the public. And the main promise was the development of their constituency beside the male representatives.

Chapter-06

Role of Women Representatives of Mymensingh Pourashava in Decision Making and Implementation Process

This chapter mainly deals with the role of women in decision making and implementation process of local government, particularly of Mymensingh Pourashava. Generally, there is no division of specific and distinct responsibilities for men and women representatives mentioned in any Act, Ordinance or Resolution of LGIs (Khan, 1996: 9). In the Constitution of Bangladesh also there is no specific differentiation between the power and functions of male and female representatives.

According to the information provided by the Ministry of Local Government , Rural Development and Cooperatives that there is no administrative complexity in case of distribution of responsibilities to the women representatives.

However, the women representatives under the reserved seat are directly elected by the votes of three wards, while the male representative is by the vote of one ward. So, normally, the types of function and their position will be different than the function and position of the male. But according to the one of the male members of the Pourashava, in which sectors, the power and functions of male and female members shall be similar or different, are not properly mentioned in the Pourashava Manual and the Local Government Ordinance (Hassanuzzaman, ed. 2002: 184).

In a conference organized by the National Women Organization, the elected representatives of the local government institutions expressed their problems that it is unless to be elected to the post without specific responsibilities and power. They demanded their definite powers and responsibilities in their respective councils. As against their demands, the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina declared some specific responsibilities on 12 sectors to be handed over upon them. Among these 12 sectors the women representatives elected under the reserved seats of three wards will perform the following duties:

1. To collected the statistics of birth and death of three wards.
2. To spread awareness about women education;
3. To spread awareness about health and sanitation;
4. To increase inspiration for family planning;
5. To increase awareness about poultry and butchery;
6. Development of cottage and handicraft industry;
7. Prevention of oppression against women and children.

Therefore, women representatives have the right to perform the same activities like their male counterparts as they are elected through universal adult franchise (Mion, 2011: 139). The non-financial and less important functions and responsibilities are delivered to the women representatives. As we know that the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives is one of the good sectors of corruption of the Government, there remaining some scope of corruption for the male representatives of the local government institutions. However, the women representatives' can play important and challenging role in their participation in the decision making and implementation process.

Therefore, it is important to know the pattern of women representatives' participation in the activities of the local government institutions. By ensuring their position in local government institutions, women representatives are expected to consolidate their position and also to bring about changes in the condition of the life of the women. In reality, whether the women representatives can successfully perform their responsibilities or not generally depends on their consciousness and opportunities (Mion, 2011: 139). However, how far women are participating in the decision making and implementation process in the Mymensingh Pourashava requires further investigation are accordingly discussed in this chapter. Some of the important indicators in this context are awareness and membership of different standing committees of LGIs, presiding of women representatives in different standing committees, role performance about decision making in meeting, roles in the overall development of women, problems faced in getting proper allocation of cards etc will be discussed in this chapter.

Awareness about standing committees of LGIs:

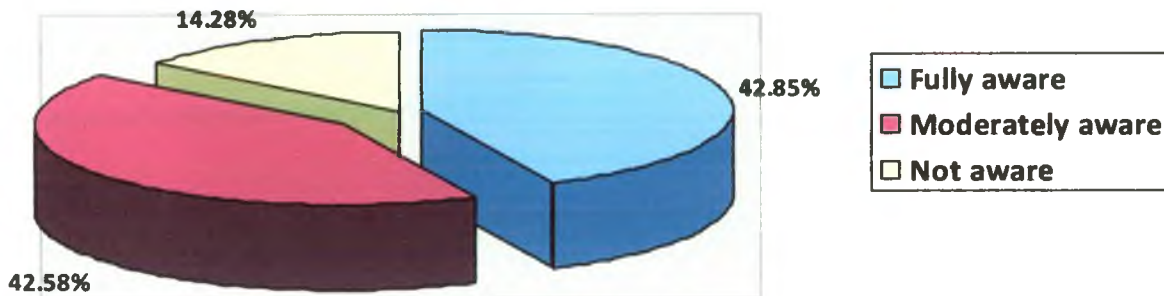
According to Local Government Ordinances of 1977 and 1983 (GOB, 1998; GOB, 1990) all the activities of the LGIs are accomplished according to the Ordinance or Act within the specific territory through the meetings of standing committees or by the name of the officials of LGIs (Mion, 2011: 140). So, standing committees play a key role in the execution and implementation of different activities for the proper maintenance of institutional functions. However, data is presented in table-6.1 regarding awareness of the respondents about this.

Table-6.1: Degree of awareness of the women representatives about the standing committees of LGIs.

Awareness	Number of respondents	Percentage
Fully aware	3	42.85%
Moderately aware	3	42.58%
Not aware	1	14.28%
Total	7	100%

From the above data we have found that among the seven respondents 3(42.85%) are fully aware of the standing committees of LGIs. Out of three respondents one is Panel- mayor-3(women), who is the second highest educated women representative of the Pourashava and previously she was elected twice in LGIs and she has a good political background. Out of three another one has the highest (M. Sc, B.Ed.) educational qualification and she is fully aware about her duties and responsibilities. Not with standing having a female panel mayor in Pourashava, she sent Kerala of India for a comparative discussion on the activities of women representatives of Krala (India) and Bangladesh. She has also a proposal to attend a seminar on this matter in Japan and in Malaysia. Though, here is women panel mayor, she is more reliable to the Mayor of Mymensingh Pourashava. Out of three remaining, one women representative, who is well concern about the standing committee has a good political background. Among the seven respondents other three women representatives are moderately aware of the standing committee of LGIs. And one representative is totally ignorant of the activities of the standing committee. So it is seen that among the seven representatives majority (six) are aware of the activities of the standing committee of LGIs. For the better understanding the dates are also displayed through a pie chart.

Figure 5: Degree of awarness of the Women Representative of LGIs



Women’s membership in different standing committees of LGIs:

Before discussing about the participation of the respondents in different standing committees of LGIs, we should know about the standing committees of Pourashava. Under Article.55 of the Local Government (Pourashava) Act, 2009 (Act No 58 of 2009), after constituting a Pourashava, the following standing committees shall be established for two and half years at its first meeting such as-

- Finance and establishment
- Tax assessment and collection
- Audit and accounts

- Urban planning and development
- Law, order and public safety
- Communication
- Women and children
- Fisheries and Livestock
- Information and culture
- Inspection and market price
- Monitoring and control
- Education
- Social welfare and community center
- License
- Public works building and construction (Alam, 2011: 71; Rahman, 1989: 307).

However, as per Government rule, each elected women will be a member of at least three standing committees and each of them will be the Chairperson of at least one standing committee (WFP, 1999: 12). Through the membership in these committees women representatives can integrate themselves in the mainstream of development activities of LGIs (Moin, 2011: 143).

The women representatives of the Mymensingh Pourashava were asked whether they had been the members of standing committees of LGIs. The data which I have found from the respondents are presented in the following table - 6.2.

Table-6.2: Respondents' membership in different standing committees of Mymensingh Pourashava

Committees	No. of total respondents	Percentage
Finance and establishment	1	14.28%
Tax assessment and collection	1	14.28%
Audit and accounts	1	14.28%
Urban planning and development	2	28.57%
Law, order and public safety	1	14.28%

Women and children	3	42.85%
Fisheries and Livestock	3	42.85%
Information and culture	-	-
Inspection and market price	2	28.57%
Tender	-	-
License	2	28.57%
Purchase	-	-

Note: Respondents were allowed in more than one category

From the above table - 6.2 it is found that the highest number of respondents 3(42.85%) are found in the committee of Women and children and Fisheries and Livestock. The second highest 2 (28.57%) number of respondents are found in Urban planning and development, Inspection and market price and License. Lastly in Finance and establishment, Tax assessment and collection, Audit and accounts, Law, order and public safety one respondents are found respectively. So, from the above data, we have found that women are the member of less important standing committees. At the time of interview, most of them were unable to recollect that, of which standing committees they are members. Most of them have complained that though there is clear provision regarding the monthly meeting of standing committee, no meeting was held from four months before of the interview. The Mayor himself does not take any active initiative in this regard. He frequently changes the date of the meeting and also complains that for want of Coram, to hold a meeting is not possible.

In fact, it is informed by a women representative that there is a provision of accountability of mayor and his male representatives about their activities, income and expenditure. Due to this, the male members including the mayor want to avoid the meeting, because all the male members including the mayor are local influential persons.

Women representative’s attendance in meetings of Local Government Institutions (LGIs):

According to the Pourashava Ordinance, 1977 and the Local Government (Union Parishad) Ordinance, 1983 of article 34(1) and 37(1) respectively, all the business if Pourashava and Union Parishads shall be disposed of at its meetings, or at the meetings of its committees (GOB, 1998: 18; GOB, 1990: 14). Therefore, the meetings of LGIs are very important for the discussion and implementation of all activities concerned. The meetings of LGIs are of two types- monthly (general) and special (emergency) meeting. General meetings are usually held at least once in a month on a fixed date (Ahmed, 2001: 61; NILG, 1998: 31). In order to hold the meeting, presence of at least half of the total member presence is necessary. And for City Corporation, unless one-third of the total ward commissioners are present, the meeting cannot be held (Rahman, 1989: 306). So women representatives, participation in meeting is the first step for them to be active in local government development activities. To prove

working capability and accountability to the people, women representatives needed to attend these meetings (Qadir, 1999: 30) However, the following table will provide information regarding this issue.

Table-6.3: Women representatives' attendance in meetings of LGIs.

Types of participation	Number of respondents	Percentage
Regular	7	100%
Irregular	-	-
Never participated	-	-
Total	7(100)	100%

So, from the above table, we have found that, the women representatives of Mymensingh Pourashava are conscious and enthusiastic about their duties.

Regarding preside ship of women representatives in any standing committee:

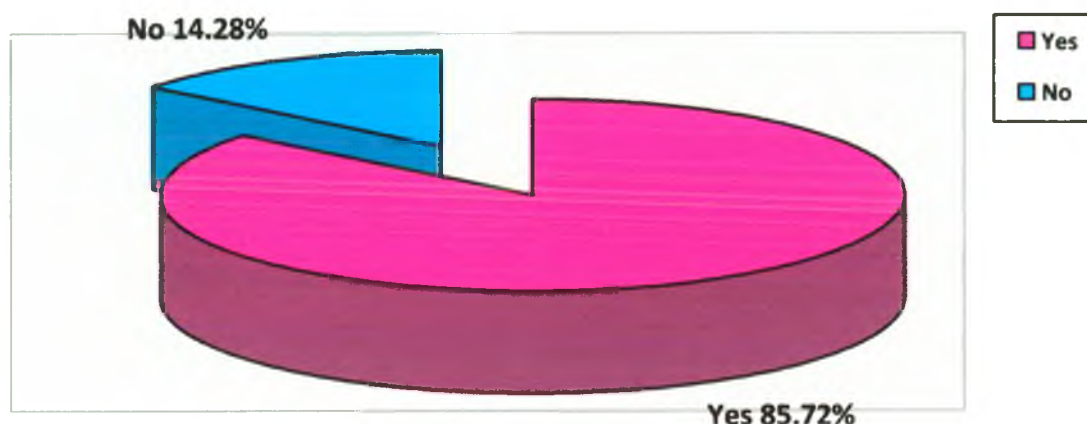
The women representatives of Mymensingh Pourashava asked about whether they have ever presided over any standing committee or not. The data in this regard are as follows:

Table-6.4: Preside ship of women representatives in any standing committee

Did preside over any standing committee	No. of total respondents	Percentage
Yes	6	85.72%
No	1	14.28%
Total	7	100%

So, from the above collected data we have found that, almost all the respondents except 1(14.28%), have preside over at least one standing committee of Mymensingh Pourashava. The scenario of women's participation as president in standing committee is also presented in the following pie chart:

Figure 6: Preside ship of women representatives in any standing commitee



The standing committees are chronologically-

1. Slum development committee
2. Environmental development committee
3. Women and children development committee, etc.

So it is found that all of these standing committees are comparatively less important than the other committees like tender, purchase, market management, appointment etc. No women have ever presided over any financial committee. And there is one women representative, who never presided over any standing committee. On this regard, she has answered that, the responsibilities are given to reliable male members of Mayor.

Role performed by women representatives in the meeting of LGIs:

From the previous data we have found that all women representatives of Mymensingh Pourashava are sincere, punctual and regular in the meetings of council. Now the question arises that to what extent they can play their role by participating in these meetings. Since the government has paved the way for women to participate in the local government elections and provisions are made for keeping 40% women in each Standing Committee, it is expected that the women representatives can actively play their roles in the council's meetings. Moreover, as the women are directly elected by the voters of their locality, it may also be expected that they will be more vocal and persuasive in the establishment of the rights of the people. But the reality is different. In the following table we shall observe that how the women can play their role in the meetings of LGIs.

Table-6.5: Roles performed by women representatives in the meeting of LGIs

Roles played by women	No. of total respondents	Percentage
Uphold the problems of their locality	07	100%
Uphold the problems regarding women & children development	06	85.72%
Participating in decision making for planning and implementing development projects	04	57.15%
Protest the discrimination against the women representatives	04	57.15%

Note: Respondents were allowed in more than one category

So from the above table we found that all of the women representatives uphold the problems of their locality and they revealed that though they uphold the problems about their locality, but most of the problems uphold by the women are not solved. Again 06 women representatives uphold the proposals of women and children development. And 4 women told that they play role in the decision –making in development activities. Among them again 4 women said that they try to protest the discrimination against women representatives.

All of them stated that, though they can keep role and uphold the problems on the above matters, but most of the problems are remained unsolved. Since the women are elected from the reserved seat contesting with only women and male are elected from general seats, so women are always underestimated and it is thought that the activities and position of women are different than that of the men. But in which fields their activities are will be different and to what extent they will be involved with the activities of Pourashava is not clearly mentioned in the Pourashava Manual. Due to these reasons, they cannot play active role in the Pourashava. It becomes clear that women representatives are somehow able to take part in discussions and raise various issues in the meetings of LGIs. But most of them opined that the male members of the institution seldom accept their opinions. So it can be said that their participation in decision-making process is obviously lower than their participation in discussion. But it is sorrow to say that the women representatives of Mymensingh Pourashava are not so united and efficient to protest this matter combined.

Role performed as women representative regarding women and children development:

Mymensingh is a first class type, ‘A’ category Pourashava. It acts all kinds of activities which a first class Pourashava does. Besides, this pourashava acts some special activities through its representatives especially by the women. Since 2000, UNDP, LGED and UKAID are combined working through the CDC and by the women representatives for the women and children development.

In 23 Pourashava and City Corporations in whole Bangladesh by identifying poor and extreme poor target group, they are performing development activities on women and children by urban partnership for poverty reduction project (UPPPF).

This target group creates Community Action Plan (CAP) in the monitoring of women representatives through the CDC and they try to identify the problems of their own locality and solve these. These problems are as follows:

1. Dowry and oppression against women
2. Child marriage and polygamy
3. Lack of consciousness about women health,
4. Malnutrition
5. Poverty
6. Raise of population
7. Unemployment
8. Old and widow allowance
9. Drop out of children from schooling
10. Sanitation problem
11. Lack of clear drinking water
12. Waste management problem
13. Lack of treatment of autistic children
14. Communication problem in rainy season
15. Lack of health awareness.

These problems are solved by the CDC. Besides these, the Pourashava tries to solve the above mentioned problems through the women representatives by forming 'Gender Committee' and arranging (Uthan boithok) yard meeting. Panel Mayor-3 of reserved seat is the chairperson and women representatives preside over the yard meetings.

The development activities which are done by the women representatives for the women and children are presented in the following table:

Table-6.6: Role performed regarding women and children development

Roles	No. of representatives	Percentage
Increase awareness against women oppression	07	100%
Make awareness about women education, health and sanitation	07	100%
Make awareness among women to be self developed	07	100%
Distribution of cards among poor, widow and old women	05	71.43%
Settlement of disputes in conjugal life	07	100%
Protest against child labor and oppression	04	57.15%
Sending poor girls to schools	05	71.43%
Arrange treatment for the poor people	06	85.71%
Create consciousness against dowry prohibition	05	71.43%

Note: Respondents were allowed in more than one category

From the above table, we have found that, all the women representatives, are working to increase awareness against women oppression, awareness about women education, health sanitation and awareness among to be self-dependent. Then second maximum member, i.e. six women representatives arranges treatment for the poor people. Other 5 respondents have expressed their opinion regarding distribution of cards among poor, widow and old women, sending poor girls to schools and creating consciousness against dowry prohibition. Other four women work to protest against child labor and child oppression.

Opinion of women representatives regarding their election promises:

Before the election all the candidates make some promises with the voters to get support from them. Likewise, the women representatives also made some promises towards their voters. The general voters expected that they (women representatives) would present the problems of their locality to the proper authority of the local government institutions. Accordingly, to get support the respondents made some promises and assured that after becoming elected they would try to fulfill those promises according to their ability. But regarding Mymensingh Pourashava, at the time of data collection from the mass people we have found that, most of them have casted their vote to the women representatives no expecting that they will be able to fulfill the demands of mass people. Rather most of them (voters) casted their vote only for

the reason that, post is created by the government for women representatives, just for casting votes and for the reasons that the women should also be elected besides the male representatives.

But some voters thought that, since there were some efficient, educated, aware and social worker women candidates, they will be able to keep role in the decision-making for the local development. In respect to these reasons, some of the voters have casted votes towards the women candidates. Thus the women representatives of Mymensingh Pourashava had some definite promises towards their voters like construction and reconstruction of roads and culverts, setting tub wells, maintaining sanitation system, creating income and earning opportunity for women, resisting violence against women, arranging allowance for the poor widow and old women, providing help to the poor, arranging schooling allowance for the poor children etc.

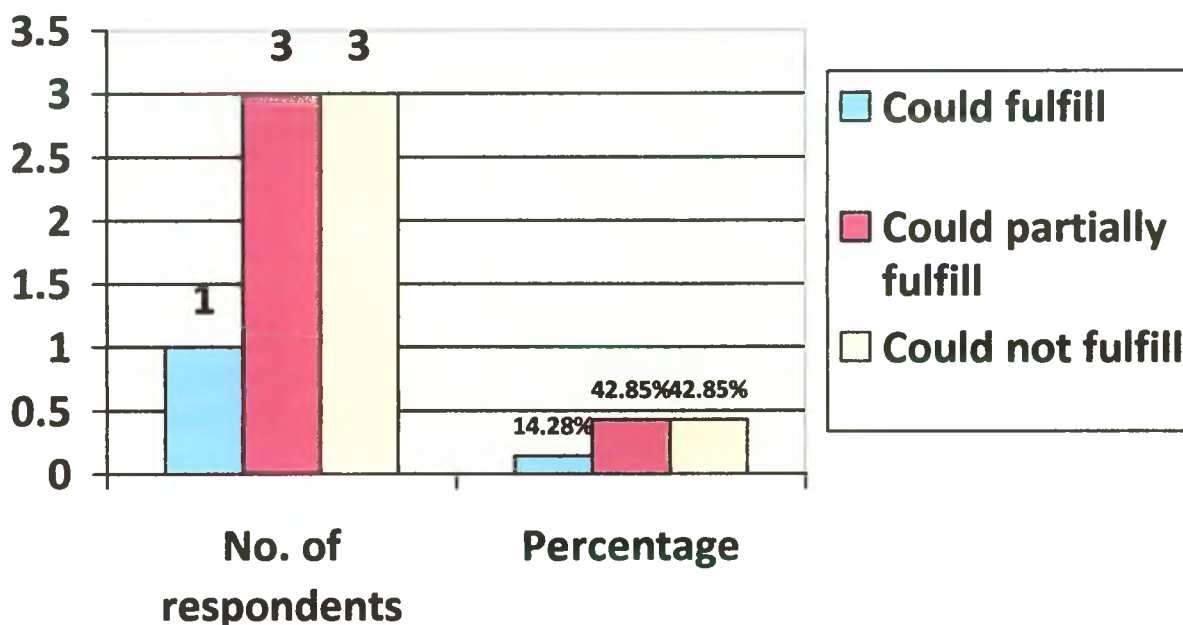
However, the fulfillment of election promises and reasons for not fulfilling those promises are discussed in this section. The women representatives to what extent they could keep their words after being elected as representatives of LGIs. Data regarding this are presented in the following table.

Table-6.7: Fulfillment of promise of women representatives in election campaign.

Options	No. of respondents	Percentage
Could fulfill	01	14.28%
Could partially fulfill	03	42.85%
Could not fulfill	03	42.85%
Total	07	100%

From the above data it is found that only one representative expressed her opinion that she could fulfill her election promises. She is the highest educated representative of the Pourashava council. Other 3 representatives revealed that they could partially fulfill their election promises. Lastly, 3 representatives stated that they could not fulfill their election promises at all.

Figure 7: Fulfillment of promise of women respondents in election campaign



Reasons of not fulfilling the election promises by the women representatives:

However, some reasons were found for not fulfilling or partial fulfillment of the promises, which are presented in the following table.

Table-6.8: Reasons for not fulfilling the election promises by the women representatives

Options	No. of respondents	Percentage
Women have no power because of male control	01	14.28%
For male dominance women get inadequate government grant	05	71.43%
Because women representatives are minority and cannot ensure their due rights for obtaining the resources	01	14.28%
Total	07	100%

From the above table it is found that one women representative expressed her opinion that women do not have power because of male control. Actually, the same view was also expressed by all the women representatives. Another one women representative said that as women are minority group and cannot ensure their due rights for obtaining the resources, they cannot fulfill their election promises. Five women revealed that for male dominance women get inadequate government grants. Actually, the entire women representatives expressed too much excitement for the reason that, the government grants which is obtained by them for distribution among the public is very inadequate. In the Mymensingh Pourashava VGF, Nutrition allowance, widow allowance, for poor women pregnancy allowance, aged allowance, TR etc. are provided to the poor and extreme poor vulnerable group. These allowances are distributed through issuing cards. In obtaining cards from Pourashava for distribution the male members always dominate the women members. Where the male members obtain 90 or 100 cards for one ward, the women councilors get only 10 cards for each of the three wards. Again in case of distribution of Test Relief (TR), where the male councilors get 3 tons rice or wheat for one ward, women councilors get only one ton for three wards.

Moreover, the government grants which is provided for the infrastructural development of the Pourashava, in that case also the women councilor get insufficient grant. In such a situation, it is observed that the women councilors cannot fulfill the 30% demand of the public. For this reason, sometimes they have to feel shame to the public. Sometimes they have also to help poor people from their own pocket. They reported that women members did not get the share of development projects and other activities in proportionate to their male counterparts. They complained that the male members of the LGIs did not evaluate the capability of women members. According to them, the male members expressed their views that government did not mention special work for women in Local Government Manual. Even at the time of data collection in pourashava office a dispute arises on this regard between male and female representatives. The male representative said that “in the manual there is no specific and separate provision in this regard. So, the grant which is allocated for the women is given by mercy”. For this reason, women members were poorly integrated to the development projects. Besides, this from seven councilors one opined that women were minority in LGIs, so they could not ensure their rights to control the resources. As a result, they failed to get involved in development projects in due proportion. This creates a negative impression among the voters.

Necessity of training for the women representatives:

The need of training and awareness could bring women representatives in a better position not only in the participation level but also at the decision-making levels. Ahmed and Jahan stated that, training is considered as one of the major pre-requisites for capacity building of the members of LGIs (Ahmed and Jahan, 2000: 21). As the women have to perform manifold responsibilities as public representative, it is expected that training makes women members efficient and conscious about their duties and responsibilities.

However, the respondents were questioned whether they received any training after being elected. It is important to mention that, the areas in which women representatives receive training were, on women empowerment, responsibilities of LGIs, violence against women, community development, health and family planning etc. Table 5.9 shows that all the women representatives of Mymensingh Pourashava received training on different subjects once or more times. All of them attended training workshop organized by LGED, UNDP, Oporajita Bangladesh, UK Aid etc. organizations in Mymensingh, Dhaka, Jessore, Rajshahi. Among these organizations UNDP trained up them several times. Among them, two representatives have been trained up by Municipal Association of Bangladesh (MAB), as they are members of these organizations. Apart from this, they also attended one or two days training programs on empowerment of women and other important issues arranged by the NGOs.

Table-6.9: Opinion of the respondents regarding the usefulness of receiving training

Opinions	No. of total respondents	Percentage
Increase knowledge on different issues and problems	07	100%
Develop awareness regarding duties and responsibilities	07	100%
Proper training helps to work together with male	05	71.43%
Develop awareness regarding women's rights	07	100%
Develop courage to protest against injustice	06	85.71%
Encourage doing work for the people	07	100%

Note: Respondents were allowed in more than one category

From the above table it is found that all the respondents (07-100%) have opined that if they get frequent training, they will be benefited in manifold way. Their knowledge on different issues and problems will be increased, they will more aware and dutiful about their responsibilities, they will be aware of their rights and will be more encourage working for the people. Again 06 have opined that training will increase courage to protest against injustice. And 5 opined that proper training helps to work together with male. So, all of the respondents have expressed positive opinion about the usefulness of training.

Chapter: 07

Problems and Prospects of Women Representatives in Mymensingh Pourashava

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to discuss various problems and prospects of women's participation in Local Government Politics (LGP). Women in our country, with the exception of a small minority, are gradually confined to the household; their presence in politics is considerably small (Salauddin, 1995: 3). Similarly, participation of women in LGP in the grassroots level is a recent phenomenon in our country. It has already been mentioned that women have got the opportunity to participate in LGP through direct election in reserved seats in the year 1997 for the first time. Consequently, some changes may have taken place in the pattern of traditional participation in LGP. The women, who had participated in Local Government electoral politics, experienced many new situations and challenges as they passed through the process of election. It is important to know different aspects of the situations they have confronted. Effort was made in this chapter to explore this issue along with the prospects of women's participation in political sphere.

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Problems faced by the respondents regarding contesting in general seats:

From the history of women participation in Mymensingh Pourashava, we have found that, from the beginning to present no women has been elected under the general seat. When there was the provision of nomination in the different Local Government Acts, they (women) were nominated. From 1999 (by the Local Government Acts, 1997) they are becoming directly elected under reserved seat. But they were asked that why they have contested under reserved seat rather than general seat. And whether they have faced any problem regarding contesting under general seat.

Four respondents opined that they have faced obstacle when contesting under general seat. One respondent said that she faced no obstacle at all. Another one said that she is not able to contest with male. Two of them said that they have never thought or expected to contest with male. Then question was aroused that what type of obstacles they have faced regarding contesting the general seat.

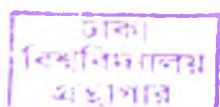


Table-7.1: Problems was faced by respondents regarding contesting general seat.

Opinion	No. of respondents	Percentage
Male representatives discouraged	05	71.43%
Party discouraged women to contest under general seat	02	28.57%
Lack of confidence of the respondents	02	28.57%
Lack of confidence of the public	01	14.28%
Lack of confidence of the family members	01	14.28%

Note: Respondents were allowed in more than one category

From the above table it is found that, five respondents opined that male contestants of the respective wards discouraged them to contest under general seat. In this regard it is seen that the male representatives are very influential and many of them was elected several times. For this reason the male contestants always discourage the women candidates to contest under general seats rather encourage to contest under reserve seat. In this regard both male and female contestants reach at a mutual understanding that, if the women contest under reserved seat, they will be helped by the male contestants. Moreover, the women do not have courage enough to go against their opinion. If they (women) do so they will be considered as rival of the male contestants and will be elected neither under reserved seat nor under general seat. Two other women representatives also gave statement about this matter. As a result, they are less confident to contest under general seat. Moreover, some women representatives gave information that some male representatives are more influential than that of Mayor also. Two opined that the respective political party has discouraged them to contest under general seat. In this regard their policy is that in this context they (political party) they will support both type of candidate so that both can be elected. Other two opined that due to lack of confidence they did not think even to contest in general seat. One said that public has no confidence on women to elect in the general seat. They as well as the male representatives simply think the women as the ornament of the council. She also said that the women have to proof their efficiency by hard work.

However, they were asked that whether they have faced any problem regarding election campaign and they answered that they did not face any difficulties.

Opinion about gender discrimination in performing the institutional activities:

In our country women are participating in local government like an apprentice. They are yet to participate in the mainstream of decision-making process, especially in politics. Generally it is observed that women are discriminated in different aspects of their life. Therefore, it is important to investigate with the extent to which women representatives are discriminated. Table 7.2 demonstrates whether the women representatives are discriminated or not.

Table-7.2: Opinion of women representatives about gender discrimination in performing activities

Opinion	No. of total respondents	Percentage
Discriminated	07	100%
Not discriminated	-	-

From the above table it is observed that all the respondents of Mymensingh Pourashava feel discrimination in performing their responsibilities. The respondents viewed that as they came through direct election, so they have the equal right to participate in performing institutional activities like the male members. But in reality, they did not get the equal opportunity to shoulder the responsibility of LGIs rather felt discrimination. However, the types of discrimination mentioned by the respondents are shown in the following table.

Table-7.3: Types of discrimination faced by the women representatives of LGIs

Types of discrimination	No. total respondents	Percentage
Not evaluated for being elected under reserved seat	05	71.43%
Unequal distribution of project responsibilities	05	71.43%
Unequal distribution in allocation of government grant	07	100%
Excluded from decision making process	05	71.43%
Discrimination regarding membership of important committees	04	57.15%

Note: Respondents were allowed in more than one category

In the above table we have found that 5 respondents have opined they are neither evaluated by the public nor by the male representatives as they are elected under reserved seat. Again five have expressed opinion that they are discriminated in terms of equal distribution of project responsibilities. All of them have opined that they are discriminated in terms of equal distribution in allocation of government grant. Often disputes arise among the male and female representatives. Other five have opined that they remain excluded in terms of decision making and implementation process. Sometimes male members tell them to put their sign after taking decision. Again four have revealed that they are discriminated regarding membership and preside over important committees. Though the Ministry of Local Government has decided to make women, President for each committee, it is not followed or practiced in reality. From the collected data it is seen that the women becomes the member of

the less important committees. In this regard the statement of one respondent (Sharmin Sultana) will help us to get a concrete scene.

Case# 3, Sharmin Sultana:

Sharmin Sultana is a woman of mid thirty. She has two daughters and is widow for three years. Her husband was an army officer. He was doing business after retirement and died by heart-attack. Sharmin Sultana became inspired about politics by her husband. Moreover, from her childhood she was very much conscious about the socio-economic condition of women of our country. Her father's family has political background but they do not like her political involvement. She lives in a flat of her father on fair and serves in a high school of the town side. She is the only higher educated member among all the women representatives of Mymensingh Pourashava and is reliable to the Mayor. In spite of the existence of Panel Mayor-3, she was sent to Kerala of India to take part in a comparative discussion about the role of women representatives of these two countries. She is moderately satisfied with her role in Pourashava. She also maintains a good relationship with the administration. But she has opined that there is a practice of discrimination between male and female representatives. Women are supposed to take part in all aspects of the Council but they have no membership in the important committees. She told that the meetings of standing committee are not held on time. Sometimes it takes four or five months gap between two meetings. According to the legal provisions, meeting should be held once a month but due to Coram crisis (for the absence of male representative) it is not possible to hold on time. Although women remain present in all the meetings of Pourashava, in press conference and in question answering session, they are the victim of discrimination. In allocation of VGD, VGF, TR, Pregnancy allowance of poor women, aged allowance and nutrition allowance for poor children women are extremely victim of discrimination. Where the male representatives get 100 cards for the distribution in one ward, the female representatives get only 30 cards for three wards. Thus, for each ward the ratio is male: female=100: 10. Even the male representatives are not satisfied. They want more cards. Another woman representative opined that not only this, male representatives want that women should not be given any card. Regarding this matter, sometimes disputes arise among male and female representatives. Once, Sharmin Sultana had scolded a male representative on this regard. She opined that why will we get fewer cards, we have become elected from three wards, so we should get more cards than the male representatives. Since public expectation is more to us, in this regard our weakness becomes expressed towards them.

However, she was asked why she did not compete from general seat. Then she replied that the time did not come yet. Through a survey she has found that still a woman is not reliable to the general people in such a patriarchal society like ours. At first women have to prove their efficiency through their activities then after achieve the public confidence, they have to compete from general seat. Therefore, she seemed less interested about her responsibility and to come over the Poura-office. She opined that there are no functions rather gossiping. She is ambitious to compete for the Parliamentary reserved seat in future.

Male representatives' behavior patterns to the women representatives of LGIs:

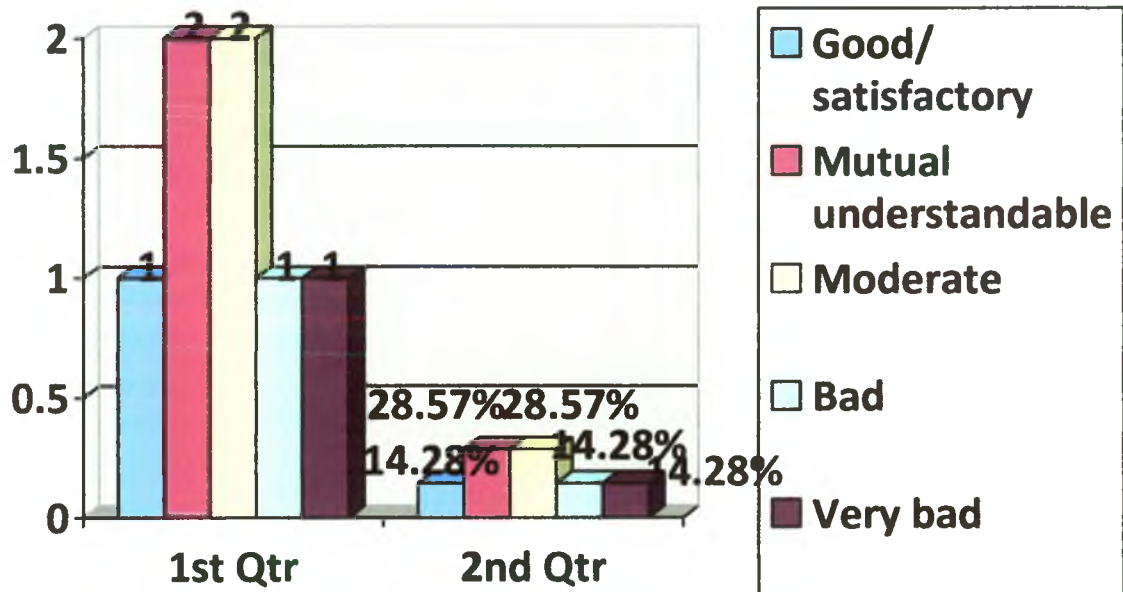
Since, at present both the male and female are elected on the basis of universal adult franchise and as they are considered as colleagues, it is expected that they will obtain equal status and rights in the LGIs. It is also worthy of mention that male members are majority in number in the Mymensingh Pourashava. So, an attempt was made to know the behavioral pattern of the male members towards the women members and data regarding this is presented in table-7.4.

Table-7.4: Pattern of male representatives' behavior towards the female representatives of LGIs

Behavioral pattern	No. of total respondents	Percentage
Good/ satisfactory	01	14.28%
Mutual understandable	02	28.57%
Moderate	02	28.57%
Bad	01	14.28%
Very bad	01	14.28%
Total	07	100%

It has already mentioned that women representatives are extremely discriminated by the male representatives. So the mutual relationship among them is not satisfactory. On this regard among 7 respondents only 1 has opined that the relationship among their male colleagues is good or satisfactory, another 1 told that bad and another one opined that the relationship is very bad. Other two have opined that the relationship among them is mutual understandable. They have also mentioned that if they (women representatives) do excess then they will get nothing (responsibility, allocation, cards, government grant etc.) from the council and this will not bring any good result for them. In respect to this they maintain a mutual relationship with their colleagues.

Figure 8: Pattern of male members' behaviour to the female members of LGIs



In this regard the statement of one respondent named Khadisa Khanum will provide a transparent scenario in front of us.

Case # 3, *Khadisa Khanum:*

Khadisa Khanom is a forty- year old woman. She has three daughters and one son. The elder daughter is married with a doctor groom and others are students. She lived in her own three storied building in Mymensingh town. Khadisa Khanom is a widow; her husband died three years ago. She was born in a prosperous family of her village near Mymensingh town. Her family does not have any political background but her father has worked to settle the disputes in the village and come forward to help the villagers. From her childhood, she was grown up in such a family that she also desired to do something for the people. She got married with such a person who was also very popular. From the desire to do something for the local people she wanted to participate as a candidate of the Union Parishad election under the reserved seat in 1997. But this desire was not fulfill as the date of submission of the nomination paper was over by that time. Later, in 1999 the circulation of the election of Mymensingh Pourashava was published and she decided to participate for the reserved seat. Her husband also inspired her and for the campaign of the election he sold one piece of his land in Mymensingh town. But she could not pass that time. In 2004 again she took part under the reserved seat but that time also she could not pass; in the competition her position was second. In 2011 again she stands as a contestant. Her election manifesto was development of the locality, arrangement for women

employment and always to help the local people like a friend. Along with her son-in-law she worked hard in her election campaign. As a result she passed in this election. After the election she is playing an important role in the development of her locality besides the male representatives. She has established 17 Km. long water pipe line in her locality, among 55 Km of the whole Mymensingh town under the project of Ward Level Coordination Committee (WLCC) & Town Level Coordination Committee (TLCC) of ADB. Besides, she is working as a secretary of Women and Development under Municipal Association of Bangladesh (MAB). Apart from this, she is keeping an important role in settling the trivial disputes of her locality. She is fully concern about her duties, responsibilities, rights as well as the manual of pourashava. She works in a mutual understanding with the male representatives of the pourashava because most of them are locally influenced. If she over powers them, it will create a bad impression in her duties and in the next election. In addition to this, they (male representatives) also respect her. But she has opined that if the male representatives get chance, they show negative impression about women representatives in front of public. In respect to this, she told that women should increase attachment with public and should talk openly about their (women representatives) power. She opined that if women wish, they can play important role in the Council. She mentioned that there was no separate room and toilet for women in the Pourashava; through Mayor she has arranged these for the women. She also told that if Panel mayor- 3 wants, she can play important role for the development of women representatives. Due to this woman representatives must be united. She is satisfied with her own role. About politics, her aim is to hold the same position in the next election.

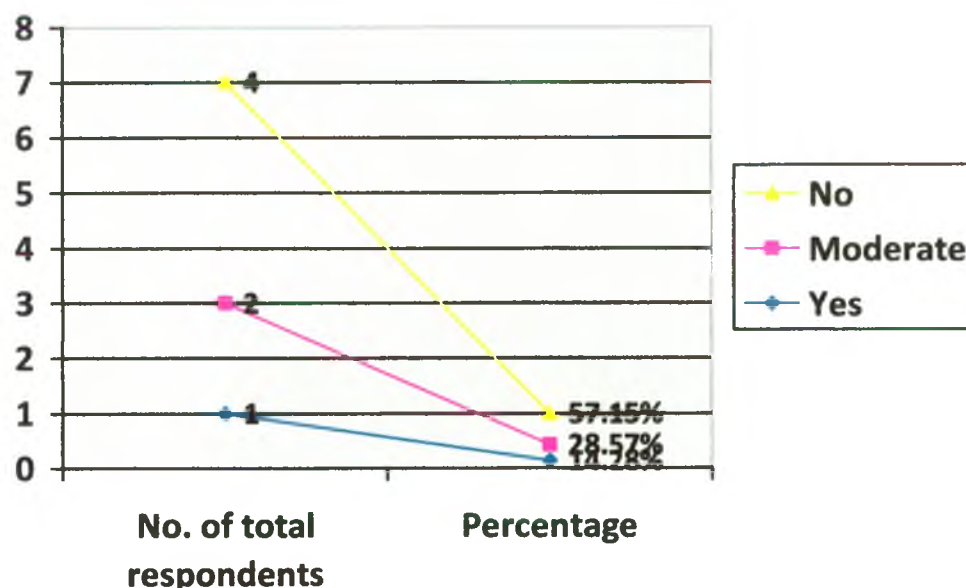
Regarding properly functioning in LGIs by the women representatives:

After being elected, the women members of LGIs faced different problems accomplishing the institutional responsibilities. Data was collected from seven respondents, relating to whether they were able to perform their responsibilities. Two said that they can moderately perform their functions. Other four opined that they cannot perform their functions properly. Only one said that she can perform her duties properly. In this regard following table is presented.

Table-7.5: Regarding properly functioning in LGIs by the women representatives:

Opinion	No. of total respondents	Percentage
Yes	01	14.28%
Moderate	02	28.57%
No	04	57.15%
Total	07	100%

Figure 9 : Regarding Properly Functioning in LGIs by the Women Representatives



Reasons of inability to perform the activities of LGIs:

However, they were further asked that why they cannot properly perform their activities. Data regarding is performed below:

Table-7.6: Reasons of inability to perform the activities of LGIs

Reasons of inability	No. of total respondents	Percentage
Women are not given important responsibilities	06	85.71%
Responsibilities of women are not clearly mentioned in Pourashava Manual	06	85.71%
Male representatives are more reliable to Mayor	05	71.43%
Negative approach of male representatives	06	85.71%
Lack of self-confidence	-	-

Lack of cooperation of local people	-	-
Women are minority in number	01	14.28%
Administrative in cooperation	03	42.85%

Note: Respondents were allowed in more than one category

From the above table we have found that, and it has already been mentioned that women are not given important responsibilities. As they are women and elected from reserved seats, 06 women told that they are not emphasized by the Mayor and male members. It is also mentioned that responsibilities of women representatives are not clearly mentioned in the Pourashava Manual. For this reason other 6 opined that they are always underestimated by the male representatives. Other 5 women told that male representatives are more reliable to Mayor. Consequently the male representatives get important responsibilities from the Mayor. In fact, the male representatives should be cooperative rather than competitive to the female representatives. But 6 among 7 representatives of Mymensingh Pourashava told that male negatively approach towards them. Again 3 opined that they do not get any cooperation from the administration. Another one has opined that as women are minority in number, so their proposals are rarely passed in the council.

Women representatives' ability to express opinion in the meetings:

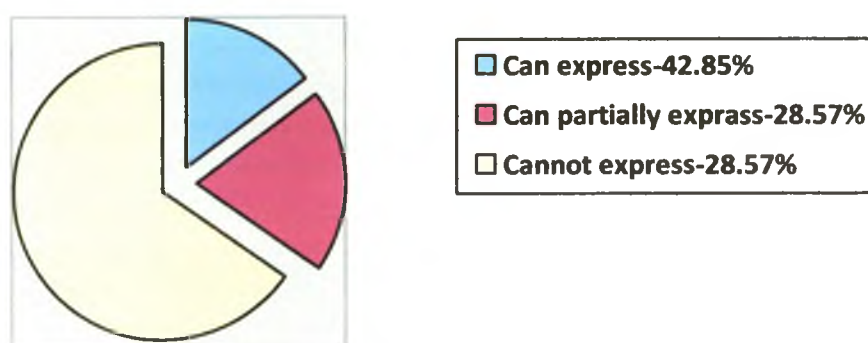
As the constitution of our country guaranteed the equal rights of men and women in all spheres of public life, women representatives of LGIs have the rights to express their opinion equally like the males. Ability to express own opinion may be considered as one of the important indicators of women empowerment. Moreover the male members are elected from one ward, whereas each of the women members is elected from three wards. Therefore, logically they have more rights to express their opinions in the meetings as compared to male members. But in reality, it is observed that their opinions were not generally taken into consideration by the male members. Before 1997, the women members were nominated by the male members. In respect to this their status in the institution was also dependent. But with the local government election 1997, when women members were directly elected then situation has been changed in some extent. As they are directly elected since 1997, they have the right to overcome the dependent status and supposed to have the right to overcome the dependent status and supposed to have the right to exercise their freedom of expressing opinion. So in the following table it is presented that, whether they are able to express their opinion freely or not.

Table-7.7: Ability to express opinion in the meeting

Opinion	No. of total respondents	Percentage
Can express	03	42.85%
Can partially express	02	28.57%
Cannot express	02	28.57%

From the above table we have found that three respondents opined that they can express opinion. Two other opined that they can partially express their opinion but their opinion is not so evaluated. Two respondents said that they cannot express opinion. Therefore, it has been also presented by the following pie chart.

Figure 10: Respondents ability to express opinion in the meeting



However, they were also asked that, whether the male members do any meeting in absence of them. All of them said that the male representatives often do meeting in absence of women representatives.

Whether women representatives' opinion in meeting is honored or not:

The women representatives were asked that, whether the opinion given by them is honored or not. Three women representatives said that their opinion is partially evaluated. Four other representatives said that, their opinion is not honored at all. Subsequently, they were again asked that if their opinion is not honored in that case what is done. In regard this opinion is presented in the following table.

Table-7.8: Acts done by male representatives after dishonoring women representatives' opinion:

Acts done after dishonoring women representatives' opinion	Total no. of respondents	Percentage
Decision of male representatives forcefully applied on women	7	100%
Presence of women in meeting as puppet	5	71.43%
Women are not call in all meetings	4	57.15%
Have to put signature in spite disagreeing with male	6	85.71%

Note: Respondents were allowed in more than one category

From the above data it is found that all the respondents have opined that they don't equally take part in decision making rather the decision taken by male representatives are forcefully applied on women. Six respondents have opined that in spite of disagreeing with male representatives they have to put signature on the decisions taken by them (male representatives). Five have opined that as women cannot express opinion freely and confidently, they present in meetings just like puppet and other four have opined that they are not called in all meetings. Sometimes Mayor Calls on meeting with male members and taking decision women are told to put their signature.

Reasons of women's less participate in the general election of Mymensingh Pourashava:

The women representatives of Mymensingh Pourashava were asked why the general women are less interested and discouraged to participate under general seat in the election of the Pourashava. Their opinions are presented in the following table:

Table-7.9: Reasons of women's less participation in the general election:

Opinion of women representatives	Total respondents	Percentage
Influence of local influential persons	3	42.85%
Difficult to pass contesting with male	2	28.57%
Traditional thinking and less expectation of women	1	14.28%
Less confidence of public towards women	3	42.85%
Comparatively male are more efficient than female	2	28.57%

Note: Respondents were allowed in more than one category

From the above data it is found that the male representatives of Mymensingh Pourashava are more influential, efficient as well as experienced. So, it is tougher to pass in election by women contesting with them. In our country the mentality and thinking of women are still traditional as well as our socio-economic condition and patriarchal society still does not support women to be involved in politics. The mentality of common people is also traditional and still they want to see the male as model of their political leader. Moreover, the people as well as some of the women representatives themselves think that some male representatives are more efficient. As a result of this the educated, efficient and women of the well to families are less interested to be involved in politics.

Suggestions on women’s effective participation LGIs (Mymensingh Pourashava):

In order to increase women’s participation in local government politics, various initiative should be adopted to integrate them into political mainstream, so that they can take part in decision-making process from grass root level which may be considered as the first and foremost step towards women empowerment. For developing awareness and consciousness about the political participation to mainstream women in local as well as national levels, the existing shortcomings in local government system should be removed. New rules and regulations should be introduced and implemented to increase women’s participation in LGIs in future.

However, data was collected from women representatives, male representatives and from hundred conscious inhabitants of 21 wards of Mymensingh Pourashava through prescribed questions how to improve the present situation of women representatives. In this context, data has been presented in the following table 6.10, 6.11 and 6.12.

Table-7.10: Suggestions given by women representatives on women’s effective participation in LGIs:

Suggestions	Total respondents	percentage
Political party should affiliate women with the political mainstream	4	57.15%
Family should support and encourage women	2	28.57%
Public confidence towards women should be increased	2	28.57%
Women should be more educated and conscious about their right and duties	3	42.85%
The male representatives should be more helpful and cooperative rather than competitive	6	85.71%
Women representatives should be more active and show their performance to the local people	4	57.15%

Women should be more eager about their duties and responsibilities	2	28.57%
Government should encourage and facilitate to establish women's equal rights	7	100%
Administration should be friendly to help women representatives in any situation	2	28.57%
Training opportunity should be increased by GOs and NGOs for capacity building of women representatives	6	85.71%
Various seminar and symposium should be arranged by the council to increase awareness among women representatives	2	28.57%
Traditional and patriarchal mentality of our society should be changed	1	14.28%

Note: Respondents were allowed in more than one category

Therefore, how can the situation of women representatives are improved? Asking this question data was also collected from the male representatives. It was not possible to collect data from all the male representatives, because they did not receive the researcher cordially. Out of 21 representatives, only two have provided their suggestions. These are as follow:

Table-7.11: Suggestions given by male representatives on women's effective participation in LGIs:

Suggestions	Total respondents	Percentage
Women representatives should get the opportunity to exercise power like the male representatives	01	4.76%
Centrally women should be given power to accelerate their empowerment	01	4.76%
Total	21(100)	9.52% (100%)

Data was also collected from 100 conscious voters of Mymensingh Pourashava asking them, the suggestions about how to improve the overall situation of the women representatives. Data is presented in the following table.

Table-7.12: Suggestions given by mass people on women's effective participation in LGIs:

Suggestions	No. of total respondents	Percentage
Women representatives should be more attached with the people in performing their responsibilities	22	22%
At first women representatives should know their own rights and obligations then they have to work for public interest	15	15%
Women should be given the opportunity to work individually and separately like the man	10	10%
Women empowerment should be increased and improved	8	8%
Women's activities should be evaluated and awarded by the pourashava as well as government	7	7%
To arrange various seminar, symposium and workshop to increase awareness among women about their rights	5	5%
To arrange frequent training about the rights and duties of women representatives	10	10%
To make provisions regarding the accountability of women representatives	2	2%
Educated women should be encouraged to come forward	20	20%
To know about the activities of LGIs of other countries, frequent training for women should be arranged by government.	1	1%
Total	100	100%

From the above table it is found that majority numbers of respondents 22% have opined that women representatives should be more attached with the people in performing their responsibilities. 20% have opined that educated women should be encouraged to come

forward to participate in LGIs. Other 15% have express their opinion that at first women representatives should know their own rights and obligations then they have to work for public interest. Other 10% have opined respectively that women should be given the opportunity to work individually and separately like the man and should arrange frequent training about the rights and duties of women representatives so that they can perform smoothly in the activities of LGIs. 8% and 7% have respectively opined that women empowerment should be increased and improved as well as women's activities should be evaluated and awarded by the pourashava and by the government. Other 5% and 2% have respectively opined that government should arrange various seminar, symposium and workshop to increase awareness among women about their rights and should also make provisions regarding the accountability of women representatives. Another 1% has opined that women should let to know about the activities of LGIs of other countries and frequent training for women should be arranged by government.

Chapter: 08

Conclusion and Recommendations

Participation of women in Local Government Politics is one of the most important as well as burning issues in our country now a day. In order to ensure women's equal rights in the socio-economic and political aspect, their participation in this sphere bears great importance to all especially to women, because without equal participation of women in LGIs, it is not possible to improve their position. It is mentionable that women of our country are still lagging behind in respect of social status, education, equal right, employment, politics etc. It is expected that women's greater participation in the decision making process including politics from grass root level may have positive influence on establishing their equal right. The expected result will come on this regard only when women will be able to express their needs, demands and expectation in the formulation of planning through participation in LGP. The government of Bangladesh has already introduced the provision of reserved seats for women in local government with the view to integrating them in decision making process from grass root level. The government has also provided a major opportunity to include provision to ensure greater participation by women in local government responsiveness of local government authorities to women's interest and needs. On this aspects the Local Government Act of 1997, is considered as milestone on women's empowerment. Through this Act the system of direct election for women was introduced for the first time. Women have acquired a legitimacy space in LGI that can raise their position in this institution. It is important to know the extent to which the system of women's participation in LGP contributes to women's development and also to what extent they are able to perform significant role in Local Governance. In this light the study tried to investigate the issues related to women's participation in local government as well as in decision-making and implementation process in LGP especially of Mymensingh Pourashava.

The respondents of this study are in the age of 35 to 60 years. It is observed that most of the respondents are of middle aged, normally the young generation is not interested enough to take politics as their career. Though all of them are married but most of them are widow. All of the respondents are educated minimum up to SSC and maximum up to Post graduation. It is expected that the educated representatives will be more efficient, confident and courageous to take part in decision-making process side by side the male members. The occupational pattern of the respondents represents that 71.42% are involved with occupation such as school teaching or house tutorship through which they have earning source (including receiving honorees from LGIs). As involvement in government service is considered as disqualification for candidature, respondents were found in non- government organizations. Finding shows that almost all the respondents are important in some cases only one earning person of their families and some of them are not too solvent economically. Most of them have land property in Mymensingh town. At the time of data collection it is observed that as most of the respondents are widow or separated from husband, they are the important person or guardian of their family to take decision at household level. If women become

economically solvent and independent, they gradually gain the decision-making power, which will ultimately pave the way for their empowerment.

Data regarding respondent's husband's education and occupation indicates that majority comes from educated families. It is observed that if the women representatives have family and party affiliation, they are counted by the Mayor as well as the male members. Most of the respondent's husband was businessman, one's husband lives in abroad and information about two is unmentioned.

In this study a brief account of the respondent's political background was presented for the better understanding of their involvement in LGP. It was assumed that experience would keep an important role for women to properly implementation of their responsibilities and taking part in decision-making process. From the study it was found that almost all the respondents have involvement in politics or their families have political background. It is also found that majority did not have previous experience as local government representative and they have mentioned that experience did not bears much importance to participate in LGP. The voters have already tested those who are experienced in this field. But the expectation of the community people is generally high towards the newcomers in terms of their contribution. As a result, the newcomers are also working hard to show their performance so that they can be elected in next term. Now days, election increasing women's awareness regarding participation in politics, in this connection, respondent's opinion tends to indicate that the traditional notion of experience needed for women's participation in politics has lost its apple. Women are gradually acquiring the capability to face the challenges of participating in politics where previous experience is not an important factor.

However, involvement in political parties is considered as one of the important factors for participation in politics. From the collected data it is found that 85.71% respondents have political involvement and other 14.29% is supporters of any leading political parties. So it can be said that a positive relation between political party involvement and being elected was found in urban areas. It is also found that the representatives of ruling party seem busier with the activities of the council.

From the traditional view point it is also found that women participants in politics are generally the legend of their family members who were involved in politics. Information regarding respondent's family members' participation in LGP shows that the aforesaid notion is strong enough as all the respondents' family either of parent's family side or of husband's family side are involved in politics.

Respondents were found to participate in LGP for several reasons. All of them have consent that they have participated in LGP mainly to do public welfare, to establish the right of women and for women's development. They think it is the only way to put forth women's problems in front of proper authority, which will enable them to participate in the development process for the betterment of women.

It has already been mentioned that women are generally supposed to be confined within the household domain and in rearing up children. Their entrance into the public domain largely

depends on their family supports. If women get necessary support and assistance from their respective families, they can gain the encouragement to confront the barriers. From the study it is found that most of them have received support from their families and relatives and from local people also in terms of logistic and financial support in election campaign. So, logistic support of the families plays an important role to encourage morally the participants. Family support bears a good impact on women's participation in LGP, which also indicates the changing positive attitude towards women's greater participation in politics.

The study reveals that, some women participants faced some other problems in LGP. At first, the problem they have to face is contesting in general seats. It is mentioned in the earlier that all the women representatives of Mymensingh Pourashava are elected under reserved seats. Question arises whether they thought or tried to compete from general seat. 71.43% respondents have replied that in spite of having interest they could not contest from general seat as the male contestants have discouraged them. But most of them did not face any discouragement from the aged relatives of their family. People's outlook about women's participation in politics is changing day by day which inspires women to participate in LGP. For participation in political activities mobility of the candidates is necessary. Mobility helps women participants to ensure their identity in the locality which is mandatory for participation in election and being elected. It is only possible when women become involved in outdoor activities. Some respondents have opined that it is another cause for women not to participate in election under general seat. Most of the participants have opined that education was not constraint for them to participation and being elected in LGIs.

In our country, generally women voters could not cast their votes according to their own will as their male relatives, especially their husbands influenced them. In case of Mymensingh Pourashava election-2011, it was found that a vast majority of female voters' presence was observed. Therefore, it was also found that the women participants themselves have participated in election campaign. In some cases they have taken help from relatives and they could also apply their own opinion in campaigning. This tends to indicate that the state of their mobility exercise of self- decision, ability to approach female as well male voters. While they were approaching the voters they used to do this according to their own decisions.

They reported that they did not face any obstacle at the time of campaign. It implies the positive attitude of the community people towards women's self-participation in election campaign like the males. From discussion made regarding the nature of women's participation and face problems in participation in LGP, It becomes clear that women participants ability to spent money and time, exercise decision-making power, self-participation, freedom of expressing views in election campaign- all these factors ultimately indicate their enhanced empowered position.

It was also observed that in spite of many limitations, women representatives had the interest and sincerity to perform their roles properly for the betterment of the people, especially of women. 42.85% respondents opined that they are fully aware of the functions of different standing committees of LGIs. Other 42.85% respondents opined that they are moderately aware on this regard. They reported that, as the meetings of standing committees do not held

on time, some of them neither could recollect about their membership in different standing committees nor have adequate knowledge about the committees. Almost all of them are member of comparatively less important standing committees like violence on women resistance committee, health and family planning committee, social welfare committee, fisheries and live-stock committee, slum development committee etc. Few of them have got the membership of license, inspection of market price, audits and accounts, judiciary committee, tax assessment and collection, finance and establishment committees etc. 85.71% have opined that they did not get any president ship of any standing committee. Information regarding women representatives attending in meetings of LGIs shows that all of them that mean 100% participate in any meeting if they are informed on time. But sometimes Mayor and other male representatives intentionally try to avoid them by not informing about some secret meetings. But the women representatives were found very particular and interested to participate in meetings, as they wanted and eager to take part in decision-making process. The women representatives through their involvement in various food assistance development programs (VGF, VGD, TR, Uthan Boithok, activities of CBO) performed important roles for the upliftment of the condition of the condition disadvantaged women. On this aspect, 100% respondents opined that they uphold the problems of their locality in council meetings but most of them remain unsolved. Although their involvement is satisfactory, most of the respondents opined that they do not get project responsibility proportionately to the male representatives. However the women representatives hoped that if there were any clear provision of government on this aspect, they could properly satisfactorily contribute to women's development as well as the development of whole community.

In regard to the roles played by the women representatives, findings show that they tried to perform active roles but due to the male members non cooperative attitude all of them are not successful to do so. In the meetings, the majority of women representatives raises problems of the locality; participate in the discussion of undertaking development project and protest if their opinion were neglected. According to the male domination in LGIs is still so strong that cannot participate in decision-making process.

In respect to protest violence against women, increasing awareness against women oppression, makes awareness among women to be self-dependent, settlement of disputes in conjugal life etc. in these aspects women representatives work. But due to lack of proper scope and opportunity, their contribution to overall development of women is not very significant. It was also observed that lack of proper distribution of development projects, the male members' control and dominance on resource, women's less accessibility to the resources made respondents unsuccessful in fulfilling the expectations of the locality people.

In the LGIs, women representatives have to cope with different types of problems. Most of the respondents reported that the behavior pattern of the male members towards them was not cooperative rather than competitive. Some them complained that they were considered as only the ornamental members by the male-members. Accordingly, most of them do not get any importance from the male representatives. It is mentionable that 100% female respondents felt discrimination in terms of not receiving equal status, equal distribution of

projects responsibilities, and inclusion of decision making process and allocation of distribution.

Women representatives reported that they faced various problems in performing their responsibilities. The most important problems are non-clarified responsibilities for women member, unequal distribution of development projects and non-acceptance of opinions mentionable. Women representatives of LGIs recommended that in addition to female education and financial dependency, government facilities and encouragement are necessary for women political empowerment. Women representatives, the civil society of the pourashava and male representatives have recommended different suggestions for women's effective participation in LGIs such as equal distribution of development projects among male and female members. specific and clarified role allocation for the female representatives, enhancement of honorees, upliftment of female education, male-members' cooperation, increasing social awareness for establishment of women's right, and facilitating government initiative and opportunity to participate in training program.

The participants of LGP expressed their future plane of participation in different levels of electoral politics. Most of them have opined that they want participate in election from same post. Only has opined that she wants to contest for reserved seat of Parliament. Almost all of them did not dare to contest from general seat and some of them did not think of it.

From the analysis of preceding chapters on women's participation in LGP and their role performance in LGIs it can be concluded that women participants are trying to acquire political consciousness, and empowerment through the process of their participation in LGP. As a result of their participation in direct election they are getting involved in election campaign where they have to maintain communication both with male and female voters. This kind of public relation enables them to express their opinions freely, increase self-participation in out-door activities and also increase their level of awareness about women's equal rights. However, it is also mentionable that everywhere men are more visible in politics than women. A number of obstacles have kept the representation of women in government and politics low. But the women representatives of Mymensingh Pourashava are conscious about rights; they are vocal and protest against discrimination.

After participating in the process of election, those who are elected as representatives could play some roles for women development although the scope is very limited. It may mentionable that participation of women representatives in development projects, especially the schemes related to financial responsibilities is also very scanty. There is no government restriction to allot this type of activities to the women members of LGIs, but due to male members' disinterest in this matter women do not get the opportunity. In spite of the limited scope for contributing to the welfare and development of women, they are very much enthusiastic and eager to perform active roles in this regard. It is noticed that women participants are more or less able and some of them are efficient enough to exercise their rights in the process of performing political activities like election campaign. But it becomes quite difficult for them to exercise their equal rights in the activities of LGIs.

In the light of this study, some recommendations are suggested to help formulate appropriate policies for the government and other concerns which will hopefully be able to reduce the existing problems in women's participation in decision making and implementation process in Local Government politics. In this aspect besides the government organizations, NGO, civil society and media can play an important role.

1. Roles and responsibilities of the women representatives should be clearly defined in the manuals and orders of local government. Work should be fairly distributed among the male and female councilors in such a way so that women members can meaningfully participate in all types of functions.
2. To create greater awareness among women about their low status in society and the need to prove it, motivational programs along with programs for expanding opportunities for education, health care and employment should be launched.
3. Specific programs should be undertaken by the government and non-government organizations in order to create an awareness among the women in the root levels that political participation would give them an access to the political decision making process relating to the allocation of resources.
4. Mass media should be used to educate and mobilize public opinion in such a way that the realization about the benefits of women's full participation in the national development efforts is created among people.
5. Priority must be given to monitoring the status, conditions and rights of women. There must be a sustained campaign for women mobilization, regular reporting of monitoring, public information and advocacy in this realm.
6. Women should be given various opportunities for leadership training, training regarding the activities of pourashava and education in order to encourage them to encourage them to take up political and leadership positions. Supportive services should be provided to allow women to participate in these training courses.
7. There is an urgent need to undertake research on women's participation in politics, their voting behavior, consciousness and participation in the political parties.
8. Female as well as mass education should be expanded and accelerated to develop consciousness, social awareness and positive attitude towards women's rights and their participation in public sphere.
9. Patriarchal mentality of our society should be changed. Women should get their due status from the society. Politics should be influenced free and should not be male dominated so that women can participate freely both in reserved and general seats.
10. Equal opportunity for women education should reach rapidly door to door. Educated and conscious women have to come forward with full enthusiasm to make to take part in election of LGIs. In respect to social environment should be friendly and favorable.

11. As it is observed that economic independence is one of the pre-requisite of participation in electoral politics, government should take proper initiatives to create employment opportunities or introduce various income earning activities for women.
12. Attitudinal change of the male representatives of the LGIs should be essential towards women participation in LGIs. The male members must be cordial in receiving the opinions of the women representatives and give them the opportunity to express their opinions. To develop positive attitude regarding this, some training programs or workshops should be arranged for the male members of LGIs.
13. To reduce discrimination in participation of different projects or membership in different standing committees, allocation of specific work responsibilities should be mentioned and clarified in Local Government manual properly.
14. A number of training programs or workshop on “the roles and responsibility of women members in LGIs and their inclusion in decision-making process” should be arranged for the women members of LGIs to enhance their knowledge in this regard.
15. Honorarium of the members of the LGIs should be increased. Especially every women member has to work for three wards. They have to visit the vast constituencies, which need financial support to meet up conveyance expenses.
16. Administrative assistance should be ensured to the women members whenever they seek help to the administration in relation to solve any problem of their localities.
17. Media can play an important role to create awareness and public opinion in the society regarding women’s political participation.

However, merely having women on councils does not automatically mean that the interests of women in the community are represented. Without women’s needs and interests being taken into account, without opportunity for them to participate in and influence decision-making, development interventions and planning sustainable results will not come. Finally it can be said that provision of inclusion of directly elected women members have created a new avenue to participate in the decision-making process in the only democratic institution at the grass-root level.

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