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**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND DEMOCRACY
IN BANGLADESH:
A CASE STUDY OF A UNION PARISHAD**

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

Dhaka University Libran



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BY

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UNIVERSITY OF DHAKA
DHAKA, BANGLADESH**

MARCH - 2003



M.Phil.

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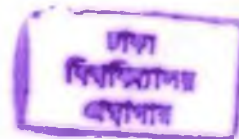
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MARCH - 2003



DECLARATION

I do hereby declare that the thesis entitled “**Local Government and Democracy in Bangladesh: A Case Study of a Union Parishad**” prepared and presented by me to the Dhaka University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Philosophy degree is an original work of mine which has been done during the study period. The thesis has not been presented in any form to any other academic institutions for any degree or any other purpose.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled "*LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND DEMOCRACY IN BANGLADESH: A CASE STUDY OF A UNION PARISHAD*" in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the degree of *MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY* in Political Science prepared under my direct supervision by *MOST. SHAHIDA BEGUM* has been completed during the period prescribed under M. Phil Ordinance.

This is her original work. It does not contain any conjoint research work or analysis with me or any other else.

 - 27/07/03
(DR. DALEM CH. BARMAN)
SUPERVISOR

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Professor and Chairman
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PREFACE

Basically Bangladesh is rural in nature. It is one of the least developed countries in the world. Agriculture is the mainstay of Bangladesh economy. It is also the largest and most important sector in the economy of Bangladesh. It provides not only food and raw materials but also employment to large section of people.

The agricultural sector alone provides employment and work for the majority of people in Bangladesh. In 1997, about 68.5% of the working population were engaged in agriculture and allied agro-industries. The place of agriculture in the economy is well reflected in the proportion of contribution to the GDP of the country. No other sector separately comes anywhere close to this. The share of agriculture in total GDP was 49.8% in 1972-73. However it declined to 31.50% in 1998/99.

Local government has been identified as an institution for development throughout the world. The recent trend of decentralization adds more importance to the existing local government system. It is perhaps the most recent political realization and administrative development in all countries that the strengthening of local government is not necessary only for execution of governmental policy but also for involving people of all spheres of society in the formulation of the development policies as well as in their execution. Bangladesh is no exception to this.

At present, the term local government is very significant for its character. The local government is more concerned with "social consumption" that is allocation of plots of land, regulation and provision of education, primary health and transportation and market stalls etc. Local government is weaker than Central government, in case of resource allocation; job security and functionaries. Generally the Central government is found insensitive with the real needs of ordinary people. The local government is subordinate to the Central government. It however, enjoys a statutory status, it has the power to raise finance through taxation in the area under its jurisdiction; it has the freedom to act

independently of central control. The most important aspect of the local government is its scopes for development of democratic system. Democracy of local people in decision-making in specified aspects gives a major role to the local level government.

Local government can help speed up the decision making process and provide prompt services to the people. It can also help bringing effective co-ordination and cheap administration. This is an age of democratic control, decentralization of administration, local level participation in planning and “bottom-up” development against the backdrop of increasing difficulties faced by Central governments. The importance of local government can hardly be overemphasized. Local government facilities are two-way communication between higher and lower levels of government. It contributes to diffusion of power, national solidarity and democracy by promoting diversification and deconcentration of political activity, by setting up yet another centre of political experience and by acting as a safety valve, allowing steam off at the local level. In any case, it is not possible for the national government to perform all the multifarious functions arisen in a modern state. So, functions of local government became necessary in the modern state. The local government’s existence is also considered more efficient.

Local government is one of the important institutions that constitute improved democracy. The institutional form of democracy can be attained through participation of local people in various activities. In the context of Bangladesh, local government system has been significantly changed to enable people’s representation to play an effective role in the local development effort. The study attempts to analyze the existing pattern of local government and identify its role to develop infrastructure facilities. The main objectives of the study are mentioned below in detail.

✓ The study is to examine the functions of local government in Bangladesh to focus its role in the establishment, management and stability of democracy. It will investigate on legal provisions, composition, activities of the local government system and its interactions with people, other levels of government and agencies including NGOs.

Keeping in view of limitations of researcher, the study has been confined to the local government i.e. a union. In order to make the study intensive and purposeful, it has been limited to selected union of Banaripara Thana under Barisal District only, which is an important union of Banaripara Thana and where is still a subsistence attempt to build up democracy.

This thesis is divided in to six chapters. Chapter-one gives a brief overview of the local government, conceptual framework, scope of the study. Chapter-two presents objectives of the study, methodology, chapter scheme and limitation of the study. Chapter-three brings out the historical background of the local bodies in Bangladesh along with the relevant regime motivation. Chapter-four concentrates on the empirical findings from the study area. Chapter-five presents the problems of the study area with UP activities. Chapter-six is the concluding one, presents a brief summary of the findings and recommendations.

The author fervently hopes that identification of local bodies' problems and the suggestions made therein will help bring about a significant improvement in local government and democracy to the benefits of the government, other researchers, political persons and ultimately the union parishad as a whole.

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First and foremost I express my sincere respect and profound gratitude to my guide Dr. Dalem Ch. Barman, Professor in Political Science and Chairman of the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Dhaka, Dhaka, Bangladesh for his constant suggestions, guidance and help in the course of my research work. I am immensely benefited from stimulating advice, which I used to have with him otherwise it would not have been possible for me to complete this work. It was indeed my good fortune to have had such an able and devoted guide.

From the inception of the idea to the study the local government and democracy to the time of my submission of this thesis, I have received help from many people and institutions. Though I express my deep feelings and their names individually but I must mention a few names whose help and cooperation has been of immense helpful to me. I am extremely grateful to my teacher Professor Dr. Ataur Rahman, Department of Political Science, University of Dhaka, for his constant valuable suggestions and discerning comments on my thesis. I am thankful to all teachers of Political Science Department, University of Dhaka for their encouragement in the completion of this work.

I have also discussed with many working people in this field and shared my ideas with them. Their suggestions, experiences and written materials on the subject have been very much helpful in giving me the insights into the problems and steer the thesis appropriately.

I am extremely grateful to my husband Dr. Abul Kalam Azad, Assistant Professor, Department of Marketing, University of Chittagong, who helped me a lot during the time of my thesis work. He has always been cooperative and provided every support to me. I shared many of my ideas with him. My daughter Momo Azad and son Mehmood Azad Samrat have suffered a lot of problems during study period. I feel sorry that I could not take proper care of them for a long time.

My sincere thanks are also due to Mr. Fuad Hasan who has borne the pains of typing the thesis.

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Dhaka

Date: 23.03.03.

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CHAPTER# 1

AN OVERVIEW OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1.1: Introduction

Basically Bangladesh is rural in nature. It is one of the least developed countries in the world. Agriculture is the mainstay of Bangladesh economy. It is also the largest and most important sector in the economy of Bangladesh. It provides not only food and raw materials but also employment to large section of people (GOI-1976:1).

The agricultural sector alone provides employment and work for the majority of people in Bangladesh. In 1997, about 68.5% of the working population were engaged in agriculture and allied agro-industries (SYB of BD - 1997, BBS, P. XXV). The place of agriculture in the economy is well reflected in the proportion of contribution to the GDP of the country. No other sector to the separately comes anywhere close to this. The share of agriculture in total GDP was 49.8% in 1972-73. However it declined to 31.50% in 1998/99 (BER- 1996, BBS:6-9).

With a population of 114 million in an area of 1,47,570 km²; with GNP per capita at US \$ 250 in 1995 and a human development index score of 135, Bangladesh remains as one of the poorest and most densely populated countries. Rapid population growth, high level demand for employment, underemployment, widespread malnutrition and hunger, increasingly growing inequality stand out as the current socio-economic profile of Bangladesh (Nazneen-2000:2). Since her independence in 1971, the situation has not improved much in spite of government efforts during last three decades. 51 percent of the total population in Bangladesh live below the poverty line (BBS-1998), most of them suffer from malnutrition, and they are in a dire state in terms of housing, clothing, health facilities and education.

Government of Bangladesh have devolved various strategies in the rural areas through local bodies for boosting food production, building economic infrastructure, creating conditions for better public health and spreading literacy through the means, both formal and informal, due to more deep-seated and depressing section of place (Rahman et al 1992). For this purpose a number of initiatives have been taken to revitalize the system of local government, so that it can play a role in the process of rural transformation and removal of poverty. Among these institutions, the Basic Democracy System (1959), the District Governorship Scheme (1975), the Swanirvar Gram Sarkar (1981), the Upazila Decentralization (1982) are noteworthy. Each of them is different from the other both in context and content but all of them have had the officially advocated objective of fabricating an effective local government system for planning and implementation of development

programs at the local levels through participation of local people in various activities like removal of contrasts between the development and underemployment, high rate of population growth and low agricultural productivity and so on (Hoque, 1973: 19). It is acute in rural areas. As a result, this question of rural development has become the key issue to the policy makers and planners etc. The local government systems working with large scale local people engaged in local bodies, may usher in a new aspect motivating the policy makers to delegate substantially increased power and authority to the local bodies for planning and implementing projects for local level development.

Thus the study of local government is very important. Hence this study has been undertaken. It will examine the working of local government in Bangladesh to focus its role in the establishment, management and stability of democracy. This study will investigate on the legal provision, composition, activities of the local government and its interaction with people, other levels of government and agencies including NGOs.

Local government has been identified as an institution for development throughout the world. The recent trend of decentralization adds more importance to the existing local government system. It is perhaps the most recent political realization and administrative development in all countries that the strengthening of local government is not necessary only for execution of governmental policy but also for involving people of all spheres of society in the formulation of the development policies as well as in their execution. Bangladesh is no exception to this.

The literature on local government is replete with many definitions of local government and democracy. In some countries, the deconcentrated local extensions of the central governments and in some others traditional local structures utilized for supporting field administration have been misconstrued as local government. Sometimes local government has been mistakenly considered as an insignificant segment of the government (Siddiqui-1992:4). To avoid misinterpretation, it is necessary to differentiate local government from local politics and local administration. In this case, local politics is a much wider term and it covers a host of other areas and bodies of local government. On the other hand, local administration indicates implementation of decisions by not only local government institutions but also national or provincial government units operating at the field level. It may be noted here that in South Asia, local government is widely known as local self- government (Siddiqui - 1992: 4).

At present, the term local government is very significant for its character. The local government is more concerned with "social consumption" that is allocation of plots of land, regulation and provision of education, primary health and transportation and market stalls etc. Local government is weaker than Central government, in case of resource allocation, job security and functionaries. Generally the Central government is found insensitive with the real needs of ordinary people (Siddiqui-1992:5). The local government is subordinate to the Central government. It however, enjoys a statutory status, it has the power to raise finance through taxation in the area under its jurisdiction; it has the freedom to act independently of central control (Nazneen-2000: 45). The most important aspect of the local government is its scopes for development of democratic system. Democracy of local people in decision-making in specified aspects gives a major role to the local level government.

Historically local government obviously preceded national government. Man first established his neighborhood management authority, i.e., the village government. The ideological appeal of the decentralized and autonomous local government is derived from the dismal failure in recent times of the central state structures in delivering the fruits of development, allowing distribution of work on a territorial basis, preventing the central bureaucracy from forcing an unhealthy administrative uniformity in the country and facilitating the use of knowledge to local conditions in tackling problems (Siddiqui-1992:6). Local government can help speed up the decision making process and provide prompt services to the people. It can also help bring effective co-ordination and cheap administration. This is an age of democratic control, decentralization of administration, local level participation in planning and "bottom-up" development against the backdrop of increasing difficulties faced by Central governments. The importance of local government can hardly be overemphasized. Local government facilities are two-way communication between higher and lower levels of government. It contributes to diffusion of power, national solidarity and democracy by promoting diversification and deconcentration of political activity, by setting up yet another centre of political experience and by acting as a safety valve, allowing steam off at the local level. In any case, it is not possible for the national government to perform all the multifarious functions arisen in a modern state. So, functions of local government became necessary in the modern state. The local government's existence is also considered more efficient (Siddiqui -1992:7).

Local people who are engaged in various activities such as decision-making, policy formulation and implementation are required to promote social change for the development of rural poor. Local government is only the institution that can ensure local people's participation in all spheres of activities. It plays a vital role to develop democracy in the rural areas. Local government is the most powerful tool through which the development of the rural areas can be achieved. So, the present emphasis is given on involving the local people as active participators in the development activities. Thus, local government plays an important role for democracy for its establishment, continuity and stability. It can be said that democracy entails people's initiative, people's participation and people's vigilance.

1.2: The Contextual Framework

Local government has an important role for democracy for its establishment, continuity and stability. Democracy entails people's initiative, people's participation, and people's vigilance. If people do not come forward spontaneously to participate in the process of administration, to take initiative for appropriate measures in appropriate times and to keep vigilant eyes on the day-to-day happenings, democracy can hardly exist. But for all of these, a congenial environment has to prevail. Local government, being a government most close to the people as well as a government to take care of the local peculiarities, can better work to create and maintain an enabling environment for democracy to prevail. Local government can educate people in general and train leaders in particular. In many countries, many national leaders started their career with local governments.

Basically democracy has been introduced through the participation of villagers in the country-ruling system. Fundamental democracy gives people the right of participation in ruling system. As a result, they get the chance of expressing and demonstrating their own creative faculty for their own affairs. A sound representative institution has been created in Bangladesh through the formation of union council at the grassroots level with huge power and oriented attitude. The formation of democratic government has been enforced / actualized on the basis of this.

If we analyze the functions and different steps of union council, we will find that people have much right in expressive power in case of their combined life-style. Local problems have been solved locally with the help of this. The masses can influence the government activities

through the union council and it raises real feeling, the power of self-establishment and local working power within the masses. Consequently, national development is improved. Actually, democracy gets institutional form through the public participation in country ruling. When the masses form and implement government policies, their latent expectations and needs come to light. Thus democracy can awake and develop people. As a result, people will lead themselves in the way of their interest. Their intellect will be practiced and it will make them more responsible.

Democracy can help the countrymen through the real participation of people. It is admitted that village is the wealth of a country. So, it will bring well for the whole nation if we can engage people for self-well-being by raising their inspiration, hopes and latent power. Union council is the first step of democracy, as people can express their opinion in electing a candidate for union council. Because rustic people can elect a person as they like for their own interest.

Local government means government within an area inside and smaller than the whole state. They are infra-sovereign geographic units contained within a sovereign nation. They have defined area, population and they carry out certain public activities. Duane Lockard defines local government as public organization authorized to decide and administer a limited range of public policies within a relatively small territory, which is a sub-division of a regional or national government (Siddique;1994). On the other hand, local government may be defined as the government at local levels working through the representative councils established by law to exercise specific powers and perform delegated or assigned functions within a definite area.

The study makes a total of the process of local government in Bangladesh. It examines the role of the local government in the establishment, management and stability of democracy.

1.3:Nature and Scope of the Study

The study is designed to study the working system of local government in Bangladesh. It also focuses its role, which is involved in establishment, management and stability of democracy. The study deals with legal provision, composition, activities of local government system and the interaction with people including other levels of government and agencies including NGOs. An attempt is made in this study to identify the level of participation of local people.

The study has been made over for the period from 1999-2000 to 2001-2002. The study has been conducted in one union parishad namely Baisari Union under Banaripara Upazila, Barisal District. The selection of the union was purposive as the union showed a fair participation of local people in local bodies. The respondents include local people, UP chairman/ members and Thana level officers, and NGO workers. Though sample size of the local people is not fully representative in view of the nature of the study but their views on different aspects would be fairly representative.

CHAPTER# 2
OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

2.1: Objectives of the Study

Local government is one of the important institutions that constitute improved democracy. The institutional form of democracy can be attained through participation of local people in various activities. In the context of Bangladesh, local government system has been significantly changed to enable people's representation to play an effective role in the local development effort. The study attempts to analyze the existing pattern of local government and identify its role to develop infrastructure facilities. The main objectives of the study are mentioned below in detail.

The study is to examine the functions of local government in Bangladesh to focus its role in the establishment, management and stability of democracy. It will investigate on legal provisions, composition, activities of the local government system and its interactions with people, other levels of government and agencies including NGOs.

2.2: Methodology of the Study

This study is exploratory in nature. It is based on both primary and secondary data. Where primary data could not be obtained, secondary data had been studied with care to develop possible explanation. Primary data were collected on the basis of field survey from a Union. The study, as stated above, is conducted in a Union namely Baisari Union from Banaripara Upazila/Thana under Barisal District. Other considerations behind the selection of the above study area were:

- i) Better awareness about union parishad activities of the local people. This makes the study more realistic in the sense that detailed data could be collected and analyzed.
- ii) Researcher is familiar with the area and so the collection of primary data became easier, more reliable and less expensive.

The selection of the union was purposive. There are eight unions in Banaripara Upazila/Thana. Since the study is exploratory in nature, a small sample size was considered appropriate for the purpose. The sample included local people, Union Parishad (UP) chairman / members, NGO workers and Thana level officials who were selected purposively. From the area, a sample size of 30 local people who were concerned about Union Parishad was thought feasible. The researcher selected 30 local people from the Union Parishad on the basis of non-probability convenience sampling method. The study is, thus based on the information collected from 30 local people.

The number of chairmen/ members and TL officials were known to researcher but exact member of NGO workers were unknown to the researcher. The researcher selected 10 UP chairmen/ members, 05 NGO workers and 05 TL officials. Selected sample sizes in the study are shown in Table 2.1. Though sample size of the local people and NGO workers are not fully representative in view of the nature of the study, their views on different aspects would be fairly representative.

Table-2.1
Sample Sizes in the Study Area

Respondents	Baisari Union	NGOs			Banaripara Upazila	Total
		Grameen Bank	BRAC	ASA		
Local People	30	-	-	-	-	30
UP Chairmen/Members	10	-	-	-	-	10
NGO Workers	-	01	02	02	-	05
TL Officers	-	-	-	-	05	05
Total	40	01	02	02	05	50

Source: Field Survey

The questioning technique was used to collect primary data. Respondents were questioned in person to obtain their views in the furtherance of the study. One set of structured non-disguised questionnaire was used to obtain factual information and opinion (Appendix). Multiple-choice types of questions were also used to obtain unbiased responses. The specific points, side comments and explanations of the respondents helped the researcher to obtain ideas and views corroborating each other and in the exegesis of the final results. In order to avoid misunderstandings, the respondents were assured that the information provided by them would be kept confidential. The respondents were also given necessary explication during the course of interview and were encouraged to answer accurately to increase the validity of the information. The researcher took every care to reduce the source of biased information. Major sources of non-sampling error were lessened by means of executing fieldwork personally with maximum care.

Nature of sample is shown in Table 2.2. One can easily guess about the sample of the study area. It is found from the Table that most of the respondents were above 45 years of age in the study area. About 73.33% local people, 10% UP chairman/ members, cent percent NGO workers and TL official were educated above secondary. Majority of the local people have been living in the area from the date of birth. On the other hand, cent percent NGO workers and 60% TL official have been living up to 3 years. About 40% local people were engaged in farming and service and 70% UP chairmen/members were engaged in farming and business. It is due to the limited scope of diversification to the other activities.

Table-2.2
Nature of Sample of the Respondents in the Study Area

Variables	Classes	Types of Respondents			
		Local People	UP Chairmen /Members	NGO Workers	TL Officials
Age	20-32 Yr.	16.67%	10.00%	100.00%	--
	33-45 Yr.	10.00%	40.00%	--	20.00%
	Above 46 Yr.	73.33%	50.00%	--	80.00%
Education	Illiterate	--	--	--	--
	Up to primary	10.00%	40.00%	--	--
	Up to secondary	16.67%	50.00%	--	--
	Above secondary	73.33%	10.00%	100.00%	100.00%
How long have you been living in the area	From the date of birth	93.33%	100.00%	--	--
	0-3 Yr.	--	--	100.00%	60.00%
	4-7 Yr.	--	--	--	40.00%
	Above 8 Yr.	6.67%	--	--	--
Occupation	Only Farming	6.67%	--	--	--
	Farming & Business	13.33%	70.00%	--	--
	Farming & Service	40.00%	10.00%	--	--
	Service & Business	10.00%	20.00%	20.00%	--
	Only Service	20.00%	--	80.00%	100.00%
	Only Study	10.00%	--	--	--

Source: Field Survey

2.2.1: Location and Physical Features of the Selected Area

The researcher has selected Baisari Union Parisad under Banaripara Upazilla of Barisal District. Barisal District consists of former Barisal Sadar South and Barisal Sadar North subdivisions. In 1983 the subdivisions were merged and named as Barisal District. It is generally believed that in the remote past this area was famous for big salt godown, which was locally known as Bari salt. The name Barisal is believed to have been derived from the word Bari salt. It is bounded on the north by Madaripur, Shariatpur and Chandpur districts, on the east by Lakshmipur and Bhola districts, on the south by Patuakhali and Barguna districts and on the west by Gopalganj, Pirojpur and Jhalakati districts. It lies between $22^{\circ} 2'$ and $22^{\circ} 52'$ north Latitudes and between $90^{\circ} 01'$ and $90^{\circ} 43'$ east Longitudes. The total area of the district is 2,790,51 sq. km (1077.42 sq. miles) of which 160.38 sq. km is riverine.

Banaripara, the smallest thana of Barisal district in respect of area, came into existence in 1913. Nothing is definitely known about the origin of the thana name. There are different views about the thana name. Some are the opinion that the thana name has been derived from the word Bania meaning businessman, who had a great influence over the present area of the thana. Others believed that a great number of monies (meaning Banar in Bengali) used to live in the present area of the thana and the thana might have derived its name as Banaripara from the word Banar. The thana occupies an area of 136.69 sq. km. including 8.34 sq. km. river area. It is located between $22^{\circ} 45'$ and $22^{\circ} 52'$ north latitudes and between $90^{\circ}02'$ and $90^{\circ}13'$ east longitudes. The thana is bounded on the north and on the east by Wazirpur thana, on the south by Nesarabad thana (Sawrup Kati) of Pirozpur District and Jhalokati Sadar Thana of Jhalokati District and on the west by Nazirpur. Thana of Perozpur District.

The thana consists of one municipality, 8 unions, 3 wards, 79 mauzas, 10 mahallahs and 79 villages. The average population of union, ward, mauza, mahallah and village are 16,993, 2,628, 1,765, 788 and 1,765 respectively. The names of the eight unions are Banaripara, Baisari, Bisarkandi, Chakhar, Illuhar, Saliabakpur, Saidkati and Udaykati. The social infrastructure of Banaripara is modest with 03 colleges including one Govt. College, 30 high schools, 127 primary schools, 15 madrasas, 02 hospital and health complex and a cinema hall, 07 commercial banks are

also operating in the thana. The literacy rate is 46.1 percent for both sexes of which literacy rate of the male is 51.1 percent and 40.9 percent for female.

In Banaripara thana, 65.83% of the dwelling households own and 34.17% do not own agricultural land. The thana has a population of 1,51,873 of which 76,946 are males and 74,927 are females. The sex ratio of the thana is 103 males per 100 females. Table 2.3 shows a clear picture of Banaripara Upazila/ Thana.

Baisari Union Parishad:

Baisari Union is a modest union in the Banaripara Thana. The union occupies an area of 2771 acres. The union is bounded on the north by Syed Khati union, on the east by Sanda river and Banaripara pourasava, on the south by Sanda river and Banaripara union and on the west by Iluhar union. This union is an agrarian area with 2,095 acres of agricultural land with a population of 16,457. Number of villages are 10 where 3189 families are living. There is no health care center in the union. In the union there are 03 hat-bazars and 03 NGOs. The name of NGOs are Grameen Bank, BRAC and ASA. They perform their activities for the betterment of the local people.

There are 03 high schools, 06 primary schools and 02 madrasas in the union. The average literacy rate is 46.7% of which 52.1% for male and 41.1% for female. Communication and transportation system is not very developed. The union is situated on the bank of rivers. Boats are the main means of communication and transportation of Baisari. Inside the union of Baisari there is no well-constructed road. So, backward communication is the main problem of the union. Main crops are paddy and coconut. Table 2.4 shows a clear picture of Baisari Union.

Table-2.4

Notes of Baisari Union

Sl.No.	Particulars	Numbers
01	Area (in sq - km)-----	2771 acres
02	Population-----	16,457
03	Educational Information Literacy rate - --- -- --- Male--- --- ---- Female -----	46.7% 52.1% 41.1%
04	Number of Educational Institutions :- Number of colleges (Non-Govt)--- Number of High Schools ----- ---- Number of Primary Schools ----- Number of Madrasas -----	01 03 06 02
05	Number of Villages -----	10
06	Total farm land -----	2,095 acres
07	Number of NGOs working in this area ---	03
08	Number of Hospitals and Health Complex --	None
09	Number of Banks--- -----	01
10	Main Crops -----	Paddy, Coconut
11	Number of Families -----	3189
12	Number of Hat- Bazars -----	03

Source:(i) Bangladesh Ppopulation Census, 1991, October 1993, BBS, Statistics Division,

Ministry of Planning, GOB, Dhaka, Bangladesh. P. i-xiv, 1-24.

(ii) Banaripara Upazila Statistical Office, Banaripara, Barisal.

2.3: Chapter Scheme

This thesis is divided into six chapters. **Chapter-One** gives a brief overview of the local government, conceptual framework, scope of the study. **Chapter-Two** presents objectives of the study, methodology, chapter scheme and limitation of the study. **Chapter-Three** brings out the historical background of the local bodies in Bangladesh along with the relevant regime motivation. **Chapter-Four** concentrates on the empirical findings from the study area. **Chapter Five** presents the problems of the study area with UP activities. **Chapter-Six** is the concluding one, presents a brief summary of the findings and recommendations.

2.4: Limitations of the Study

Every research project has some limitations and one has to consider the limitations of the investigation. So, evaluation of the study becomes perfect subject to consideration of all the limitations.

It is usually very difficult to collect data from a rural area. Illiteracy of the people of the research area barred them from actual expression of facts. Besides, lack of peoples' spontaneity to give any official information caused great difficulties to the study. Govt. and official staffs always wanted to remain tight-lipped on official affairs causing difficulties in data collection. However, all sorts of steps were taken to overcome these obstacles.

CHAPTER # 3

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN BANGLADESH

Introduction

Since independence, the government of Bangladesh has been planning for economic enfranchise of the country. As usual in the social sciences, the literature is replete with many definitions of local government. In some countries, the deconcentrated local extensions of the central governments and in some others, traditional local power structures utilized for supporting field administration have been misconstrued as local government. Some times local government has been mistakenly considered an insignificant segment of government (Siddiqui; 1992:4). Local politics is a much wider term and it covers a host of other areas besides local government. On the other hand, local administration means implementation of decisions by not only local government institutions but also national/provincial government is widely known as local self-government. This term is originated during colonial era when South Asia did not enjoy any self-government either at central or provincial/state level (Siddiqui;1992:4). At present the term local government is very significant for its nature.

Bangladesh has a long recorded history and an age-old tradition. In the past, Bangladesh came under Mughal, the British and the Pakistani rule, which lasted for several centuries. It emerged as an independent and sovereign state on 16th December 1971. Each of the external regimes initiated a number of changes in the structure of rural local government of the country with a view to meeting imperial colonial and new colonial objectives (Siddiquee; 1994: 94).

The mobilization and performance of local government depends on its infrastructure, income, performance of leadership and related experiences. It is necessary to analyze different plans and programs, which have been taken up by different political governments. It would be easy if we go to analyze how and why the local government was formed. It is reported that formation of local government depends on village problem, stability and law and order situations. To gain advantage from the discussion of historical background of local government, the researcher has divided it into four (04) parts of the local government such as (1) the Ancient Period, (2) the British Period, (3) the Pakistan Period and (4) the Bangladesh Period.

This chapter reviews the experiences of past decentralization efforts and for this, the chapter is divided into four sections along chronological lines. Section one represents an overview of the ancient period; section two reviews the British colonial experiences, section three examines

the nature and obstacles of decentralization program initiated during the Pakistan period and section four analyses the programs, which have been introduced during the six successive regimes of Bangladesh.

Section-1: The Ancient Period

The term local self-government is not a new idea in the history of Indian sub- continent. Village self- government in the Indo- Pak sub continent is as old as the villages themselves. Village people in this sub-continent were more or less left to themselves. Village people had to pay their taxes, and then they had to come in contact with the central government agents. The authority of the central government was seldom extended to the `remote villages (Siddiqui; 1992: 12-13). Every Indian village had a self-governing body of its own. The village council was an all - comprehensive body and all works were done within its jurisdiction. The central control exercised by the central government was of marginal character. They had adequate financial resources for the performance of their multi various public works and institutions were maintained. A gracious community spirit prevailed among villagers in the ancient period in the sub-continent. Group or personal rivalries and bickering were practically unknown and that is why local administration went on smoothly (Khanna; 1977 and Siddiqui; 1992).

Each village was an independent and self-governing unit, which was quite effective. These units were known as village *panchayats*. Those *panchayats* were responsible for the administration of village level activities such as law and order, the management of community affairs, the resolution of disputes, developments of local level infrastructure and occasionally external relations. There were changes in rules, but the village *panchayats* remained largely unchanged in terms of their powers, functions and status (Siddiqui, 1994:95). Any historical men, researchers and critics have not given any speech against Indian *panchayat* system yet (Basham; 1989:105). This system of *gram panchayat* may be identified as the unique pattern of Indian society. (Hailey;1954: xii). In general, it seems to be that five responsible persons from the village formed ancient *Gram Panchayats* (Rahman; 1990:47).

The first serious attempt to reform both general and tax administration during the middle ages was made by Sher Shah Suri (Siddiqui; 1992: 16). Such type of reforms were carried further and more successfully implemented during the Mughal period. The Mughal administration

in the rural areas consisted of four levels, which were originally tax administration unit provinces ruled by Governors i.e. *Subedars*, Districts governed by *Sikdars*, Programs ruled by *Fauzdars* and Headman in charge of villages; *Chawkidars* assisted the village headman maintaining the law and order situation. At any level, tax collection duty was combined with responsibilities for maintaining law and order, and with some judicial and civic functions (Siddiqui; 1992: 17). The Mughals had developed an urban local government system and village local government system.

Section- 2: The British Period

Socio-economic and political phenomena have endured massive changes after taking over the administrative charges by the British East India Company. A colossal impact had been found on existing ancient local government structure since the changes took place at administrative periods of the British (1757-1858). But the expansion of the ancient *Gram Panchayat* System got stopped as the British promulgated system came into effect (Lovett; 1958:20-35 and Government of Bengal -1872: 192).

During the colonial rule Bengal had witnessed a short spell of system called *Chowkidary Panchayat* that divided the countryside into a number of unions each of which had an area of 10-12 square miles, embracing a number of villages within their fold. The committee thus formed was made responsible for maintaining peace in the locality and was empowered to collect taxes for raising funds for the payment to the village police or *chowkidars* (Pramanick and Datta; 1994: 1; and Barman; 1988: 264).

In the area of land revenue, the British introduced the *Zamindari* System (Siddique; 1992:18) where the *Zaminders* were primarily responsible for collecting tax and maintaining law and order; they were however deprived of the power of maintaining the law and order by the middle of 19th century (Barman;1988:264). The British government was trying to strengthen its rule while keeping administrative costs at low levels; they pursued the policy of favor and patronage distribution to some indigenous groups by creating *Zaminders*, *Talukdars* and *Nawabs*. Rather than developing British administrators across the country they appointed local responsible -individuals who were directed by and accountable to the rules, not by the local populace. The colonial ideology based upon the presumption of native inferiority, meant that representative or participatory institutions were irrelevant for local governance (Siddiquee; 1994:96).

The Permanent Settlement Act of 1793 was one of the major government reforms, which created far-reaching impacts on Indian administration. This Act created a class of landlords for collection of land revenue and maintenance of law and order in the villages (Siddiqui; 1992: 142). The landlords were called *Zaminders*; they paid a fixed amount of rent to the government and, in return, they were given a permanent right of collecting taxes from their tenants, they were also awarded the responsibility for maintaining public services and law and order in rural areas. The *Zaminders* were loyal to the British government and worked as their faithful agents. They provided the colonial regime with a sound revenue-base, managed the policing of rural areas without making demands on the government treasury, and became a permanently loyal class for political support. In return they lived well and enjoyed enormous power at the local administration based on a structure of patron-client linkages (Siddique; 1994:97). The Bengal Village *Chowkidari* Act of 1870 was the first British attempt to revive the traditional *panchayat* system; it was also a demand of the local people. *Chowkidary panchayats* were formed by the District Magistrate, who appointed a *panchayat* of five members at the village level. The *panchayat* was given the authority to appoint village watchman and to assess and collect taxes from the villagers to pay the salaries of the chowkidars, it was also given the responsibility for maintaining the law and order in the village. It was a fully nominated body and the District Magistrate could dismiss the *panchayat* body at will. The sole purpose for the creation of the *panchayat* body was to maintain law and order in the villages and serve British interests; no real welfare functions were assigned to it (Siddique; 1992:143). But the unpleasant nature of their duties of collecting taxes made the *panchayat* highly unpopular among the people and they were treated as the servant of government, not as the representatives of the village people (Tinker; 1968).

The Bengal Self-Government Act 1885 was massively influenced by Ripons Regulations in 1882. The basic act was colossally changed during the period of passing in 1885 (N.C. Roy; 1936: 25). If the Lord Ripons Regulation is considered as a basic determinant, without any fear and contradiction it is said that the Bengal Self-Government Act had been deviated from its main spirit. Surprisingly it is true that the Bengal Self-Government Act 1885 played a passive role in the question of existence and program of evolving *Chowkidary Panchayat* System (was established in 1870). Consequently, the responsibility of maintaining pacific situation in the villages was rested in the *Chowkidary Panchayat* System but on the other hand, newly created union committees were performing their duties, which were charged on them through regulation. Fundamentally a mutual

agreement was made possible to discharge their responsibilities and duties through distributing the works between them in a peaceful manner. The newly established union committee was performing their development duties with the limited economic capacity. The union committees performed the duties offered by the local board as their additional works. The members of the local board were elected by the members of union committees who were familiar as electors.

In basic law, no reference was made about chairman. Then undivided Bengal Government brought an amendment in 1908 and afterward this amendment came into effect in the East Bengal in 1914. There was a provision in it that every Union Committee would select a chairman among their members (Government of Bengal; 1885). The intrinsic weakness of the law in 1885 was largely dependent on bureaucrats and a free field of practicing autocratic powers by the members of bureaucracy. The basic book of Ripon's regulations was not totally accepted by the bureaucrats for their bureaucratic attitude and motives (Rahman; 1990:50). For these causes the Ripon's regulations were not put into operation. The union committee created through the Act of 1883 was unable to give rise into the winds of The Bengal in its all spheres like *chowkidary panchayat*. The union committee formed in compliance with the rough law (in process law) in 1883 got into oblivion after the enactment of the Bengal Local Self-Government Act in 1885 (Rahman; 1990:50).

The union committee was needed to be appointed for serving health care in 1889 but in that context no effective step was found in 1894. The Bengal Local Self-Government Act was largely inspired through the proposition of Lord Ripon to reform. According to this law, local body was classified into three spheres viz (i) the Local Board in the sub-division (ii) the District Board in the District and (iii) the Union Committee. At the lowest stage union committee was formed with the combination of few villages. The union committee generally remained engaged to construct and repair local school, ponds and roads. The responsibilities of preserving peace and tranquility in the village were charged with the *chowkidary panchayat*. The union committee and *chowkidary panchayat* worked side by side in the same area. The local boards and the union committee had to discharge functions delegated by their superior bodies, upon whom they also depended for funds (Siddiqui; 1992: 144).

Unfortunately Lord Ripon's proposals were not implemented in full or in right spirit. The British Raj was predominantly in favor of a 'Mai Bap' style of administration (Rashiduzzaman;1968:3) and, as such, opposition to the Ripon resolution gathered momentum. The governors of the provinces were strongly in favor of retaining the District Magistrate as chairman of the District Board, thus making him the central figure of the local administration (Siddiquee;1994:100). Then started the tension between central control and local autonomy, which continued dogging the local government in Bangladesh to the present day. So the colonial administration proved reluctant to relax central control and thus persisted the limitations on the powers granted to local bodies (Siddiquee; 1994:100, Rashiduzzaman; 1968:3 , Maddick; 1970:18).

The union committees could bring no change in rural life as they had to depend for all practical purposes upon the District Board, which themselves were starved of money, narrowly restricted in the exercise of their functions. The Bengal District Administration Committee Report, 1912-13 observed, it was a mistake to make the District Boards the administration unit of local self-government and to leave the smaller bodies dependent on it's charity (BDACR; 1912-13:38). The Act provided for the election of two thirds of the members of the local bodies. But no villager was interested to seek election partly on account of responsibilities that membership might entail and partly to avoid the risk of incurring the displeasure of the village influential as well as of the local *Zamindars* who had been in control of village life through their command over village land (Barman; 1988:267).

During the period of the British the intellectuals of India realized that the role of the private members was very passive and many of them called it a center of making (producing) sycophant statement. The Government official had uninterrupted powers for thirty years in the Union Committee beyond all criticism and hostility. In 1907 the Indian Government formed a Royal Commission with the leadership of Hobbs House for determining the economic and administrative relation with the central & provincial government and also for decentralizing administrative system (Rahaman; 1990:52). In 1909 the Commission presented the report to the government. But the report of the Commission did not reflect upon the expectations of the Indian people. Commission suggested district Magistrate as a chairman at the district board but accelerated steps were not taken to make the recommendations effective even after disclosure of the report. Afterwards a group of people with the leadership of Montague travelled INS & out of

India for eight months to acquire practical opinions of the various people for reforming the administrative procedure of India.

Montague and later Vice Roy Lord Chelmsford of India combined by identified the problems and prepared the final report showing the ways of solving. This report was later familiarized as the Montague Chelmsford Report. A part of this report was directly related to the village local administration. It was observed in the report that the village administration was basically constituted with the assistance of district administration. In this report a recommendation was made not to keep the district administration under the control of a subordinate Military officer (Hoque; 1970:21-48). Montague Chelmsford Report opined that the local self-government system was not successful in the village sphere for various causes. The Montague-Chelmsford report was not in agreement with the Royal Commission regarding the decentralization of administration. According to the report, the first important task was to assist the local to self- autonomous body to survive strongly (Government of Bengal: 82).

In this report various recommendations were proposed to make the local administration popular. The local organization needed to be largely arranged through proper reforms for making the Indian people politically conscious. According to the report a small amount of power was needed to offer to local administration for health, education, taxes & judiciary division. Later village self-autonomy process was presented in law in the light of the Montague Chelmsford report. According to this bill, Government constituted a new local administrative system by combining existing *Chowkidary Panchayet* and union committee. The newly constituted organization got familiarized as 'union board'. The concerned members would elect two third members of newly developed union board and one third of them would be nominated according to the provision. The concerned members would elect the chairman or the representative of the union board. The union board was empowered to collect money from various sources for executing the serviceable works and other activities. (Rahman ;1990:53).

When this bill was presented in the Bengal Legislative Assembly, Sher -E- Bangla criticized it for two principal causes for which it would be effective. First, union board will fall short of pecuniary assistance. Secondly, the union board would be controlled through the wills of the local government officials (Haque;1918). He further expressed that the responsibility of Deputy Commissioner regarding local aspects should be offered to District board. In this system

union board would feel easy and would take the opportunity of freedom of works. He was an opponent of selecting members for Bengal Legislative Assembly through the undemocratic way but their point of opposition was invalid by the majority concern. Besides these, many members differently opposed the proposed bill from their standpoint. The bill was sent to the selection committee and long debates were held on it but lastly it was accepted by the brute majority and familiarized as "Bengal Pastoral Self-Governance Act 1919". Many writers and renowned lawmakers called it as "Bengal Local Self-Government Act 1919". According to law, the union board was consisted of six or nine members. Among the members, the District administrator selected one third. Fundamentally Circle Officer (C.O) prepared the list of the selected persons and it was sent to the Sub Divisional Officer (S.D.O). At that time SDO rectified the list sent by the C.O. and afterwards he sent it to District administrator for final selection (Philip, Woodralf; 1954). A union consisted of ten villager ranging 25-35 square miles with eight thousand peoples (Rahman; 1990: 54). Even though the selection process was not democratic it was supported for the sake of Minority interest. Concerned Deputy Commissioner balanced his actions through a specific way. Where the Hindus were majority he selected two persons from the Muslim Community there & vice versa. Circle Officer assisted the Deputy Commissioner through providing accurate information. For this reason local powerful persons tried in various ways to attract his good view. The union board was divided into a few wards. Two or three villages formed a ward and three persons were selected from each ward by the board.

A severe competition was found in these elections and the voters cast their votes with earnest eager. In that elections 80% - 85% voters were present and cast their votes in favor of their leader. During the British period, the villagers got the scope of participating in political works and they realized the vantage of democracy. N.C Roy commented that the Bengalees had been involved with politics from that moment (Roy; 1936: 25-38). From the members of each union board, one president and vice president were elected. President, Vice-president and members were in power for four years. The power acquired from the Deputy Commissioner, the circle officer arranged election process for electing president, vice-president and president through calling union board meeting. The task of the meeting began with the presence of five or nine members (Rahaman; 1990:54). For any cause, if the members failed to elect their president and vice-president, the concerned District Commissioner had to select the president and vice-president from amongst the members. This union board performed the previous two responsibilities. The duty of the union board was primarily to supervise the village *chowkidar* and to charge taxes. Besides

these, other responsibilities were confined to construction of roads and culvert, offering health service, establishment of schools & medical complex & supervise of the taxes, as well as to observe the duties and responsibilities offered by the government. To accept donation, to charge the annual fee of the union & to give salaries of the *chowkidars* were the responsibilities of the union. In accordance with size and range, six or sixteen *chowkidars* were employed and one or two *dofadars* were appointed. The negative side of this system was its complex voting process. Women could not cast their votes. If a male wanted to be a voter, he would need to be a permanent dweller and aged at 21 years. Again, the person who gave a minimum one taka for taxes was considered a voter. One notable feature with that voting system was that the voters had to go to official and told his favorable candidate with his leap. In that perspective, a voter could not apply his power of voting independently (Chowdhury; 1969:11). Another feature of it was that union board could appoint the *Dafadar* and *Chowkidar* only for job but concerned district administrator finally appointed them. The union board could not retreat them for their misbehavior and reluctance to work like previous council. Even though the union board had the right to send their opinion regarding the responsibilities performed by *Chowkidar* and *Dafadar* or not the deputy commissioner didn't give priority about the sent information. The process in selecting members for the union board was not successful for various causes (Khan; 1956: 14). Moreover, the union board was completely dependent upon the donation of the District board. One point of credit went to the government for the existence of union board at every rural region in undivided Bengal. A survey in 1927 showed that there were 2874 union boards in undivided Bengal but it increased in 1940 to 5126 (Rahman; 1990:55). The initiatives taken by the government to establish new union boards were strongly protested and opposed by the leaders of "Swaraj Agitation" (Movement). The leaders of India felt that the union boards were basically set up only for collecting taxes from the villagers as well as to serve their deceptive technique (Tepper;1966: 93). Astonishingly true that after the regime of the British and Pakistan, the local administration of independent Bangladesh has not been changed even though thirty years have passed since independence.

The attention of the government even today is totally absent in creating massive funds and structural facilities. In 1945, Loulat Committee (Bengal Administrative Enquiry Committee) announced union committee as the most possible one. In Bengal, local self-government system may be the utmost necessitated process and among them we will count union board as potential-one (Bengal Government Press;1945: 35). In this perspective, a question arose with regard to the reform process. Would it be constituted from lower stage to upper stage through undertaking a

chronological order? Whether it would be formed upper to lower. At that time the national politics of the Indian sub-continent went under a colossal change. The then sub-continent got divided into two independent states namely India and Pakistan. On 14 August 1947, the administration of the British was formally terminated.

In fact, the credit of the performance of structuring the local administrative system of this country through statutory act goes to the so-called British Indian Government.

Section 3: The Pakistan Period

Pakistan became independent on the 14th August in 1947. Even after the attainment of independence of Pakistan, the union boards were being administered through the previous rules for the year up to 1956. In 1956, the system of direct election was adopted for the appointment of chairman of the union board. At that time there were 3581 union boards in East Pakistan (Khan; 1956:13). In the late fifties, national political events took a dramatic turn. In 1958, martial law was promulgated in Pakistan. Within a period of one year, the military government headed by General Ayub Khan introduced a decentralized system of local government, the basic democracies system. The system showed a clear and unmistakable resemblance to the forms of local government experimented during the British days. The Basic Democracies Order of 1959 provided for four tier system of local government; the Union Council, the Thana Council, the District Council and the Divisional Council (Siddiquee; 1994:107). Under the Basic Democracy introduced in Pakistan, the country was divided into 80,000 units or wards. Each ward elected a representative or a basic democrat. The basic democrats formed an electoral college to elect the chairman of Union Council and members of Thana Council, provincial assembly, national parliament and the president of the country. There were 40,000 basic democrats in East Pakistan. The basic democracies system was politically unpopular, but it provided the officers a good opportunity to develop the countryside through District, Thana and Union Councils and Municipalities. Development programs were prepared and implemented by local government bodies. Local government system at district and union levels was in existence since the British period but the Thana Council was a new institution introduced in 1962 (The Basic Democracies Order 1959; President's Order No.18 of 1959; Government of Pakistan; 1959).

The Basic Democracies Order, 1959 and the Municipal Administration Ordinance, 1960 established a four tier system of local government in Pakistan. Specific functions and powers were allocated to each tier of local bodies. Elections were held twice under the basic democracies system, in 1960 and 1964. The structure of the Basic Democracies Order was frequently changed in response to pressures from the public. Nominations from Union Councils were dropped in 1962 while the nominations from the remaining tiers were dropped in 1965. In 1969, Ayub conceded to the popular demand for divesting the Basic Democracies of their electoral and political roles and promised to retain them only as local bodies (Siddiquee; 1994:101).

These union boards were still functioning in full swing until the declaration of Basic Democracy by the then military administrator General Ayub Khan in 1959 (Basic Democracies Order; 1959). Through the declaration of Ayub Khan, Union councils were enforced in place of union boards. In compliance with the Basic Democracies Order, a system was developed for the formation of Thana / tahsil councils in the middle point of union and district administration. With regard to the nomination of members of union council the government bureaucrats appointed one-third members of Union Council as the rule of the British (Mellema; 1961: 10-15). The chairman (the then union board president) of the newly formed union council was directly elected by the members from amongst themselves. Basically the District Commissioner performed the functions regarding nomination or his subordinates performed that task with the recommendation of the local government officials. The provision for the appointment of the members of the union council was dropped in 1964 (Rahman; 1990: 56).

That bizarre administrative reforms proclaimed by Ayub Khan, the President of Pakistan, directly hit the institutional structure of the local government. His unplanned sudden reforms were completely a distinctive one in comparison to the prior rules. Under the Basic Democracies System, union council was the central point of the local administration. The power offered to Thana council was slightly practiced and union councils would roam towards Thana council in quest of collecting funds.

Here included that the provision was enforced to directly confine union council with the district council. It was seen that fifty percent members of District council, Thana/ tahshil council and Union council as well as the president of the two councils were also selected from amongst the nominated representatives of the council. Even in the period of Basic Democracy, the District

Commissioner strictly practiced his unrestrained influences and power of controlling on the District council, which kept local administration inactive for 50 years as a representative of bureaucracy. Ayub Khan proclaimed his solidarity with the report provided by Indian Royal Administrative Decentralization Commission, which was constituted during the British regime. In that report, it was expressed that the affair (Local Government) must have to be activated with the District supervision and control of the district commissioners (Government of Bengal; 1909: 303-304).

The Basic Democracies system came under serious criticism by the political parties towards the end of Ayub regime. In fact, the system turned out to be an oppressive tool of the government. It was characterized as anti-people; particularly in East Pakistan and the system was the main target of attacks during the periods of various movements such as six point and eleven point movements and the mass upsurge of 1969. The system was abolished soon after the independence of Bangladesh (Barman; 1988: 271).

Paucity of funding was a severe problem with that newly formed local government. That problem was slightly resolved through the financial donation of the government given to union council. But regular governmental donation to union council diverted it from its main functions to charge taxes. As a result self-financial management of the union council became weak and the task of union council pertaining to creation of fund was disrupted (Rahman; 1962). Surveying many activities of union council it has been found out that majority of works taken by council were performed on the basis of letter and circulars of various departments of government secretariat. It is complained that the unions often performed only at the Government direction. They did not do any work spontaneously. Government officials became discouraged upon union council due to inefficiency of their work. According to PARD Report, members complained that Government officers used to talk with the chairman and they did not pay attention to the members (Government of Pakistan; BNR, 1961). In this way, the members of union council could not take part with planning and they felt boring in working in union council. On the other hand, they were very much interested to take government incentives. Consequently, illegal economic relation was built secretly between the chairman and the local government administration (Ahmed; 1978: 52-67). The government incentives were distributed to union council by Circle Officers (Development) in such way that union council had to depend on government administration. It is often said that Basic Democracies system enhanced crime (Rahman; 1992: 58). Moreover members played a

political role as selectors. In this system the chairmen and the members were the representatives of government (Narain; 1965: 79-96). The chairman of union council got salary for his works. In this way, the office of union council, roads, bridge, etc. were constructed. But it is true that faulty election system hampered its objectives. Specially, it was very easy to be corrupt because the members elected Chairman and Vice Chairman. Nomination system was suspended later. It is to mention that basic democracy project was under the supervision of bureaucracy. Like British rulers, Pakistani bureaucrats kept the key of power at their hand. In spite of having huge possibility union council could not play any important role in economic development due to excessive bureaucratic strategies.

The result was a large-scale corruption, misuse of funds and encouragement of financial and administrative malpractice (Siddiqui;1992:40). But the Ayub regime was partly successful in achieving its political objectives through the system of Basic Democracy. The Basic Democrats helped his regime to survive in one presidential and two assembly elections (Jahan; 1977:126 and 1980:12).

Section- 4: The Bangladesh Period

After independence, administrators were appointed locally under the Presidential Ordinance No 7 in 1972. Union Council administrator was the agriculture officer of a union. But the chairman and members of relief committee were appointed from local Awami League in order to conduct the relief activities properly and smoothly. Union Council was created in 1972 under President Order No. 22. Newly formed union council was enacted with relief committee (Rahman; 1992: 58). The new government did not trust the traditional local leadership especially the clients of Ayub's former Basic Democracy System. On the other hand, the traditional rural leadership did not get support or sympathies of the Awami League Government. So the government made several attempts to replace the traditional local leadership by their local party followers and abolished the Pakistani local government system.

✓ The union council was renamed Union *Panchayat*, the Thana Council was changed to Thana Development Council and the District to Zilla Board. The District Council and Thana Council were placed under the control of the Deputy Commissioner and Sub- Divisional Officer respectively. The union councils were placed under the charge of circle officers. The Divisional

Council was abolished. The powers and functions of these bodies remained almost unchanged with some added emphasis on reconstruction and restoration of law and order. So, initial arrangement enabled the national government to exercise complete control over local affairs by nominating officials to discharge local functions (Siddiquee; 1994: 112).

The union council selected authorities like relief committees. This system was supposed to continue until the reconstruction of local autonomous government's structure under new constitution. First National Parliament of Bangladesh passed detailed law regarding the matter in June 1973 (The Bangladesh Gazette; 1973). According to this law union council was called as union *parishad*. Each union comprised 3 wards, and each union *parishad* consisted of nine members, three members directly elected from each ward. One chairman and a vice- chairman for each union *parishad* were also directly elected by voters of the entire union (Siddiqui; 1992: 150). In 1973 union *parishad* election took place for the first time (First Union *Parishad* Elections- 1973). But in this system dual conflict arose between chairman and vice chairman due to having no clear-cut law on power as well as responsibility division. For this reason, many unexpected events were arising. Because in many places, chairman and vice chairman performed activities separately with their supporters.

After three years on 22nd November 1976 the 'Local Governments Ordinance- 1976' was declared. In the law detailed rules and regulations were spelt out regarding local government. Moreover, several laws were amended regarding local governments (The Bangladesh Gazette; 1976). In the Ordinance, it was a law that the chairmen and members would be elected by direct vote of people. The Ordinance of 1976 brought a three-tier system of local government into existence in rural areas. Those were (i) a Union Parishad for a union (ii) a Thana Parishad for a Thana and (iii) Zilla Parishad for a district. Under the Ordinance, major changes occurred in respect of composition of a union *parishad*. The post of vice chairmen was abolished. It comprised one elected chairman and nine elected members and three nominated women members. It was entrusted with forty (40) functions -the main of them being public welfare, maintenance of law and order, revenue collection, development and adjudication (Nazeen;2000:105-106).

The Ordinance provided that the Sub- Divisional Officer (SDO) will exercise the supervision with the authority to direct, suspend or otherwise control union *parishads* thus allowing the government to maintain its influence over the bodies. The functions and sources of

income of union *parishads* remained the same as under the Basic Democracy was (Siddiqui; 1994: 115- 116; Siddiqui; 1992: 150-151). The most significant steps towards decentralization of power at local level was taken in 1980 when the government of Zia introduced the *Swanirvar Gram Sarkar* (self-reliant village government) in the country further down the union *parishad* into 68,000 villages to cope with the situation (Hoque; 1985: 205-218). In April 1980, by an amendment to the Local Governments Ordinance, 1971, *Swanirvar Gram Sarkar* was introduced at the village level. It consisted of a *Gram Prodhan* (village chief) and eleven (11) members including at least two women members. The *Gram Prodhan* was to select one of the members as secretary. The members of the *Swanirvar Gram Sarkar* were to be chosen so as to ensure representations of different functional or interest groups i.e. landed farmers, landless, artisans, women and youths. The members came to be known as *Gram Montries* (Village Ministers) and each of them was responsible for one of the departments such as agriculture, educations, health and family planning, cottage industries, fisheries and livestock and women affairs (GOB, 1980; Siddiqui; 1992:151 and Siddiquee; 1994: 118).

The scheme of *Gram Sarkar* was introduced with four fold functions: (i) increasing food production (ii) mass literacy (iii) population control and family planning and (iv) maintenance of law and order. This was for the first time that the villagers were going to have their own formal administrative organization at the village level. But the system had a very short life and was abolished immediately after March 24, 1982 when military took over. Thus there was hardly been any scope to examine the system's impact on the country's local administration system (Barman; 1988: 273).

Soon after its takeover of political power in March 1982, the military government of General Ershad appointed high powered committee known as the Committee for the Administrative Reorganization / Reform (CARR). The Government promulgated the Local Government (*Thana Parishad* at *Thana Administration Reorganization*) Ordinance, 1982, which provided the legal framework for a new local government institution at the *Thana* level. 460 *Thanas* were upgraded and renamed Upazillas (Sub-District) in ten (10) phases over about 13 months starting from the 7th November, 1982 (Rahman;1989:270). The *Upazila* system was initiated with objectives to ensure greater participation of the people and planned and co-ordinated development for the vast rural masses of the country (Nazim and Islam; 1987: 138-165). The structure of the country's local government has been a three-tier system with *Zila Parishad* at the

District level, *Upazila Parishad* at the *Upazilla* level and *Union Parishad* at the Union level. According to the Local Government Ordinance 1982, relating to the *Upazila*, an *Upazila parishad* will consist of-

- i) A chairman directly elected by the people of the entire *Upazila* on the basis of adult franchise. Till the election of the chairman of *Upazila parishads* the *Upazila Nirbahi* Officers acted as chairmen.
- ii) Representative members- all chairmen of the union *parishads* under the jurisdiction of the *Upazila*.
- iii) Three women members – nominated by the government from amongst the women residing in the *Upazila*.
- iv) Official members – the holders of offices in the *Upazila* as specified by the government will be the ex- officio members without voting right.
- v) Chairmen of the *Upazila* Central Co-operative Association and
- vi) One nominated male member- eligible for election as chairman of *Upazilla Parishad* or from freedom fighters (GOB; 1982; Siddiqui; 1992: 153, Ahmed; 1993: 145-147).

It is noted that the *Upazila* system has been abolished by the BNP Government in 1991. On the other hand, Awami League Government reformed this system in 1996. With a view to transmitting the local government to the door of mass people. In 1980, BNP planned to form the *palli parishad* as adopted with the initiation of *gram sarkar*. In 1989, the *parishad* regulation was passed by the 4th parliament. The formation of *parishad* was assumed to assist to the development of the overall condition of the village but union chairmen or members could not be the member of the *palli parishad*. On the other hand, the fund of the *palli parishad* was formed on the basis of the donation of the union *parishad*. In 1992, Local Government (Union *Parishad*) Ordinance was passed through the amendment of the regulation 1983 ((The Bangladesh Gazette; 10, November, 1992). In accordance with the ordinance (section 59) each union *parishad* was given status as an administrative unit. With the other provision, existing *Pourasava* was also given status as an administrative unit. Through an amendment, in 1993 three seats were reserved for women in each union council. A union is divided into nine wards. There is a provision that each union *parishad* will consist of one chairman and nine members with the responsibilities of conducting election in the hands of Thana Nirbahi Officers (TNO) (The Bangladesh Gazette; 22 July, 1993).

CHAPTER # 4
FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the field survey. The respondents have given their opinions about field of planning and policy making, decentralization of local administration, women's participation in local administration, participation of people at the local level union parishad activities, nature of cooperation of the UP functionaries and people's participation in local bodies etc. In the following paragraphs the research findings are shown in details.

4.A: Field of Planning and Policy Making

Respondents were interviewed with a view to know whether people should play a role in the field of planning and policy-making. Table 4.1 shows the opinions of the respondents in this regard. Majority of the respondents said that the people should have roles to play. Only 20% local people opined that people should not play any role in this context, as they are not aware about UP activities.

Table 4.1

People should play a role in the Field of Planning and Policy Making

Respondents	Yes	No
Local People	80%	20%
UP Chairmen and Members	100%	-
NGO Workers	100%	-
TL Officers	100%	-

Source: Field Survey

Respondents were asked to mention whether they thought that people should play any role in the field of planning and policy making and if they should, what were the roles? Table 4.2 shows the opinions of the respondents in this regard. About 95.83% local people, cent percent UP chairman/ members and NGO workers and 40% TL officers said that people can present their local problems. On an average, about 83.33% local people, 80% UP chairman/members, cent percent NGO workers and 40% TL officers mentioned that they can

identify the needs and requirements of the people. On the other hand, 54.17% local people, 10% UP chairman /members, cent percent NGO workers and 60% TL officers mentioned that they can also play role in the policy making by indicating the necessary requirements and resources of locality. About 54.17% local people, 90% UP chairman/members and cent percent NGO workers agree with the view that people play a vital role in the local bodies for implementation of rules and regulations. About 66.67% local people, 70% UP chairman /members, cent percent NGO workers and 40% TL officers opined that they can also play an important role at the time of implementation of law and order situation.

Table 4.2

Role of the People in the Field of Planning and Policy Making

Field of Planning and Policy Making	Respondents			
	Local People	UP Chairmen/ Members	NGO's Workers	TL Officers
People can present their problems	95.83%	100%	100%	40%
Identify the needs and requirements of the people	83.33%	80%	100%	40%
Identify the necessary data of locality for policy making	54.17%	10%	100%	60%
Implementation of rules and regulation	54.17%	90%	100%	-
Creating public opinion in favor of policy making and planning	66.67%	70%	100%	40%

Source: Field Survey

Respondents were further asked to mention the names of the bodies who have played the dominant role in the decision making process. Table 4.3 shows the opinions of the respondents in this regard. About 95.83% local people, cent percent UP chairman /members, 20% NGO workers and 40% TL officers agreed that elected members of the UP played the dominant role in the decision making process. Cent percent local people, NGO workers and TL officers and 10% UP chairman /members mentioned that UP chairman and local leaders played the dominant role in the decision making process. Only 40% TL officers identified that village committee and govt. bureaucracy played the dominant role in the decision making process.

Table 4.3
Playing Dominant Role in the Decision Making Process

Respondents	Dominating Role Players			
	Village committee	Elected member of the UP	Govt. Bureaucracy	Chairman and local leaders
Local People	-	95.83%	-	100%
UP Chairmen/ Members	-	100%	-	10%
NGO Workers	-	20%	-	100%
TL Officers	40%	40%	40%	100%

Source: Field survey.

4.B: Decentralization of Local Administration

Respondents were asked to comment on the decentralization of local administration. Table 4.4 shows the opinions of the respondents in this regard. It reveals that cent percent local people and NGO workers and 10% UP chairman /members replied that the people's participation increased due to relationship developed between thana and union level in the decentralization of local administration. About 53.33% local people, cent percent UP chairman/members, 80% NGO workers and 40% TL officers mentioned that people's participation increased through decentralization of administration. On the other hand 60%

local people, 40% UP chairman/members, 80% NGO workers and cent percent TL officers agreed that participation of people increased in local administration as a result of increased allocation of government fund. Overwhelming half of the respondents agree with the enhancement of the *thana* level officials' status caused the increased participation of people according to 56.67% local people, 50% UP chairmen/members, 60% NGO workers and 40% thana level officials.

Table-4.4

Peoples Participation increased due to the Decentralization of Local Administration

Respondents	Reasons for People's Participation has increased			
	Relationship has developed between thana and union level	More officials placed at the thana level	More govt. fund allocated	Status enhancement of thana level officials
Local people	100%	53.33%	60%	56.67%
UP Chairmen/ Members	10%	100%	40%	50%
NGO Workers	100%	80%	80%	60%
TL Officers	-	40%	100%	40%

Source: Field Survey.

Respondents were asked to mention the advantages and disadvantages of decentralization of local administration they enjoyed and encountered. Table 4.5 and 4.6 show the opinions of the respondents in this regard. The respondents mentioned that they enjoyed advantages due to more efficient and less costly, easier working system, easy access to govt. officials and increased services to more people. About 80% local people, 20% UP chairman/members, cent percent NGO workers and 20% TL officers mentioned that they enjoyed the advantages due to decentralization of local administration as it was more efficient and less costly. About 76.67% local people, 70% UP chairman/members, cent percent NGO workers and 60% TL officers agreed that they gained advantages through decentralization of administration due to easier working system. About 66.67% local people, 10% UP

chairman/members, 60% NGO workers and TL officers supported the view that decentralization of administration ensured easy access to govt. officials. 73.33% local people, cent percent UP chairmen / members, NGO workers and TL officers held the opinion that the decentralization of administration increased services to more people.

Table 4.5
Advantages of Decentralization of Local Administration

Respondents	Advantages			
	More efficient and less costly	Easier working system	Easy access to govt. officials	Increased services to more people
Local People	80%	76.67%	66.67%	73.33%
UP Chairmen/ Members	20%	70%	10%	100%
NGO Workers	100%	100%	60%	100%
TL Officers	20%	60%	60%	100%

Source: Field survey.

Respondents also identified some disadvantages of decentralization of local administration. Table 4.6 shows the opinion of the respondents in this regard.

Table 4.6
Disadvantages of Decentralization of Local Administration

Respondents	Disadvantages		
	Political interference from out side	Increased corruption	Emergence of touts and intermediaries
Local people	63.33%	86.67%	70%
UP Chairmen/Members	20%	70%	20%
NGO Workers	100%	100%	80%
TL Officers	80%	60%	100%

Source: Field Survey.

It appears from the above table that about 63.33% local people, 20% UP chairman /members, cent present NGO workers and 80% TL officers complained that they faced political interference from outside because of decentralization of administration. About 86.67% local people, 70% UP chairman/ members, cent percent NGO workers and 60% TL officials argued that corruption increased due to decentralized administration. The main problem appeared to be the emergence of touts and intermediaries at the local level according to 70% local people, 20% UP chairman /members, 80% NGO workers and cent percent TL officers. They argued that decentralized local administration could not perform its work easily due to the emergence of touts and intermediaries who were reported to frequently visit UP office especially during the working time of the offices.

Respondents were asked to mention whether they thought that local people were getting more benefits from the local govt. after the decentralization of administration. Their responses are shown in table 4.7. About 93.33% local people, cent percent UP chairman/members and 40% NGO workers replied in positive. However, about 33% local people, 60% NGO workers and cent percent TL officers mentioned that local people were getting more benefits but partially. Only 3.33% local people replied that they were getting benefits substantially.

Table 4.7

Local People are Getting More Benefits from the Local Govt. after the Decentralization of Administration

Respondents	Yes	No	Partially	Substantially
Local People	93.33%	-	3.33%	3.33%
UP Chairmen/Members	100%	-	-	-
NGO Workers	40%	-	60%	-
TL Officers	-	-	100%	-

Source: Field Survey.

Respondents were further asked to mention whether they thought that income of local people and benefits of various services increased after, decentralization of local administration. Table 4.8 shows the opinions of the respondents in this regard. All of the respondents replied in positive in this regard.

Table 4.8
**Income of Local People and Benefits of Various Services Increased after the
Decentralization**

Respondents	Yes	No
Local People	100%	-
UP Chairmen /Members	100%	-
NGO Workers	100%	-
TL Officers	100%	-

Source: Field Survey.

Respondents were asked to mention about the beneficiaries who have gained the most advantages through the administrative changes. Table 4.9 shows the opinions of the respondents in this regard.

It appears from the table 4.9 that touts and intermediaries were gaining the most advantages through the administrative changes. Most of the respondents agreed with the view. About 26.67% local people, 20% UP chairman/members, 40% NGO workers and TL officers opined that local businessmen and contractors were also benefited. On the other hand, 33.33% local people and 40% UP chairmen /members mentioned that the local poor also gained some advantages through the administrative changes. About 40% local people, 10% UP chairmen/members and cent percent TL officers mentioned that chairman and members of UP gained advantages.

Table 4.9

Beneficiaries who Gained the most Advantages Through the Administrative Changes

Respondents	Name of the Beneficiaries					
	Govt. officials at <i>thana</i> level	Chairmen /members of <i>thana parishad</i>	Chairmen/ members of union <i>parishad</i>	Local businessmen and contractors	Touts and intermediaries	Local poor
Local People	26.67%	46.67%	40%	26.67%	66.67%	33.33%
UP Chairmen/ Members	-	-	10%	20%	90%	40%
NGO Workers	-	-	-	40%	100%	-
TL Officers	-	-	100%	40%	80%	20%

Source: Field Survey.

4.C: Nature of Co-operation of the Union Parishad Functionaries

An organizational relationship and cooperation between the union *parishad* and the bureaucracy is required for development work process of the national government. So the *thana* level officers sometimes are in need of cooperation from the union *parishad* functionaries. However, sometimes-union *parishad*'s function is to maintain contact with other organizations like NGOs. NGOs are engaged in various activities similar to those of the union *parishad*. NGO workers may also, sometimes, approach to the union *parishad* for necessary cooperation. Local people also expect necessary cooperation from union *parishad*, as union *parishad* is a public organization.

Respondents were asked to mention whether they were getting necessary cooperation from UP chairman /members or officials. Table 4.10 shows the opinions of the respondents in this regard. About 66.67% local people, cent percent NGO workers and TL officers respectively replied that they were getting cooperation often from UP chairmen/members. On the other hand, 13.33% local people mentioned that they got cooperation always from UP chairman or members. But about 20% local people said that they never got any cooperation from UP chairman or members as they were engaged in different types of activities.

Table 4.10

Getting Necessary Cooperation from UP Chairmen / Members or Officials

Respondents	Always	Often	Never
Local People	13.33%	66.67%	20%
NGO Workers	-	100%	-
TL Officers	-	100%	-

Source: Field Survey.

Respondents were asked to mention whether the cooperation of the UP chairman/members or officials was inadequate or not. Table 4.11 shows their responses in this regard. About 54.17% local people, cent percent NGO workers and TL officers mentioned that UP chairmen/members or officials extended cooperation, which was not adequate, due to lack of knowledge of administrative power and positive attitude, lack of training of its functioning and financial inadequacy of the UP. Only 45.83% local people replied that the cooperation of the UP chairmen /members or officials was adequate.

Table -4.11

The Cooperation of the UP Chairmen/ Members or Officials is adequate or inadequate

Respondents	Adequate	Inadequate
Local people	45.83%	57.17%
NGO Workers	-	100%
TL Officers	-	100%

Source: Field Survey.

Respondents were asked to mention whether they helped the local people in their area. Table 4.12 shows the opinion of the respondents in this regard. Majority of the respondents stated that they helped the people through advice and other activities. Only 10% UP chairmen/members helped the local people through financial assistance. On the other hand, about 60% NGO workers and 10% TL officers mentioned that they helped the local people through taking them to the concerned authority.

Table 4.12

Help the Local People in Local Area

Respondents	Helping Mechanisms			
	Giving advice	Help through other activities	Financial assistance	Taking them to the concerned authority
UP Chairmen/Members	100%	80%	10%	-
NGO Workers	100%	100%	-	60%
TL Officers	100%	80%	-	10%

Source: Field Survey.

4.D: People's Participation at the Local Bodies

Union *parishad*'s chairman and members are elected by the local people. The Union *Parished* officials render some social services and perform some development activities with the financial support and bureaucratic assistance of the government. Due to inadequacy of fund and inefficient administration, they cannot solve all problems of the union. But local people also demand their support and cooperation. On the other hand, there are limited scopes to involve local people in UP activities.

Respondents were asked to mention whether people should take part in the UP activities for solving the problems of the union or not. Table 4.13 shows the opinion of the respondents in this regard. All UP chairmen/members, NGO workers and TL officers and 93.33% local people replied in affirmative. Only 6.67% local people replied in negative.

Table-4.13

People should take Part in the UP Activities for Solving the Problems of the Union

Respondents	Yes	No
Local People	96.33%	3.67%
UP Chairmen/Members	100%	-
NGO Workers	100%	-
TL Officers	100%	-

Source: Field Survey.

People's participation is essential for any development work in UP. But some problems are there to ensure participation of local people in the development work. These are poverty, pressure of influential groups, financial inadequacy and lack of information and education etc. Moreover, the existing modes and mechanisms of work through which people can participate at local level are neither adequate nor effective. The respondents were requested to suggest the types of mechanism through which people would take part in the development activities at local level. Their responses are reflected in table 4.14. On an

average 86.67% local people, cent percent UP chairmen/members and NGO workers and 40% TL officers mentioned that people could be enabled to take part in the development activities through motivation and education. According to them it was possible to improve the level of people's participation not only in the area of project implementation but also in project planning at the UP level. On the other hand, 40% local people and NGO workers and cent percent UP chairmen/ members mentioned that the formulation of the village *parishad* could increase people's participation. Moderate respondents agreed that need oriented project or program and village based project or program could work as the important mechanism which would ensure peoples' participation in the development activities in the UPs. The respondents were of the opinion that participation would increase if the UP projects or program responded directly to the needs and problems of the majority rural people. Moreover, it may be noted here that wide publicity of UP activities and training of the UP officials were required to ensure people's participation.

Table – 4.14

Opinion of the Respondents about Modes and Mechanism of Peoples' Participation

Respondents	Mechanisms				
	Motivation and education	Formulation of village <i>parishad</i>	Target group oriented program	Need oriented project or program	Village based project or program
Local people	86.67%	40%	40%	16.67%	53.33%
UP Chairmen/ Members	100%	100%	-	20%	20%
NGO Workers	100%	40%	60%	60%	40%
TL Officers	40%	-	60%	80%	100%

Source: Field Survey.

Respondents were asked to mention whether the participation of the local people was necessary to develop democracy. Table 4.15 shows the opinions, of the respondents in this regard.

Table – 4.15

Participation of the Local People and Development of Democracy

Respondents	Yes	No
Local people	93.33%	6.67%
UP Chairmen/ Members	100%	-
NGO workers	100%	-
TL officers	100%	-

Source: Field Survey.

It appears from the table 4.15 that 93.33% local people, cent percent UP chairman/members and NGO workers and TL officers replied in the affirmative, though the scope of people's participation in the real sense was very limited in the existing UP activities. But people's participation was considered as a vital element of development plan, solution of UP problems and the development of democracy thereby at the local level.

4.E: Awareness of UP Functions and Proposal accepted in the UP Meeting and Tax Payment

Respondents were asked to mention whether they were aware about the UP functions. Table 4.16 shows the opinions of the respondents in this regard. About 93.33% local people, cent percent UP chairman/members, 40% NGO workers and TL officers opined that they were aware about UP functions. On the other hand, 6.67% local people, 60% NGO workers and TL officers mentioned that they were partially aware about UP function. Local people usually are not engaged in UP activities.

Table 4.16

Opinion of the Respondents about Awareness of the UP Functions

Respondents	Yes	No	Partially
Local People	93.33%	-	6.67%
UP Chairmen/ Members	100%	-	-
NGO Workers	40%	-	60%
TL Officers	40%	-	60%

Source: Field Survey.

Respondents were asked to mention whether they noticed the activities of any influential people or group influencing the UP activities. Table 4.17 shows the opinions of the respondents in this regard.

Table – 4.17

Local Influential People /Groups' Influence upon UP Activities

Respondents	Yes	No
Local People	100%	-
UP Chairmen/Members	100%	-
NGO Workers	100%	-
TL Officers	100%	-

Source: Field Survey.

It appears from the above table that all respondents replied in the positive. Respondents were also asked to mention which group influenced the UP activities. Table 4.18 shows the opinions of the respondents in this regard.

Table – 4.18
Groups Influencing the UP Activities

Respondents	Influential People or Group				
	Peer group	Reference group	Elite	Political group	Non-political local leader
Local People	-	-	-	60.33%	39.67%
UP Chairmen /Members	-	10%	10%	90%	-
NGO Workers	-	40%	-	60%	40%
TL Officers	-	-	-	100%	-

Source: Field Survey.

It appears from the table that political group was the most influential group for the UP activities and political interference was the most important mechanism to influence the activities of the local bodies.

Respondents were asked to mention whether any of their proposals was accepted in the UP meeting. Table 4.19 shows the opinions of the respondents in this regard.

Table- 4.19
Proposal Accepted in the UP Meeting.

Respondents	Yes	No
Local People	73.33%	26.67%
UP Chairmen/Members	100%	-
NGO Workers	40%	60%
TL Officers	-	100%

Source: Field Survey

The table reveals that about 73.33% local people, cent percent UP chairman/members and 40% NGO workers mentioned that their proposals were accepted in the UP meeting. On the other hand, about 16.67% local people, 60% NGO workers and cent percent TL officers replied that their proposals were not accepted. Some of the respondents were not involved in such type of activities of UP.

They were further asked to point out the types of proposal accepted in the UP meeting. Their responses are shown in Table 4.20. On an average 54.55% local people, cent percent UP chairman/members and 60% NGO workers mentioned that their proposals for local level dispute resolution were accepted. 9.09% local people, 10% UP chairman/members and 40% NGO workers had no answer in this regard. Proposal on road construction was accepted in the UP. About 36.36% local people and 30% UP chairmen/members said that their proposals for construction of roads were accepted.

Table-4.20
Respondents Mention About Proposal in the UP

Respondents	Types of Proposals				
	Relating to Law and order	Advice	Local disputes	Road Construction work	No Answer
Local People	18.18%	27.27%	59.55%	36.36%	9.09%
UP Chairmen/ Members	-	70%	100%	30%	10%
NGO Works	-	-	60%	-	40%
TL Officers	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Field Survey.

UP is playing a vital role to develop infrastructure facilities in the locality. So, UP chairmen/ members place various proposals in the UP meetings. Considering the importance of UP meetings, chairman/ members of UP were asked to mention what subjects were usually discussed in the UP meetings.

It is revealed that UP chairmen/members discuss various subjects in the meetings of UPs. These are budget preparation, tax collection and assessment, construction work, judicial matters, relief distribution and development work for agriculture etc. All UP chairmen and members reported to involve themselves in these activities. 20% UP chairmen/members mentioned that they discussed about the judicial matters in the UP meetings.

The UP chairmen /members were asked to mention the length of their involvement in the UP activities. It appears that most of the UP chairmen and members are engaged in UP activities up to four (04) years. But some of the respondents are engaged from 10 to 14 years in UP activities. UP chairmen/members mentioned that they attended the UP office for 2 to 5 times monthly.

UP chairmen/members were asked to mention whether taxes were paid regularly by the local people in their unions. Table 4.21 shows the opinions of the respondents in this regard.

Table 4.21
Local People Pay Tax Regularly

Respondents	Yes	No
UP Chairmen/members	50%	50%

Source: Field Survey.

If appears from the above table that about 50% UP chairmen/members said that local people paid tax regularly in their UP. On the other hand, 50% respondents replied in negative, who related the non payment of taxes with the lack of consciousness about tax payment.

Respondents were further asked to mention whether they themselves paid taxes regularly. Table 4.22 shows the opinions of the respondents in this regard. About 76.67% local people, cent percent UP chairmen/members and NGO workers, 60% TL officers replied that they paid the UP taxes regularly. On the other hand, about 23.33% local people and 40% TL officers mentioned that they did not pay taxes regularly as they were not fully concerned with about UP taxes and also for their negative attitude towards it.

Table-4.22
Pay Tax Regularly

Respondents	Yes	NO
Local People	76.67%	23.33%
UP Chairmen/Members	100%	-
NGO Workers	100%	-
TL Officers	60%	40%

Source: Field Survey.

The respondents were also asked to mention whether they were engaged in politics. Table 4.23 shows the opinions of the respondents in this regard. On an average, about 30% local people and 90% UP chairman /members mentioned that they were engaged in politics. On the other hand, 70% local people, 10% UP chairman/members, cent percent NGO workers and TL officers replied in the negative.

Table – 4.23

Opinions of the Respondents about engaged in Politics

Respondents	Yes	No
Local People	30%	70%
UP Chairmen/Members	90%	10%
NGO Workers	-	100%
TL Officers	-	100%

Source: Field Survey.

The respondents were asked to state whether the people were seen to think about UP. Table 4.24 shows the opinions of the respondents in this regard. It reveals that 66.67% local people, 80% UP chairman/members, and 40% TL officers mentioned that the people thought about UP activities. On the other hand, 26.67% local people, 10% UP chairman/members and cent percent NGO workers expressed that UP activities were not favorable to the people as most of the UP chairmen/ members were not active or sincere for their duties. 6.67% local people, 10% UP chairman/members and 60% TL officers didn't give any response in this regard.

Table-4.24

Whether Local People Think About Union Parishad

Respondents	Favorable	Unfavorable	No Opinion
Local People	66.67%	26.67%	6.67%
UP Chairmen / Members	80%	10%	10%
NGO Workers	-	100%	-
TL Officers	40%	-	60%

Source: Field Survey.

Govt. allowance is not sufficient for the UP chairmen/members. The respondents were asked to mention whether they thought the govt. allowance was sufficient for UP chairmen/members. Cent percent respondents of UP chairman / members replied that they did not get sufficient allowance from government. The study reveals that they get allowance from Tk. 250 to Tk. 350 per month.

The study reveals that various advice was usually given by the govt. officials when they visit a UP. These were agricultural development, family planning and advice for construction work etc. Cent percent respondents of the UP agreed with the view.

The respondents were asked to mention whether they thought that various project committees were constituted by taking people from different socio-economic and occupational groups. Table 4.25 shows the opinions of the respondents in this regard. About 23.33% local people, cent percent UP chairman/members and 60% NGO workers replied in the positive. On the other hand, 46.67% local people and 60% TL officers replied in negative. Only 30% local people, 40% NGO workers and TL officers respectively mentioned that they were not aware of the project committees, which are constituted with people from different socio-economic and occupational groups.

Table 4.25

Various Local Project Committees Constituted by Taking People from Different Socio-Economic and Occupational Groups

Respondents	Yes	No	Do not know
Local People	23.33%	46.67%	30%
UP Chairmen/Members	100%	-	-
NGO Workers	60%	-	40%
TL Officers	-	60%	40%

Source: Field Survey.

4.F : Government Power Application on UP Activities

Union *parishads* do not act as a unique pattern or self- governing body. Because the central government exercises its power on UP activities and also controls over administrative, financial, legislative, judicial activities etc. Inadequate income source and intensive official control have not allowed union *parishads* to develop as autonomous self-governing bodies (Nazneen-2000: 209).

Table 4.26 shows the scopes of governmental power application on UP activities. About 53.33% local people, cent percent UP chairmen/members and NGO workers & TL officers mentioned that government applies power on UP economically. Only 6.67% local people and 20% TL officers argued that scope of governmental power application on UP activities was bureaucratic, which is mostly responsible. On the other hand, 66.67% local people and cent percent NGO workers opined that political control by the govt. over union *parishads* was also responsible.

Table 4.26

Scopes of Government Power Application on UP Activities

Respondents	Economic	Bureaucratic	Political
Local People	53.33%	6.67%	66.67%
UP Chairmen/Members	100%	-	-
NGO Workers	100%	-	100%
TL Officers	100%	20%	

Source: Field Survey.

Though the central government always exercises control over the UP activities, sometimes such type of control helps UPs. But frequent interferences hamper the activities of UPs and retard the growth of UPs. Again, respondents were asked to mention whether they face impacts of the application of govt. power on UP activities. Table 4.27 shows that cent percent respondents hold the opinion that better functioning is not possible when government exercises power on UP activities. All local people, NGO workers and TL officers mentioned

that frequent interference through government power exercise hampered the UP activities. 6.67% local people and 10% UP chairman /members did not give any opinion.

Table-4.27

Impacts of the Application of Govt. Power on UP Activities

Respondents	Impacts			
	Frequent interference hampers the worker	Retard the usual activities	Better functioning is not possible	No opinion
Local People	100%	40%	73.33%	6.67%
UP Chairmen/ Members	-	-	90%	10%
NGO Workers	100%	100%	100%	-
TL Officers	100%	60%	100%	-

Source: Field Survey.

Respondents were further asked to mention whether they thought that such type of government control on UP activities was always helpful or hindering or both. Their responses are shown in Table 4.28.

Table 4.28

Government Control on UP is always Helpful or Hindering or Both

Respondents	Helpful	Hindering	Both
Local People	26.67%	-	73.33%
UP Chairmen/ Member	50%	-	50%
NGO Workers	-	-	100%
TL Officers	-	-	100%

Source: Field Survey.

On an average about 73.33% local people, 50% UP chairman/ members, cent percent NGO workers and BL officers mentioned that government control on UP activities was always helpful and hindering. But 26.67% local people and 50% UP chairman/members replied that such type of control on UP activities was helpful.

4.G : Women's Participation in the UP Activities

Bangladesh government emphasizes on women's participation in the Union *Parishad* activities. This is in response to some provisions in the Constitution of the country, designed to remove the disparity between men and women in the area of governance (Mahmuda Islam *et al* (ed), 1979:342). The realization has been significantly increased in the recent years as women, who constitute half of the population of the country, became vocal about their demands. The policy planners, political leaders, donors, NGOs and other concerned people have also realized that women should participate in the development activities (GOB, 1990 UNDP, 1989&1993, BRDB 1992:108). In the Union Parishad elections held after the amendment of 1997, the women took part spontaneously throughout rural Bangladesh. The women have played a kind of passive role in the electoral process in Union Parishad elections when expected as only voters. Thus, the decision of Bangladesh Government has broadened the range of women's participation in the Union *Parishad*.

Respondents were asked to mention whether they thought that the level of women's participation in local level increased or not. Table 4.29 shows the opinions of the respondents in this regard. All of the respondents replied in affirmative. They were then asked to mention why and to what extent the level of women's participation in local administration increased. Responses in this regard are reflected in Table 4.29.

Table -4.29

The Level of Women's Participation in Local Administration

Respondents	Increased	Not Increased
Local people	100%	-
UP Chairmen/Members	100%	-
NGO Workers	100%	-
TL Officers	100%	-

Source: Field Survey.

From the Table 4.30, it reveals that 86.67% local people, cent percent UP chairman/members and NGO worker and TL officers mentioned that the level of women's participation in local administration increased through participation in direct election of Union Parishad. About 66.67% local people, 20% UP chairmen/ members, 60% NGO workers and cent percent TL officers mentioned that the level of women's participation increased in local level because social attitude changed. For improvement of family planning program women's participation increased in local administration. About 70% local people, 20% UP chairman/members, 80% NGO workers and TL officers agreed with the view. On the other hand, 66.67% local people, 30% UP chairman/members, cent percent NGO workers and 60% TL officers identified that the level of women's participation increased in local administration as local facilities were provided through govt. and non-govt. initiatives. To raise the status of women, government has introduced more educational and technical facilities which are being offered to them. About 26.67% local people and 40% NGO workers supported the view.

Table- 4.30

Opinions of the Respondents about Modes and Mechanism through which the Level of Women's Participation in Local Administration increased

Modes and Mechanism	Respondents			
	Local people	UP Chairmen /Members	NGO Workers	TL Officers
Direct participation in election	86.67%	100%	100%	100%
Change in social attitude	66.67%	20%	60%	100%
Improvement of family planning program	70%	20%	80%	100%
Local facilities through government and non-government initiatives	66.67%	30%	100%	60%
More educational and technical facilities for women	26.67%	-	-	-

Source: Field Survey.

CHAPTER # 5

PROBLEMS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN BAISARI UNION

Introduction

The chapter presents the nature of problems in the study area, corruption in local bodies, problems of Union Parishad and measures to ensure better performance of the UP activities. This chapter also presents suggestions to solve those problems in the local level at UP and also in the study area.

5.A : Nature of the Main Corruption in Union Parishad

Respondents were asked to mention whether there were any corruption in the UP activities. Table 5.1 shows the opinions of the respondents in this regard. Majority of the respondents replied in affirmative.

Table 5.1
Respondent's Opinions about Corruption in UP Activities

Respondents	Yes	No
Local People	93.33%	6.67%
UP Chairmen/ Members	100%	--
NGO Workers	100%	--
TL Officers	100%	--

Source: Field Survey.

The respondents were further asked to mention the nature of main corruption in the Union Parishad. Their responses are presented in Table 5.2. Majority of the respondents identify political persuasion to take bribe in various kind and also in cash as corruption. About 53.33% local people, 30% UP chairman/members, cent percent NGO workers and TL officers identified the reluctance of local bodies to response in time as second corruption. About 46.67% local people, 10% UP chairman/members, cent percent NGO workers and 40% TL officers termed local bodies' official procrastination a third kind of corruption. Another nature of corruption is the desire for illegal gains. About 16.67% local people, 10% UP chairman/members and cent percent NGO workers were found to hold this view.

Table 5.2
Opinion of Respondents about Nature of Main Corruption

Respondents	Nature of Corruption			
	Political persuasion to take bribe	Local bodies' reluctance to response in time	Local bodies' official procrastination	Desire for illegal gains
Local People	96.67%	53.33%	46.67%	16.67%
UP Chairmen / Members	90%	30%	10%	10%
NGO Workers	100%	100%	100%	100%
TL Officers	20%	100%	40%	-

Source: Field Survey.

The respondents were asked to give their opinion about corruption in UP. Table 5.3 shows the opinions of the respondents in this regard. About 33.33% local people, 10% UP chairman/members, cent percent NGO workers and TL officers thought that corruption in local bodies increased significantly. On the other hand, 73.33% local people and cent percent UP chairman/members thought that corruption in local bodies increased slightly. It appears from Table-5.3 that only 6.67% local people mentioned that corruption in local bodies decreased slightly.

Table 5.3
Respondents' Opinion about Corruption in Local Bodies

Respondents	Increased Slightly	Increased Significantly	Decreased Slightly	Decreased Significantly	No Opinion
Local People	73.33%	33.33%	6.67%	--	6.67%
UP Chairmen/ Members	100%	10%	--	--	--
NGO Workers	--	100%	--	--	--
TL Officers	--	100%	--	--	--

Source: Field Survey.

5.B : Information About Local Problems

The respondents were asked to state about the sources through which they used to keep themselves informed about the problems of their area. Table 5.4 shows the opinions of the respondents in this regard. Cent percent UP chairmen/members, 80% NGO workers and 60% TL officers mentioned that they used to get information about the problems of their locality through their visit to the area. Cent percent UP chairmen/members, 40% NGO workers and 80% TL officers replied that they used to get information through listening to the complaints of people of the area.

Table 5.4
Respondents and the Processes of Information Collection
about the Problems of the Locality

Respondents	Visiting the area	Listening to the complaints of people of the area	Others
Local People	--	--	--
UP Chairmen/ Members	100%	100%	--
NGO Workers	80%	40%	--
TL Officers	60%	80%	--

Source: Field Survey

The respondents were asked to mention whether the local people approached them or not for their co-operation in solving their problems. Table 5.5 shows the opinions of the respondents in this regard. About 20% UP chairmen/members and TL officers replied that the local people always approached them for co-operation in solving their problems. On the other hand, 80% local people, cent percent NGO workers and 80% TL officers informed that local people sometimes approached them for cooperation.

Table 5.5
Opinions of the Respondents about the Local People's Approach for Cooperation in Solving their Problems

Respondents	Always	Sometimes	Never
Local people	--	--	--
UP Chairmen/ Members	20%	80%	--
NGO Workers	--	100%	--
TL Officers	20%	80%	--

Source: Field Survey.

The respondents were further asked to mention how they helped the problem stricken people. Table 5.6 shows the opinions of the respondents in this regard. About 90% UP Chairmen/members, cent percent NGO workers and 60% TL officers mentioned that they helped the problem stricken people through *salish*. About 90% UP chairmen/members and 40% NGO workers replied that they helped people through distributing relief goods. On the other hand, 40% NGO workers and TL officers mentioned that they helped people through the distribution of government allowance. Only 10% UP chairmen/members helped the stricken people with financial help.

Table 5.6
Opinions of the Respondents about the Helping Mechanism to the Problem Stricken People.

Respondents	Salish	Distributing relief	Distributing Govt. Allowance	Financial Help
Local People	--	--	--	--
UP Chairmen / Members	90%	90%	--	10%
NGO Workers	100%	40%	40%	--
TL Officers	60%	--	40%	--

Source : Field Survey.

The respondents were asked to mention which groups of people used to visit their offices most frequently. The study reveals that cent percent UP chairmen/members opined that touts and intermediaries used to visit their office most and sometimes the TNO and the ADIG also visited them. On the other hand, 10% NGO workers said that poor men and lower middle class people used to visit their offices frequently. TL officers replied that various managing committees, PTA and SMC used to visit their office.

The respondents were asked to mention whether they faced or not any problem in their area. Table 5.7 shows the opinions of the respondents in this regard. All of the respondents replied in affirmative. They were asked to mention about problems they faced. The respondents were further asked to mention about the nature of the problems. Table 5.8 shows the opinions of the respondents in this regard.

. Table 5.7

Opinions of the Respondents on the Problem they Faced in the Study Area

Respondents	Yes	No
Local People	100%	--
UP Chairmen/ Members	100%	--
NGO Workers	100%	--
TL Officers	100%	--

Source: Field Survey.

Table 5.8

Opinions of the Respondents about Nature of the Problem they Faced in the Study Area

Respondents	Nature of Problems				
	Backward Communication	Unemployment	Illiteracy	Health and Sanitation	Lack of Electricity
Local People	100%	100%	53.33%	60%	73.33%
UP Chairmen/ Members	100%	90%	80%	90%	40%
NGO Workers	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
TL Officers	100%	80%	100%	80%	60%

Source: Field Survey.

Backward communication is the most important problem of the study area. There are no roads and bridges in the area that can help people to communicate with *Thana* Headquarter. The study area is divided by the river Sanda. So construction of roads, bridges and culverts are very difficult. It appears from the Table 5.8 that all of the respondents identified poor conditions of communication. Another important problem is unemployment. Cent percent local people and NGO workers and 90% UP chairmen/members and 80% TL officers mentioned about this problem and blamed lack of financial status, lack of industrial facilities, lack of facilities of self employment, etc for it. Illiteracy has also been identified by the respondents as an important problem. About 53.33% local people, 80% UP chairmen/members, cent percent NGO workers and TL officers agreed with this view. Lack of sufficient educational institutions, poverty and underdeveloped communication system are responsible for illiteracy. For this illiteracy, local people cannot understand all of the subject matters of local government. Another important problem in the study area is health and sanitation. 60% local people, 90% UP chairmen / members, cent percent NGO workers and 80% TL officers indicated this. Lack of adequate medical facilities is responsible for this. About 73.33% local people, 40% UP chairmen/members, cent percent NGO workers and 60% TL officers mentioned the lack of electricity as an important problem. This hampers business and industry, education and irrigation etc.

5.C : Suggestions for Problem Solutions

The respondents were also asked to make suggestions for solving the problems of the area. Increased self-employment activities and financial support from the government were identified thus as very effective solutions of the problems.

The respondents were asked to mention about the development programs that could be undertaken by the local people in the rural areas. Table 5.9 shows the opinions of the respondents in this regard. Majority of the respondents identified that the first and foremost development programs should be the development of educational facilities and scopes of self-employment. Because, education and self-employment play a vital role in the development program in all respects. Second, the local people should go for infrastructural development. About 33.33% local people, 40% UP Chairmen/members, cent percent NGO workers and TL officers agreed with this view. Health and sanitation development program should also be undertaken by local people to ensure sound health for next generation. About 73.33% local people, 60% UP chairmen/members, 80% NGO workers and cent percent TL officers mentioned that the requirement of health and sanitation was a must and therefore development programs should be undertaken by the local people in this regard. Another essential development program, as suggested, was technical and vocational training. About 76.67% local people, 10% UP chairmen/members, cent percent NGO workers and 40% TL officers supported the matter of technical and vocational training.

Table 5.9

Development Programs to be Taken up by the Local People

Respondents	Name of the Development Programs				
	Infra-structure	Education	Health and Sanitation	Self-employment	Technical and Vocational training
Local People	63.33%	80%	73.33%	100%	76.67%
UP Chairmen/ Members	40%	100%	60%	90%	10%
NGO Workers	100%	80%	80%	100%	100%
TL Officers	100%	100%	100%	100%	40%

Source: Field Survey.

The respondents were asked to comment on possible steps for better performance of the UP. Their responses are shown in the Table 5.10. It appears from the table that 73.33% local people, cent percent UP chairmen/members, NGO workers and TL officers suggested to develop a strong and viable financial system. It is essential to ensure better performance of the UP activities. About cent percent local people and NGO workers, 10% UP chairmen /members and 40% TL officers suggested for making elected persons more accountable to the proper authority. On the other hand, 93.33% local people, cent percent UP chairmen/members and NGO workers and 80% TL officers are found to favor staff training and orientation to ensure better functioning of UPs. About 66.67% local people, 80% UP chairmen/members, cent percent NGO workers and 60% TL officers advocated that rules and regulations should be made appropriate to ensure better performances of UPs. About 63.33% local people, 50% UP chairmen/members, cent percent NGO workers and 40% TL officers suggested to ensure financial support for better performance of the UPs.

Table 5.10
Respondents' Opinion about Measures to Ensure
Better Performance of the UP

Respondents	Modes and Mechanisms of Better Performance					
	Develop strong and viable financial system	Attitudinal change of the UP and Thana level officials	Accountability of elected representatives to the proper authority	Staff training and orientation	Appropriate rules and regulations	Financial support
Local people	73.33%	60%	100%	93.33%	66.67%	63.33%
UP Chairmen/ Members	100%	10%	10%	100%	80%	50%
NGO Workers	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
TL Officers	100%	80%	40%	80%	60%	40%

Source: Field Survey.

The respondents were asked to mention the most important problems that are essential to be solved for development of local bodies. Table 5.11 shows the opinions of the respondents in this regard. Cent percent local people and UP chairmen/members, 40% NGO workers and 80% TL officials mentioned that the first and foremost important problem was the financial inadequacy that was essential to be solved for development of local bodies. Limited scope of participation was identified as the second important problem to be solved for the development of the local bodies. About 75.33% local people, 60% UP chairmen/members, 80% NGO workers and TL officers agreed with this view. Poor salary of the staffs was identified as third important problem. About 53.33% local people, cent percent UP chairmen/members, 60% NGO workers and TL officers agreed with the view. About 66.67% local people, 20% UP chairmen/members, 40% NGO workers and 60% TL officers mentioned that poor administrative capacity was another problem that should be solved for development of local bodies. Bureaucracy was identified as one of the barriers to develop the local bodies. About 60% local people, 40% NGO workers and TL officers mentioned that bureaucratic complexity caused problems for development of local bodies.

Table 5.11

Respondents' Opinion about Important Problems that should be essentially Solved for Development of Local Bodies

Respondents	Name of the Problems				
	Financial inadequacy	Poor administrative capacity	Poor salary of the staff	Limited scope of participation	Bureaucracy
Local People	100%	66.67%	53.33%	73.33%	60%
UP Chairmen/Members	100% *	20%	100%	60%	--
NGO Workers	40%	40%	60%	80%	40%
TL Officers	80%	60%	60%	80%	40%

Source: Field Survey.

CHAPTER # 6
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Intorduction

Agriculture is the mainstay of Bangladesh. The place of agriculture in our country's economy is per excellence. About 69% of the total population depend on agriculture. It contributes 17% of our total export. Rapid population growth, high demand for employment and under employment, widespread malnutrition and hunger, increasingly growing inequality stand out in sharp relief in the current socio-economy profile of Bangladesh. Most of the people are living in the rural area, as Bangladesh is rural in nature. Land is indeed the most valuable productive asset in the rural areas. It is also the main source of income to the rural people.

In the rural areas, through local bodies, government of Bangladesh has developed various strategies for boosting food production, building economic infrastructure, creating conditions for better health and spreading literacy thorough means, both formal or informal, to uproot the causes of the deep-seated and depressing situation. Local government can play a vital role in the process of rural transformation and removal of poverty. It implements development plans and programs at the local level through participation of local people in various activities.

Local government is very significant for its character. The most important aspect of the local government is its scope for development of democracy. Democracy of local people is reflected when local people become engaged in activities like decision making, policy formation etc. Local government is the only institution that can ensure local people's participation in all the activities, which play an important role to develop democracy in the rural areas. The current study emphasizes on involving the local people in the development activities, which formulate the rights of local people as well. Thus, local government plays an important role for democracy, its establishment, continuity and stability. On the other hand, democracy entails people's initiative, people's participation and people's vigilance. Actually, democracy gets institutional form through the public participation in the process of governing. When the mass of the people formulate and implement the government policies then their latent expectations and needs come to light. So, democracy can awake and develop people. As a result, people learn to lead themselves in the way appropriate for their interest.

Their intellect will also be practiced and it will make them more responsible. Hence, Union *parishad* is the first step to develop democracy, as people can express their opinions in the election process at the UP level.

This study is exploratory in nature. It is based on both primary and secondary data. The study area has been carefully selected with a view to generating data from the primary sources. Primary data were collected on the basis of field surveys from a union *parishad*. The researcher has selected Baisari Union *Parishad* as the study area. The selection of Baisari Union *Parishad* was purposive. The sample included local people, UP chairmen /members, NGO workers and TL officers who were also selected purposively. The study is based on the information collected from a sample size of 30 local people, 10 UP chairmen/members, 5 NGO workers and 5 TL officers from the study area.

The assisting technique was used to collect primary data in the light of research objectives. Respondents were questioned in person for their views in the furtherance of the study. One set of structured non-disguised questionnaire was used to obtain actual information and opinion. Multiple types of questions were also used to obtain unbiased responses. The respondents were also given necessary explication during the course of interview and were encouraged to answer accurately to increase the validity of the information.

Now a days, governance has become much more complex in nature. A central government cannot supervise the remote rural areas due to numerous difficulties including excess pressure caused by huge population. It cannot even implement its programs undertaken for the development of grass root level and so local government system got conceptualised with a view to ensuring the direct participation of local level people to overcome the aforesaid obstacles (Rahman, Syed Lutfor; 1989:64).

Now, UP is the lowest tier of the local governments of Bangladesh (though village council has been proposed below this level). A union is generally formed with an area with 15 to 20 thousand people. A union council is formed to run the governance locally in a union. The ongoing union council system has been in operation for a long time and come of age through different types of evolution.

The Government of Bangladesh bestowed many responsibilities upon the UPs to run many development activities for the betterment of rural life. However, all such steps failed to build a totally independent and autonomous local government. Till today, UPs failed to function freely due to the obstacles caused by the bureaucrats and different interest groups. Besides, it is also true that the government never sanctioned enough money and power to these local autonomous governments to make them self-reliant bodies. These institutions are only used as the political weapons by the ruling powers.

With an attempt to find out the pitfalls responsible for the weak state of Bangladesh local governments this study identified the influence of the colonial bureaucratic structure as the main problem that compelled the local governments to fail to be pro-people in nature. Now, it is almost impossible for the general people to take part in its activities. Actually, our bureaucrats with colonial mentality have no effective training for running programs for sustainable development. This yielded a wide range of gap between people and the bureaucracy that resulted in an almost no-development situation. In contrast, a friendly and cooperative mode of relation between these two can ensure sustainable development and economic self-reliance. To attain such relation bureaucracy will have to be transparent and accountable in nature. If it becomes so, bureaucrats will be acceptable to people and a mutually sound relationship will be developed between them. In fact, we have no other alternative action to it to cope with the current changes of modern world. Government officials will also have to change their mentality of working only in office rooms to make the governance dynamic. They will have to make regular field visit. They will have to try to establish a direct and intimate relationship with the rural people. They will have to set guard against all the misdeeds of locally affluent quarters and play a positive role to develop a tie between the rulers and the general people.

The respondents have given their opinions about field of planning and policy making, decentralization of local administration, women's participation in local administration, participation of people at the local level UP activities, nature of cooperation of the UP functionaries and people's participation in local bodies etc.

Most of the respondents agreed that people should play a role in the field of planning and policy-making. They have opined that people can play a role in various aspects in this regard, such as; i) people can present their problem, ii) identify the needs and requirements of the people, iii) identify the necessary data on locality for policy making, iv) implementation of rules and regulations, v) create public opinion in favour of policy making and planning. In this case, elected members of the UP, chairmen and local leaders have played the dominant role in the decision making process. But Thana Level Officers argued that government burucracy plays the most dominant role in this regard.

The study reveals that the people's participation have increased due to relationship developed between Thana and Union level, more officials placed at the Thana level, more government fund allocated and status enhancement of the Thana level officials through decentralization of local administration. There are some advantages and disadvantages of decentralization of local administration. Respondents have gained advantages due to more efficient, less costly and easier working system; easy access to government officials and increased services to more people through decentralization of local administration. The study also reveals that people always do not get advantages through decentralization of local administration. They have faced some problems, such as, political interference from outside, increased corruption and introduction of touts and intermediaries etc. As a result, local people are deprived of their benefits from the local administration. The higher-level officers and local MPs should take immediate and appropriate steps to control it.

The study found that income of local people and benefits of various services had been increased after decentralization of local administration. But, touts and intermediaries are gaining the most advantages through the administrative changes. Only in a few cases, local

poor are benefited. So, touts and intermediaries should be removed immediately through the implementation of the laws and orders strictly.

An organizational relationship and cooperation between the UP and the field of bureaucracy is required for the development work process of the central government. Thus, the *Thana* level officers, sometimes, are in need of cooperation from the Union *Parishad* functionaries. NGO workers may also, sometimes, approach to the Union *Parishad* for necessary cooperation. Local people can hope for necessary cooperation from Union *Parishad* as the Union *Parishad* is a public organization. The study found that most of the local people, NGO workers and TL officers are often getting cooperation from UP chairmen/members. But, rest of the local people opined that they do not get cooperation from the UP chairmen/members as they are engaged in different types of activities and they do not have fully helping minds. For removal of these problems, UP chairmen/members should give attention to the local people's problems and they should also serve people by assistance through advices, activities, financial assistance and taking them to the concerned authorities.

Sometimes, UP chairmen/members help the local people through giving advice and activities, which are not sufficient or adequate. So, they should be more responsible in all respects as they are the representatives of the local people to the local bodies.

The study found that there are limited scopes to involve local people in UP activities. But local people also demand for UP's support and cooperation. Considering the limited scope of UP, people should take part in the UP activities for solving the problems of the union. People's participation is a must for any development activity in UP. But, some problems are there in the field of the participation of local people in the development work. These are poverty, pressure of influential groups, financial inadequacy and lack of knowledge and information, educational inefficiency etc. Moreover, the existing modes and mechanisms of people's participation in local level do not work as those are neither adequate nor effective. These modes and mechanism of people's participation should be motivation and education, formation of Village *Parishad*, preparation of target group orientated programs, felt need oriented projects or programs and creation of village based projects or programs etc.

The study reveals that democracy of local people has been improved through the participation of local people in the UP activities though the scope of people's participation, in the real sense, is very limited in the existing UP system. But, people's participation is to be considered as an important element for massive development plan, solving UP problems and thereby improving democracy of the local people at the local level. The current study found that local people participate in the UP activities in some cases. These are related to law and order, advice, local disputes, road construction work etc. The level of participation of local people is not wide by range. They have a limited scope compared to their needs and requirements. Sometimes, UP accepted proposals of the local people in the UP meetings.

For the development of infrastructure facility in the locality, UP chairmen/members place various proposals in the UP meetings. The study reveals that they normally discuss on budget preparation, tax collection and assessment, construction work, judicial matters, relief distribution and development work for agriculture etc. The participation of the local people is a must in the areas mentioned above. For that reason, 3 or 4 persons per ward should be included in a UP meeting. Respective thana level officers can ensure the participation of local people in the UP meetings. As a result, local people will be conscious about their needs and requirements and can help to develop democracy in local level.

The smooth functioning of UP is not possible as political groups and non-political local leaders frequently influence UP activities. In this context, political interference is the most important mechanism to influence any activity of local bodies at present. For removal of interference from outside, UP members and chairmen should be made responsible for their duties and they will have to do their work consciously too. Most of the local people are not aware about tax payment to UP offices. It is essential to collect taxes from the local people by UP for development work. For this, UP should be introduced to the local people in a way so that they give taxes in the UP offices. In this case NGOs can play an important role to popularise tax payment among the local people especially to them who are connected with NGO activities.

The union *parishads* do not act as a self-governing body because the government exercises its power on UP activities and also controls over administrative, financial, legislative, judicial activities etc. Better functioning is not possible when government exercises power on UP activities. Inadequate income and intensive official control have not allowed the UP to be developed as an autonomous self-governing body. These barriers should be overcome by creating internal sources of income; timely tax collection from *hat-bazars* and thus local bodies should form an attitude to grow up as an individual institution.

Most of the UP chairman/members are engaged in political activities at the local level or area. They are acting in the UP as a political leader. For that, UP activities are not duly performed by the UP chairmen/members. People could not grow a favourable attitude on UP activities too. Local people should try to elect non-political people as members or a chairman in the UP. As a result, they will be active and sincere to their duties and thus people will be benefited.

Govt. allowance is not also sufficient for the UP chairmen/members. The study reveals that they get allowance from Tk. 250 to Tk. 350 per month. It is not sufficient. It should be increased to at least Tk. 500 to Tk. 700 per month.

The women played a kind of passive role in the electoral process in UP elections when expected only as voters. So, the recent decision for electing women to the UPs has broadened the range of women's participation. It grew up awareness about the obstacles of the women. Government and non-government organisations provide loan facilities in groups or individuals to the women for productive purposes. To raise the status of women government has introduced more educational and technical facilities that are being offered to them. The study found that the existing facilities to raise the status of women by government are not sufficient in local bodies of our country. It should be expanded widely and intensively in grass root level.

The study reveals that corruption by UP chairmen/members has been increased significantly due to political pressure and bribe and, as such, local bodies do not respond in time causing official procrastination and encouraging need for illegal gains from different sources. So, the UP chairmen and members will have to be more responsible about their duties and responsibilities in this regard.

Sometimes, respondents get information about local problems through listening to the complaints of people of the area. The study reveals that they help the local people through making *salish*, distributing relief, government allowance and in few cases through financial help. These types of cooperation are not enough to the local people.

The socio-economic problem is the main problem of the local bodies. However, backward communication is the most important problem of the study area. There is no mentionable road and bridge in the area that can help people to communicate with Thana Headquarter. The study area is situated on the bank of river Sanda. Unemployment, illiteracy, health and sanitation problems and lack of electricity etc. are some other important problems of the study area. The study reveals that non-electrification created many bottlenecks in the field of business and industry, education and irrigation.

For removal of these obstacles in the study area, the local people should take up development programs. First and foremost development program should be educational and self-employment programs. These two can play a vital role in the development in all respects. Then, development programs should be undertaken for infrastructural changes and to remove health and sanitation problems. Construction of roads, bridges and culverts should be made gradually in the study area under infrastructure development program for earning sound health; health complex should be built up by the central government in the study area. Sanitation system should be improved by the local people in the area. On the whole, a technical and vocational training program should be taken up by the govt. in this study area.

The study found that betterment of performances of the UP activities is highly essential to ensure development. The most important side of the development is creating a

strong and viable financial system so that the local bodies can remove all financial obstacles in the local levels. Other one is to realise an attitudinal change of UP officials and thana level officials. Elected representatives should be made more accountable to the proper authority. Staff training and orientation is also a must. Rules and regulations should be made appropriate to ensure financial support for sound functioning of the UPs.

The study also reveals that the most important problems to be solved for development of local bodies are financial inadequacy, poor administrative capacity, poor salary of the staffs, limited scope of participation, bureaucratic complexity etc. For development of local bodies, these problems must be solved through dialogues among higher-level authorities and central government. Solution to all identified problems is also required for actual development of local bodies. Given the solution to all these problems, the local bodies will be able to improve their activities through the participation or involvement of more and more local people in the UP activities.

APPENDIX

c) Who have played the dominant role in the decision making?

Respondents	Dominating Role Players			
	Village committee	Elected member of the UP	Govt. Bureaucracy	Chairman and local leaders
Local People			—	
UP Chairmen/ Members				
NGO Workers				
TL Officers				

12. It is said that through the Decentralization of Local Administration e.g. Upazila, the peoples' participation has increased? Please give your opinion.

Respondents	Reasons for People's Participation has increased			
	Relationship has developed between thana and union level	More officials placed at the thana level	More govt. fund allocated	Status enhancement of thana level officials
Local people				
UP Chairmen/ Members				
NGO Workers				
TL Officers				

13. Please mention the advantages and disadvantages of decentralization of local administration.

Respondents	Advantages			
	More efficient and less costly	Easier working system	Easy access to govt. officials	Increased services to more people
Local People				
UP Chairmen/ Members				
NGO Workers				
TL Officers	#			

Respondents	Disadvantages		
	Political interference from out side	Increased corruption	Emergence of touts and intermediaries
Local people			
UP Chairmen/Members			
NGO Workers			
TL Officers			

14. Do you think that local people are getting more benefits from the local Govt. after the decentralization of administration? i) Yes ii) No iii) Partially iv) Substantially

15. Do you think that income of local people and benefits of various services are increased after the decentralization? Yes/ No

16. Who has, in your opinion, gained the most advantages through the administrative changes?

Respondents	Name of the Beneficiaries					
	Govt. officials at <i>thana</i> level	Chairmen /members of <i>thana parishad</i>	Chairmen/ members of union <i>parishad</i>	Local businessmen and contractors	Touts and intermediaries	Local poor
Local People						
UP Chairmen/ Members						
NGO Workers						
TL Officers						

17. Do you get necessary cooperation from UP chairmen / members or officials?

Respondents	Always	Often	Never
Local People			
NGO Workers			
TL Officers			

18. Do you think the cooperation of the UP chairmen/ members or officials is adequate?

Respondents	Adequate	Inadequate
Local people		
NGO Workers		
TL Officers		

19. How do you help the local people in your area?

Respondents	Helping Mechanisms			
	Giving advice	Help through other activities	Financial assistance	Taking them to the concerned authority
UP Chairmen/Members				
NGO Workers				
TL Officers				

20. a) Should people take part in the UP activities for solving the problems of the union?
Yes/ No.

#

b) If yes, please mention in which mechanism people can take part in the development activities?

Respondents	Mechanisms				
	Motivation and education	Formulation of village <i>parishad</i>	Target group oriented program	Need oriented project or program	Village based project or program
Local people					
UP Chairmen/Members					
NGO Workers					
TL Officers					

21. Do you think that the participation of the local people is necessary to develop democracy?
Yes/ No.

22. Are you aware about UP functions? Yes/ No.

23. a) Do you think that local influential people /groups influence upon UP activities? Yes/
- No.

b) If yes, which group?

Respondents	Influential People or Group				
	Peer* group	Reference group	Elite	Political group	Non-political local leader
Local People					
UP Chairmen /Members					
NGO Workers					
TL Officers					

24. a) Is your proposal accepted in the UP meeting? Yes/ No.

b) If yes, please mention about your proposal.

Respondents	Types of Proposals				
	Relating to Law and order	Advice	Local disputes	Road Construction work	No Answer
Local People					
UP Chairmen/ Members					
NGO Works					
TL Officers					

25. a) Do you think that local people of your union pay tax regularly? Yes/ No.

b) Do you pay tax of UP regularly? Yes/ No.

26. Are you engaged in politics? Yes/ No.

27. How do the local people think about Union Parishad?

Respondents	Favorable	Unfavorable	No Opinion
Local People			
UP Chairmen / Members			
NGO Workers			
TL Officers			

28. Do you think that project committees are constituted by taking people from different socio-economic and occupational groups? Yes/ No/ Do not know.

29. a) What are the scopes of government power application on UP?

Respondents	Economic	Bureaucratic	Political
Local People			
UP Chairmen/Members			
NGO Workers			
TL Officers			

b) What are the impacts of the application of above power on UP activities?

Respondents	Impacts			
	Frequent interference hampers the worker	Retard the usual activities	Better functioning is not possible	No opinion
Local People				
UP Chairmen/ Members				
NGO Workers				
TL Officers				

30. Do you think that such type of government control on UP always helpful or hindering or both?

Respondents	Helpful	Hindering	Both
Local People			
UP Chairmen/ Member			
NGO Workers			
TL Officers			

31.a) What do you think about the level of women's participation in local administration?

Increased/ Not Increased.

Respondents	Increased	Not Increased
Local people		
UP Chairmen/Members		
NGO Workers		
TL Officers		

b) If increased, please mention about modes and mechanisms through which the level of women's participation in local administration has increased?

Modes and Mechanism	Respondents			
	Local people	UP Chairmen /Members	NGO Workers	TL Officers
Direct participation in election				
Change in social attitude				
Improvement of family planning program				
Local facilities through government and non-government initiatives				
More educational and technical facilities for women				

32. a) Is there any corruption in UP activities? Yes/ No.

b) If yes, please mention the nature of main corruption?

Respondents	Nature of Corruption			
	Political persuasion to take bribe	Local bodies' reluctance to response in time	Local bodies' official procrastination	Desire for illegal gains
Local People				
UP Chairmen / Members				
NGO Workers				
TL Officers				

c) What is your opinion about corruption in local bodies?

Respondents	Increased Slightly	Increased Significantly	Decreased Slightly	Decreased Significantly	No Opinion
Local People					
UP Chairmen/ Members					
NGO Workers					
TL Officers					

33. How do you keep yourself informed of the problems of your area?

Respondents	Visiting the area	Listening to the complaints of people of the area	Others
Local People			
UP Chairmen/ Members			
NGO Workers			
TL Officers			

34. a) Do the local people approach you for your cooperation in solving their problems?

Respondents	Always	Sometimes	Never
Local people			
UP Chairmen/ Members			
NGO Workers			
TL Officers			

b) How do you help the problem stricken people?

	Salish	Distributing relief	Distributing Govt. Allowance	Financial Help
Local People				
UP Chairmen / Members				
NGO Workers				
TL Officers				

35. a) Do you face any problem in your area? Yes/ No.

b) If yes, what are the problems?

Respondents	Nature of Problems				
	Backward Communication	Unemployment	Illiteracy	Health and Sanitation	Lack of Electricity
Local People					
UP Chairmen/ Members					
NGO Workers					
TL Officers					

36. In your opinion, what type of development program should be taken up by the local people in the rural areas?

Respondents	Name of the Development Programs				
	Infra-structure	Education	Health and Sanitation	Self-employment	Technical and Vocational training
Local People					
UP Chairmen/ Members					
NGO Workers					
TL Officers					

37. What measures, in your opinion, will ensure better performance of the UP?

Respondents	Modes and Mechanisms of Better Performance					
	Develop strong and viable financial system	Attitudinal change of the UP and Thana level officials	Accountability of elected representatives to the proper authority	Staff training and orientation	Appropriate rules and regulations	Financial support
Local people						
UP Chairmen/ Members						
NGO Workers						
TL Officers						

38. Please mention the most important problems that should be essentially solved for development of local bodies.

Respondents	Name of the Problems				
	Financial inadequacy #	Poor administrative capacity	Poor salary of the staff	Limited scope of participation	Bureaucracy
Local People					
UP Chairmen/ Members					
NGO Workers					
TL Officers					

39. How far has the local government system become successful to meet up the needs and welfare of the local people?

40. How long have you been engaged in Union Parishad activities?years.

41. How frequently do you go to the UP office (days in a week)?

42. What subjects are usually discussed in your Union Parishad meeting?
i) Budget preparation ii) Tax collection and assessment iii) Construction work
iv) Judicial matters v) Relief distribution vi) Development work for agriculture.
43. Do you think that govt. allowance is sufficient fir you? Yes/ No.
44. What kind of advice is usually given by the govt. officials when they visit UP? -----
45. Do you think that it has become difficult for you to discharge your responsibilities towards your family after you have become a chairman/ member of the UP?
Yes/ No/ Partially.
46. To whom do the officials talk most when they come to your UP? -----
47. Which groups of people do most frequently visit your office? -----
48. What steps do you suggest to solve the problems you face in your area? -----

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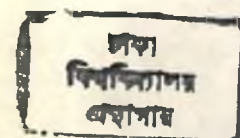
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